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Living between compassion and domination? An ethnographic study of institutions, interventions and the everyday practices of poor black Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa

Reason Beremauro

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2013

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about a specific locality- the Central Methodist Church- and it details the lives and experiences of a large group of migrants who lived within this locality. The study also examines the activities of a wide range of humanitarian organisations that instituted interventions at the church and analyses how individuals' suffering is dealt with by humanitarian organizations. The individuals who inhabited the church were a product of large-scale structural factors- political conflict, economic decline and fragmentation and social despair. These individuals were however following traditional mobile livelihoods routes that have been part and parcel of the Southern African labour migration history. The central questions that this study examines are how and in what ways experiential suffering is dealt with and how the different ways and technologies of managing suffering, impinge upon individual and collective subjectivities in the specific locality of the church. In addition the study examines the categorizations and representations of indigent Zimbabwean migrants within South Africa and how these representations have been constructed and transformed over time. The findings made in the study are drawn from a year of ethnographic fieldwork, which combined a number of different methods. These included archival research, participant observation, in-depth interviews and narratives with individual migrants, state officials and officials from humanitarian organizations. The study also made use of diaries in order to detail the everyday lives of individual migrants and capture the texture of everyday life at the church. The findings indicate that the migrants emplaced within the Central Methodist Church were not only victims of structural, political and socio-economic factors as has been the common refrain in recent literature but were also victims of the 'invisible', silenced, unrecognized and unacknowledged violence and exclusionary nation-building mechanisms and processes in post-independence Zimbabwe and post-apartheid South Africa. The study finds that the ways through which organizations deal with suffering is mediated by numerous factors and humanitarian interventions interact and articulate with the aspirations of individuals in complex and unpredictable ways often with perverse outcomes. One of the key findings that emerges from the study carried out within a specific locality challenges the notion of places such as refugee camps and asylum holding centres as being 'exceptional spaces' where individuals are bereft of rights and even their sense of individuality and worth. Rather such places ought to be understood in terms of contextual, material and historical realities. These places ought also to be understood in terms of the meanings that are attached to them by those who inhabit them. In this regard the study shows the Central Methodist church building to be a material and political resource used by the inhabitants and it's also an economic and political resource utilized by NGOs and other actors. The thesis shows that the ways through which humanitarian interventions are deployed leads to the creation of categories of victimhood and oftentimes these categories are negotiated and constantly reconfigured at times without necessarily interacting with the realities of the beneficiaries in the manner intended. The thesis shows that the everyday lives of indigent individuals are characterized not only by hardships but the manner in which these individuals attempt to assist each are processes fraught with tension and ambiguity. By so doing, the study challenges the romanticization of the lives of the poor which is often depicted as resilient and where the poor assist each other. The thesis makes a contribution to the anthropology of humanitarianism. In addition, the thesis contributes to broader debates on the intersections between migration, indigence, victimhood and the logics and practices of humanitarian institutions.

Keywords: migration, suffering, structural violence, humanitarian organisations, biopolitics, everyday practices, urban migrants

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give glory and honour to the Almighty God who strengthens me and has been forever faithful in my life.

There are a number of people that contributed to the completion of this research project and to whom I would like to express my gratitude. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Steffen Jensen, one of the coordinators of the *Histories of Victimhood* research project who in many ways (too many to mention) assisted me. Thank you for the opportunity you gave me to be part of what was an interesting and intellectually stimulating research project. Your sharp analysis and advice helped refine some of the ideas I had. I'm especially grateful that you always found time to read many different drafts of my work and provide timely feedback. You are a source of inspiration and thank you for the encouragement and unwavering support you gave me over the years. My appreciation also goes to Henrik Rønsbo from the RCT who was also a coordinator of this project for sharing his insights with me.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisory committee at Wits, headed by Dr. Pamila Gupta and including Prof. Eric Worby. At different stages of the PhD process Dr. Irma DuPlessis and Prof. Ingrid Palmary commented on my work, especially at the beginning of the PhD. Working with a relatively large supervisory committee would ordinarily have been a daunting task but individually and collectively, the supervisory committee made the task relatively simpler and somewhat uncomplicated by focusing on different aspects of my work. Thanks for being meticulous and for providing prompt feedback and inspiring comments. The final product attests to your expertise. I am also appreciative of the administrative support provided by Adila and Najibha Deshmukh at WISER, as well as the practical and academic support provided by Catherine Burns in the final stages of the PhD. Thank you all!

I profited immensely from two writing fellowships at the University of Roskilde. I enjoyed participating in the PhD seminars, which improved and honed my writing and analytic abilities. I'm also grateful for the resources that these opportunities availed, which in many ways, enriched my work. In this regard, I would like to thank, in particular Christian Lund for providing these opportunities and for the useful discussions in the seminars. I would also like to

thank Inge Jensen for providing administrative support and making my stay at RUC as comfortable as possible. There are a number of kind individuals I met at RUC but I will only mention a few here- Lene Bull Christiansen, Jacob Rasmussen, Anne Egelund, Bent Steenberg Olsen, Jacob Trane Ibsen, Stine Finne Jacobsen and Lotte Buch. Thank you for your friendship and intellectual support.

In the same vein, I would also like to thank my PhD colleagues at WISER and at the Humanities Graduate Centre- Sakhumzi Mfecane, Jennifer Musangi, Stanford Mahati, Jendele Hungbo, Joy Omwoha, Tatenda Mukwedeya, Crispen Chinguno, Dudu Ndlovu, Beverley Ochieng, Shepherd Mpofu, Jacob Mati and Asanda Benya. Thank you all for your support and constructive criticism.

I'm grateful to my family, Jacqui and little Aiden. Jacqui- thanks for the constant encouragement as I battled through the various and often difficult stages. I appreciate your love, constant support and your patience. Aiden- you are always a source of inspiration! I would also like to thank the rest of my family- my parents- for all the love and support you have given me over the years and my brothers and sisters for the moral and practical support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the institutions that made it possible for me to complete this PhD. The Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Survivours of Torture (RCT-Denmark) who provided a generous stipend and funding that supported fieldwork. WISER- who provided academic, financial and institutional support. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Humanities Graduate Centre who also provided me with material support.

ABBREVIATIONS

AHRF	African Human Rights Forum
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ANC	African National Congress
CMC	Central Methodist Church
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
GNU	Government of National Unity
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MSF	Medecins San Frontieres
NGOs	Non-governmental organization
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
RHRU	Reproductive Health and Research Unit
SACST	Southern African Centre for Survivours of Torture
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPS	South African Police Service
SAWIMA	Southern Africa Women in Migration Association
SPT	Solidarity Peace Trust
TEBA	The Employment Bureau of Africa

TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TOL	Tree of Life
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAid	United States Agency for International Development
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress for Trade Unions
ZNLWVA	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university

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(Reason Beremauro)

_____day of_____ 2013

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Research

This thesis details the experiences of a large group of black Zimbabwean migrants living within a particular locality- the Central Methodist Church- in Johannesburg, South Africa. Broadly, it is an ethnographic study about a place and about the lives of individuals living in profound hardship within that place. The focal concern of the thesis is how these individuals live through conditions of suffering, uncertainty and immense hardship. Also, it is an analysis of the intersections between individuals' suffering and the practices of humanitarian organizations that attempted to alleviate different forms of hardships. I explore the ways in which individuals' suffering is accorded a voice as well as the silences and invisibilities that are simultaneously produced in the process. I also consider how humanitarian interventions may impinge upon political and social formations as well as individual and collective identities.

The Central Methodist Church is a religious institution located in downtown Johannesburg that has since 2004 accommodated a substantial number of ethnically diverse, displaced individuals in a labyrinthine six-storey building. The church transcended from being a religious institution into an undesignated- and therefore politically contested- 'refugee' camp. The majority of the people who resided in this church are part of thousands of individuals who have moved out of contemporary Zimbabwe in response to a precipitous political and economic crisis. The church and its Zimbabwean inhabitants gained immense visibility and prominence in South Africa, Zimbabwe and perhaps beyond through numerous media reports, documentaries and blogs that have been written about the institution and the people living within its confines[1]. Concurrently, the institution attracted a diverse range of humanitarian and welfare organizations all seeking to alleviate the suffering and hardships faced by the inhabitants, in what is perceived to be an abject living place[2]. The church opened up two related phenomena which I explore in

[1] An illustration of these media articles: 'Church offers only home' (*Business day* 2009), '3500 Refugees face eviction in SA' (*CAJ news*, 2009) and 'Methodist Church in CBD under fire' *The Migrant*, Supplement to The Star, December 2009)

[2]That the Central Methodist Church is a site of humanitarian and political prominence is illustrated in significant but largely symbolic political events that have been held in the church building. These include a visit by a group of

this thesis- the harsh forms of life emergent in this place and how individuals emplaced here live through these difficulties and secondly, the entities, technologies and interventions used to alleviate these hardships.

In the first instance, the thesis deciphers the lifeworlds of the migrants inhabiting a site of obvious hardship and depicts the various ways individuals manage the dilemmas and struggles of their everyday lives in search for recognition and livelihoods in a country pervaded by economic inequalities, crime and violence and hostile tendencies towards black migrants. I juxtapose and analyse their lives and experiences against the historical and contextual backdrop of the changing socio-political and economic situation in Zimbabwe as well as contemporary South Africa. By illuminating the history of the sending and receiving countries the thesis invites and explores questions on structural causes of poverty and inequalities, as well as the more easily recognized forms of injustice arising from contexts of violence and essentially, how they penetrate everyday life and the range of responses they draw from individuals. How does displacement and its attendant effects alter material and social relations among people living in crisis? How and in what ways do profoundly affected individuals live through their everyday lives and how do they confront, negotiate, manage or manoeuvre the different hardships they encounter?

The second concern relates to the presence and activities of humanitarian, welfare and human rights organizations at the Methodist church. The thesis considers the ways in which suffering is dealt with by the organizations, as well as the relationship between these organizations, interventions and the lived realities of the migrants. I therefore examine how indigent individuals enter the realms of interventions and consequently how interventions permeate the lifeworlds and realities of targeted individuals and groups, enabling or constraining the long-standing survival strategies of individuals. Humanitarian organizations operating in

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political leaders who included the former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, the former United States President Jimmy Carter and Graca Machel, wife of international icon Nelson Mandela visited the church, in November 2008. The trio had been denied permission to enter Zimbabwe for a humanitarian assessment mission and they visited the church as a poignant reflector of the Zimbabwean crisis. Related to this was a launch in February 2009, of a 21 day hunger strike campaign by individuals within South African civic society groups under the auspices of World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) in solidarity with the Zimbabwean refugees at the church and to protest against the slow pace of Zimbabwean talks brokered by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The hunger strike was led by anti-apartheid cleric and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu.

settings of 'crisis'- that the institution I worked in aptly epitomized- often draw on a 'global assemblage of categories, legal definitions, norms and standards, and procedures and technologies' within which individuals are classified, managed and understood (Robins 2009, 638; see also Pandolfi 2003; Giordano 2008). My purpose was not only to identify the processes through which, individuals are spoken of and the institutional categories they are subsumed under, but I also sought to examine how the deployment of specific institutional, humanitarian and bureaucratic categories, at particular moments, affects individual subjectivities and identities. A related concern was to examine what happens to individual and collective narratives (as well as histories) when individuals are forced- through circumscribed options- to subscribe to legal definitions and categories as means to access limited social, political and economic benefits and rights. One of the arguments that I pursue is that the manner in which humanitarian interventions are structured does not adequately take into account the ways in which people understand, talk about and experience suffering.

The questions considered here have a particular currency and they assume additional salience within the broader context they were investigated-South Africa- where large segments of hitherto marginalized populations are yet to realize the economic promises of a post-apartheid era amidst growing nationalist discourses. South Africa is the dominant economic producer in Southern Africa attracting immigrants from most African countries. Anti-immigrant sentiment is, however, strong and cuts across virtually every socio-economic and demographic group. Poor black foreigners face xenophobic violence from nationals who are still feeling the patterns of exclusions and inequalities based on arbitrary social categories (see Landau and Monson 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006). There have been waves of violent attacks directed at black migrants, most notably at the end of 1994 and early 1995. Although disquiet and discontent over the presence of immigrants, has persistently lingered since then, the violent attacks of 1994/95, were surpassed, in terms of both scale and intensity, in May 2008 by the sustained violent attacks directed at immigrants and refugees in which 62 Black Africans were killed while an estimated 100 000 were displaced over several weeks (Robins 2009; Murray 2011; Peberdy 2009; Hassim, Kupe and Worby 2008).

There is a construction of competing discourses and claims to a victim status by both black migrant groups and hitherto marginalized mainly black South Africans. While black

migrants stake their claim to space in South Africa on the fact that their governments hosted exiled South African leaders and that South African industrialization was built on the back of migrant labour, there is 'a fundamental belief that governments and citizens have no obligation to promote the rights or welfare of non-citizens until they have overcome the inequalities and injustices bequeathed by their own history' (Landau 2006; 233, see also Nyamnjoh 2006). Such claims are often expressed within an exclusionary nationalist discourse that frames black immigrants as 'problems and threats', a drain on national resources and the prosperity offered by South Africa to its citizens (Crush 1999; 124; Dodson and Oelofse 2006; 126, see also Crush 1999ab; McDonald et al 1999; Kaarsholm 2008; Jensen and Buur 2007). In such a context, where claims of victimhood co-exist, there is a compelling need to explore how agencies acting on immigrant groups frame the claims of the immigrants, the factors involved and the way in which individuals relate to the classifications.

Contemporary Zimbabwe is facing a complex, multi-layered political crisis and economic downturn that has, for more than a decade, driven large numbers of its population to neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa. Poor Zimbabwean individuals who are fleeing to South Africa are also going into places where they have traditionally sought livelihoods for many years, but are finding themselves struggling and competing for space and survival with poor locals. They are also facing huge obstacles in their struggle for legal recognition from the state (Kok et al 2006, Crush and James 1995, Solomon 2003, McDonald and Crush 2002, Terreblanche 2002). The movement of Zimbabweans into South Africa and their struggles for legal recognition has followed a trajectory different from the movement of migrants from South Africa's traditional labour reserve countries, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi. Consequently, marginalized Zimbabwean migrants have faced confrontations around attempts to secure legal status and recognition from the state, which limits their livelihood options. Situated within the limits of a tenuous and complex legal and political position; the study sought to illuminate how Zimbabwean individuals pursuing mobile livelihoods in South Africa circumvent and navigate state laws and classifications in their struggles for survival. From this group of immigrants and the organizations acting on their behalf, it may be possible to glean information on what happens when society develops new classifications and categorizations for individuals and communities. It is this illumination that the study intends to contribute to social sciences more generally.

The bulk of contemporary studies on the displacement of Zimbabweans have tended to focus narrowly on the economic crisis, political repression and the brain drain (Bond 1998; Bond and Manyanya 2003; Hammar et al 2003)[3]. While the importance and merits of these studies is undeniable, what is often fundamentally missing is how the historical, social, economic, political structural factors illuminated, come to impinge on the possibilities of poor, marginalized, traditionally mobile individuals on an ordinary and everyday level. In instances where attention has been focused on Zimbabwean migrants, the common thread has been the remittances (goods and money) they send back home with inadequate analysis on the social, relational aspects such remittances serve for the immigrant and their social milieu (see Bracking and Sachikonye 2006). Such approaches have glossed over the experiences of the migrants in the places where they pursue livelihoods. Little attention is cast on the experiences, practices and understandings of poor migrants who are increasingly relying on humanitarian assistance. This thesis aims to fill this knowledge gap by examining both the practices of these organizations and their engagements with poor migrants in South Africa.

Within a global context, the movement of individuals from the global South into wealthier polities has been cast as a security 'threat' leading, in many instances, to the tightening of legal options for settlement but at one and the same time forcing individuals to deploy various indiscretions to acquire the right to stay (Castles and Miller 2003; see also Malkki 2007[4], Fassin 2005). Ticktin (2006) for example, ethnographically illustrates how in the context of France the tightening of the immigration system for would-be asylum claimants and the opening up of humanitarian forms of governance at the same time, articulated with individual subjectivities in cruel and perverse ways whereby affected individuals reportedly sought HIV self- infection in order to access the benefits of citizenship. Drawing and building upon Ticktin's work, I sought to understand the manifestation and articulation of these processes and responses as they obtain

[3] Notably departures from this trend are the writings of Ross Parsons (2010), whose ethnographic study looks AIDS orphans within the context of Zimbabwe's economic crisis; Eric Worby's (2010) examination of the social realities of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg in the context of large scale movement and xenophobic violence in South African urban spaces.

[4] Malkki (2007; 340) alludes to the global radical contraction of the legal principle of asylum and argues that this 'contraction' is manifest in the way countries are generally tightening their asylum regulations making it very difficult for people seeking to be recognized as refugees to be granted this status. Ticktin (2006) and Fassin's (2005) work on the French asylum system is illustrative of this point. Their studies show how political asylum seekers in France encountered difficulties in being granted a refugee status as compared to those who claimed asylum on the grounds of humanitarian reasons such as life threatening illness or traumatic stress disorders.

within the global South looking precisely at how individuals and entities may reconfigure identities, social and political formations and the consequences that emerge therefrom. A majority of the studies also concentrate on South-to-North migration with the consequence that South-to-South migration is neglected. By examining the movement of Zimbabwean individuals into South Africa, my hope is that the thesis will, in a modest sense, bridge this lacuna and make a contribution to understanding migration dynamics as they occur within the global South.

Migrants and immigration in South Africa have attracted a lot of scholarly debates, but most of these studies concentrate on the question of the numbers of the migrants, the effects on the South African labour market and social services provision, and the xenophobic tendencies of the host communities (see for example Solomon 2003, Majodina 2001; Tevera and Zinyama 2002). Most of these studies rely overly on survey methodologies, such as closed-ended questionnaires, which permit large sample sizes and comparative data analysis, but that are limited in producing rich and detailed information about the lived experiences of the migrants – particularly the inchoate aspects of their lives (see Landau and Monson 2008; Peberdy and Rogerson 2000). Such approaches elucidate experiences that are not lived or shared, but merely observed externally by the speaking subject. In embarking on this study, I was interested in the broader conceptual and theoretical questions prompted by the Zimbabwean movement. For that reason, this study aimed to produce deeper insights into the phenomenon derived from the kind of rich, contextual, and nuanced data rarely captured in surveys. I privileged an ethnographic approach, which involved sustained observations, participation in the observed practices and events, collection of documents and in-depth interviews with participants - the aim of which was to produce rich and detailed data on the practices and politics of the state, the organizations assisting migrants and the lived realities of the migrants as observed through their everyday lives and their engagements with these organizations.

Locating my Research: Conceptual and theoretical premises

Central to my investigation and to this thesis, are the notions of victims and victimhood, biopolitics, the everyday and everyday practices which I utilize to consider the workings of NGOs and how the lives and realities of the people in the specific locality of the church are interpreted and understood at given moments; and also in turn to highlight the ways people understand their predicament, try to make do, manage and survive amidst a myriad of challenges, hardships and uncertainities.

In this section I explain and clarify these concepts as used in the study. Secondly, I locate my study within the body of available literature.

Victims and victimhood

Contemporary anthropological and psychological studies have cast attention on groups, communities and individuals that are perceived to have suffered forms of loss and injustices. These include legacies of collective forms of violence, atrocity and politically inflicted suffering and loss, such as among Holocaust survivors, war-affected populations and victims of repressive regimes (see Ochs 2006, Starman 2006, Meister 2002, Pupavac 2004). Increasingly, there is more attention on populations whose suffering emanates from rather latent and structural factors such as inequalities, disease and epidemics such as HIV and AIDS and poverty (Nguyen 2005; Farmer 2002; Ong 2006). Interest in victims has also been given immense impetus by specific interventions and mechanisms that have been instituted to alleviate the collective effects of war and violence as seen through war crimes tribunals and truth and reconciliation commissions as 'therapies for political healing' (Pupavac 2004; 378; Ross 2003). Predominant theoretical insights into the notion of victims, such as the one proffered by Bayle (1991) congeal around the idea of individuals, groups or communities suffering loss, through an identifiable cause and the legal and moral context of such loss necessitating interventions and societal concern by an identifiable agent (see also Starman 2006). While the presence of victims is generally accepted and widely acknowledged, the manner in which victims are spoken of is fluid and seemingly, built on shifting sands. Categories of victims need to be explored further because they are continuously created through interventions and this in many ways is encapsulated in the 'growing proclivity to interpret behaviour in psychopathological terms' as seen through the

'rapid rise in the 1990s of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a social problem internationally' (Heru 2001; 13; Pupavac 2004; 386 see also Malkki 2007).

Jensen and Ronsbo (forthcoming) distinguish victims from victimhood and this distinction is useful for this study. Victim is a term that, 'denotes experiential suffering, victimhood is a political category' (ibid: 1). For Jensen (forthcoming; 1):

> Victims become victims and are made real through a complicated web of entextualized discourses entering into programs, narratives, prioritazations of actors like donors, states and civil society groups, and the everyday practices of survival by those interpellated as victims.

Jensen and Ronsbo (forthcoming: 23) conclude that victimhood, therefore speaks 'to the ways in which suffering is entextualized and acted upon' and is in many ways 'negotiated, impermanent and immanent' (ibid: 1). For others like Ochs (2006) and Starman (2006), victimhood denotes a powerful discursive resource, that is competed for and one that generates political empathy and charity and gives access to resources for those categorized as victims. Identification as a victim may be the only 'initial way to get one's needs recognized and met' (Heru 2001; 10). Those laying a claim to a victim status are expected to be 'pitiable, hapless and disempowered' (Heru 2001; ibid). In many ways, this conceptualization shows the discourse of victimhood, as Ochs (2006; 357) argues to be one that 'excludes and conceals' by delineating who fits in and does not fit in. It excludes the recognition of other victims and conceals the agency of those classified as victims. This conceptualization assumes 'inherent innocence, entitlement to sympathy' and ethical indulgence reserved for those who are classified as victims but this may not sufficiently take into account how people understand their suffering (Starman 2006: 327-328). Claims to a victim status are, often underpinned by notions of 'compassion', 'sympathy' and 'benevolence' (Ochs 2006; 362). People intending to lay a claim to victim status have to reduce themselves to 'pure victims' who are pitiable. Those classed as victims may also be located in universal dominant categories, such as 'women and children', which, are perceived to be, in their natural state, 'innocent and vulnerable, in need of protection' (Heru 2001; 14 see also Mohanty 1993; 199)

Drawing from these conceptualizations and material from the field, the thesis is premised on the understanding that, the way people assumed to be victims are spoken of and their suffering acted upon (in the form of interventions) creates instances of both visibility and

invisibility and may not sufficiently capture how people understand their predicaments and the rehabilitative mechanisms they require. In acknowledging and casting groups collectively as victims often the violations are traced from a meta-narrative but the Methodist church and its inhabitants presents a set of dilemmas and ambiguities. The church brought together different ethnic groups and political identities that drew upon different historical episodes of violations such that their narratives transgressed the popular narrative consequently challenging and destabilizing the boundaries of particular categorizations.

Understanding the different narratives among 'the victims' can contribute to knowledge on victimhood and constitutes a way of understanding suffering as it is recognized and regulated by social, economic and political circumstances and considerations. In the process the thesis tries to show how forms of victimization and suffering are elided and at times silenced and the consequences of this invisibility.

Humanitarian interventions and biopolitics

In examining humanitarian interventions and humanitarian forms of governance the thesis builds on the premise evoked by Foucault's (1978) biopolitics approach which perceives biological life as a central concern in contemporary politics. Biopolitics concerns the management of life at the level of populations through programmes of health, education, population control and so forth (Dean 1999). Under this notion individuals are considered biological and political problems. Pandolfi (2003; 374) writes that:

> Biopolitics thus reveals an inversion in the deployment of power- the reduction of subjective trajectories, of individuals, of men and women, to bodies. Such indistinct, displaced and localized bodies come to be classified and defined as refugees, legal or illegal immigrants, or traumatized victims according to the diagnostic categories of humanitarian management

There is a biopolitical concern that underpins humanitarian interventions and these can be read as a form of biopolitical power or a large array of apparatuses that classify and categorize different categories of individuals as a technology of power. Foucault's writings on biopolitics allude to the 'contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self' and explore the relation between power, knowledge and the body. He perceives biopolitics as the power over life operating at the level of whole populations (Calhoun et al 2007 and Dean 1994). There is a notion of 'care' in which the 'care of the self' becomes the domain of agencies who

exercise a kind of disciplinary power emanating from universal surveillance, concerned with the provision, security and happiness of populations and individuals (Delanty 1999; 105, Dean 1994; 209). Individuals become 'clients to be administered, governed and normalized with respect to governmental objectives' (Dean 1994 ibid). Seen in this way biopolitics designates to institutions the power over life and death and according to Fassin (2007; 501) it is a power that selects 'which existence it is possible or legitimate to save' (see also Pandolfi 2003). The prominence of humanitarian organizations is mostly seen in sites of 'crisis' and humanitarian disasters, legitimated as attempts to alleviate suffering, operating mostly under humanitarian law (Redfield 2005; Duffield 2007; Pandolfi, 2003).

Taking this approach the thesis looks at how humanitarian organizations working within the specific context of the church and broader South Africa, transfer assemblages of categories and institutional practices from the global context to a particular local site and how these resonate with individual aspirations. In this way the study provides a lens through which to analyse how interventions and victim categories built on the idea of universality and being powerful and enduring labels that determine access to resources speak to the realities and aspirations of mobile individuals.

At a rather general level, my initial theoretical impulse was a desire to explore the historical foundations and continuities in humanitarianism, of which the 'antecedents are in religious movements and sensibilities' through the case of the Central Methodist Church (Feldman 2007; 694, see also Elisha 2008). However, my material suggests that contexts, more so sites of 'crisis' or 'emergency' should be seen as arenas of contestation and negotiation and ultimately of indeterminacy, not only where victims are actualized through interventions and categories but also where humanitarian organizations and local groups rationalize and attempt to satisfy the often competing demands of beneficiaries, local interests, the state and donors (Merry 2006; Giordano 2008).

A further related argument is that in such contexts such as the Central Methodist church characterized by many different actors- NGOs, religious authorities, and state officials and coupled with the everyday survival strategies of the migrants- who, collectively, attempt to exert forms of influence; victims are often actualized or made through practices of governance,

interventions, knowledge and power. The study therefore takes a historical perspective in order to provide insights into the different meanings attached to the figure of a victim.

At this level I see my work as a contribution to the anthropology of humanitarianism by broadening insights on the forms of negotiations, power dynamics and authority structures that occur among different actors trying to access a visible site of suffering and how this impacts on the 'targeted' individuals.

The thesis does not take an exclusively, biopolitical approach despite its obvious merits. There is a danger, that the approach reifies or exaggerates the power of institutions over individual agency. Power is not restricted to institutions, but it lies in a multiplicity of domains and operates multidirectional (from above and below), such that there is a 'plurality of struggles' (Delanty 1999; 106 and Calhoun et al 2007; 188; Pandolfi 2003). With particular reference to the issues under investigation in this study, a mere focus on the categories of victims, such as 'asylum seeker', 'refugee', 'victim of xenophobia', 'undocumented or illegal migrant' may not tell us about the everyday lives of the people and may entangle the study within an unhelpful dichotomy of victim and agency or that of victim and victor. Walker (2010; 9) reminds us that such a dichotomy ignores the 'details and textures of daily life' and in instances where experiences are categorized we might gain a sense of victims and heroes but we perhaps also lose a sense of what 'exists in the slippage between suffering and agency' which often constitutes the 'unspoken everyday' (ibid; 14).

Suffering and the everyday

The term suffering I employ can be understood in terms of its broader usage to refer to hardships emanating from lack of basic necessities such as water and food, abject living space and uncertainties- common hardships that the Zimbabwean migrants living in the church building faced. However, I also focus on 'social suffering' as articulated by Kleinman, Das and Lock (1997, ix; see also Biehl, Good and Kleinman 2007) whose definitions, encompasses an assemblage of human problems that emanate from political, economic and institutional arrangements and how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems. To understand how these large scale structures and forces permeate the everyday and affect the capacities of individuals as well as their responses and resiliencies, the thesis deploys Vigh's

(2008) argument that we ought to view 'crisis as context' rather than 'crisis in context' and such an approach recognizes 'crisis' or hardship as incessant and endemic. This aids the historical approach taken in the study, which looks at the political and economic structural factors as well as the social influences that structured Zimbabwean displacement. In addition by looking at 'crisis as context' or as something continuous the thesis accounts for the more contemporaneous hardships migrants contend with and how they negotiate these hardships on an everyday level.

Everyday practices

One of the problems for analysis in this thesis is how migrants engage humanitarian narratives and victim categories and the processes through which interventions aiming to alleviate suffering permeate the lifeworlds and realities of targeted individuals and groups, enabling or constraining the long-standing survival strategies of these individuals. Studies on marginality and minorities[5] are increasingly examining the responses and resistances of poor, socially invisible categories of individuals and communities to dominant representations. Michel de Certeau's work on the practices of the everyday offers analytic lenses through which to engage and analyse these responses to see more clearly how they produce particular forms of behaviour, practice and understanding.

de Certeau's (1984) outline of the practices of the everyday seek to 'study the representations of a society, on the one hand and its mode of behaviour, on the other' (Napolitano and Pratten 2007; 8). Practices of the everyday seek to generate practical and theoretical 'truths' about human life grounded in the realities of daily existence (Napolitano and Pratten 2007; ibid, Keith and Pile 1997; de Certeau 1984). By invoking the 'everyday practices' the thesis situates and analyses humanitarian narratives and victim categories in the lived realities and experiences of poor migrants and as an exploratory framework 'of the inner lives of subjects' (Biehl et al 2007; 5). Biehl et al (2007; ibid) write that investigations of individual subjectivity reflect: 'lived experience within everyday worlds as well as within temporary spaces and transitions- moments of crisis and states of exceptions'. Interest in this investigation was on

[5]One of these is James Scott whose studies (1985), Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance looks at ordinary everyday peasant resistance and (1990) Domination and the Arts of resistance: The hidden transcript of subordinate groups in which he argues that subordinate groups resist in ways that are similar to peasants resistance. In short he argues that resistance can be covert and conformity may be calculated and beneath a veneer of compliance are undercurrents of resistance.

how individuals commonly assumed to be passive respond to dominant representations and how their everyday practices foreclose on what is most important for them.

Within the practices of everyday de Certeau distinguishes two concepts- *strategies* and *tactics* and the two constructs inform the approach taken in this study. The two constructs compel an examination of not only the practices of individual migrants but also of individuals working for humanitarian agencies and how they perceived the migrants and interpreted their interventions and practices. As March and Olsen (1984 cited in Colson 2003; 12) argue, an organization- and even more so a field of heterogeneous organizations such as those involved with refugees- is also a coalition of many interests and hence a political environment. From this perspective the thesis tries to work through how global assemblages of categories are translated and implemented on a local site.

Strategies are for the strong and making strategic decisions depends on possessing the power to do so. What are the everyday practices of different categories of staff in these organizations? Why do they work for these organizations and how do they articulate the programmes and goals of the organization?

Tactics on the other hand are an 'art of the weak' and these are determined by the absence of power and the concept brings out the 'the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of "discipline" (de Certeau 1984). Scott (1990) also alludes to the powerless possessing a 'hidden transcript' which power holders do not see or hear but which is different from the 'public transcript' played out in the open, public interactions between the dominant and the dominated (Napolitano and Pratten 2007; 4)

Although de Certeau's work has been criticized for failing to recognize relationships of complicity and processes of consensus (compliance and resistance) from his perspective the study sought to understand how socially invisible categories of migrant groups 'hollow out' spaces within institutional categories. I therefore paid close and particular attention on what the migrants' do both in the presence of staff from humanitarian agencies and outside and away from the view of organizations to gauge the reactions and responses of individuals to their representation and categorization.

My theoretical assumptions on notions of victims, biopolitics, the everyday and suffering orient my broad methodological approach. In order to grasp the different perceptives articulated by individuals and NGO staffers I adopted an ethnographic study that combined a number of different techniques and also allowed me to observe the interactions between the different entities as well as their interactions with beneficiaries.

Methodological Reflections

The idea of studying displaced Zimbabweans in South Africa was born out of a long interest I had in the movement of individuals and the experiences that shape or are shaped by their settlements in foreign countries. My previous research looked at the sexuality and reproductive rights of women refugees from the Great Lakes region in Zimbabwe in the context of a 'crisis'. The interest in studying the lives of migrants and displaced groups was triggered in my hometown of Bulawayo, then the industrial hub of Zimbabwe in the 1980s and early 90s, attracting diverse individuals from outlying areas and those further afield like Mashonaland and migrants from regional countries like Zambia and Malawi. However, Bulawayo was not just a migrant receiving city but individuals often moved out of the city heading mainly to South Africa. In this way the city, epitomized the position of Zimbabwe as both a receiver and sender of immigrant labourers within the complex Southern African labour system. Of particular salience were the structural and social factors that configured the movement of individuals and this sensitized me to the way politics, economics and social factors interacted and structured social identities, often in a myriad ways. I have in mind, migrants who were called *injiva* and these were often, seemingly well to do, young, and 'street wise' individuals who had gone to work in South Africa and would come back to visit kin relations in Bulawayo, after a number years and in most instances driving off trendy cars to show that they 'had arrived'- attained success. With the implosion of the Zimbabwean economy and the increased volume of people who moved out of Zimbabwe, came stories of the abject living spaces that people lived in and often precarious livelihoods they engaged in, in order to raise enough resources to make a grand visit to the country. My research interests were focused on finding out the strategies that people

living in difficult conditions employed, to manage and navigate different sets of moral, social and economic expectations, obligations and dilemmas.

In 2008, I was offered a fellowship in a broad comparative and collaborative research programme, entitled *'Histories of Victimhood*, under which, research studies were undertaken among different communities in Guatemala, Colombia and Palestine and I had to carry out a study of that nature in South Africa. The studies were carried out in communities affected by structural forces such as inequalities; violence, war, economic collapse and the individuals could be defined loosely but in a collective sense, as victims. The broad focus was mainly to look at the various rehabilitative therapies and assistance programmes populations were assisted under, as well as their responses to structural circumstances. My thesis falls directly under the broad rubric of this project and the major questions the project poses but it also, at the same time, speaks eloquently to my long-standing research interests.

I commenced year-long ethnographic fieldwork in February 2009 and conducted the study mainly at the Central Methodist Church. The decision to do the study at the church was determined by empirical considerations. The Central Methodist Church- through its Bishop- is a Christian institution that attributes some of its work to religious values and beliefs and thereby offering a prism through which to examine humanitarianism through a religious discourse founded on notions of 'compassion' and 'sympathy'. At the same time it was an institutional space where humanitarian organizations converged seeking to assist the huge number of indigent individuals opening up an essential entry point into the interventions of different organizations, the lived experiences of the migrants and their encounters with the organizations. I had planned to examine the same issues in Musina- a South African border town with Zimbabwe- where an asylum holding camp was located but I soon abandoned this plan after the camp was shut down in March 2009 and close to 2000 individuals moved to the church. Apart from the obvious depth that the church lent to the study it also positions the thesis in line with contemporary ethnographic studies that are increasingly casting attention on forms of life, modes of survival and technologies emerging in 'zones of crisis' brought about by war, natural disasters, injustices, inequalities and human rights violations and the subjectivities that emerge in these settings (Feldman and Ticktin 2010; Biehl et. al 2006; Sachs 2001; Ong, 2006; Petryna 2002). For my study, the church was a propitious site in which to capture the texture of daily life that oftentimes

evades description and analysis in studies that approach actors through the dichotomy of victim and agency (Walker 2010).

Research Methods

I employed a largely ethnographic methodology that combined different approaches, which allowed for close attention to issues of interest to the study. These included participant observation; formal and informal interviews, narratives and following the paths of individuals to places where they sought legal documents, employment or welfare assistance. While the church was my main field site I followed the migrants to some of the places they went to, as well as visiting the offices of some of the NGOs that ran programmes at the church, such that the study was a multi-sited ethnography in the tradition of Marcus (1995; 96-111). An ethnographic approach allows a researcher to immerse oneself in the lives of informants and participants gaining valuable insights into their experiences and everyday lives (cite). In my case, given the difficulty of the field site, a multi-sited ethnography allowed me to better capture the diversity and complexity that structured the field and also to constantly reflect upon my position as both a Zimbabwean and a researcher.

I attended many of the gatherings held at the church most notably Friday weekly meetings, and mid-week daily church services as well as meetings and campaigns held by NGOs in the church. On some occasions, I joined in celebrations as well as, funeral gatherings and services held for deceased migrants in the church. I participated in trauma counseling workshops hosted by the Southern African Centre for Survivours of Torture (SACST), also formerly known as the Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project) as well as various activities hosted by the Southern African Women in Migration Association (SAWIMA). In these gatherings, I was able to observe the interactions and encounters between some of the NGO officials and migrants; as well as getting insights into some of the interventions and programmes. In most of the meetings I was able to sit through as an observer, although in trauma counseling sessions I at times, participated in the general discussions. Burgess (1984; 79) sees the value of being a participant observer in the opportunity it affords a researcher to collect rich data based on observations in natural settings. Furthermore, a researcher can obtain accounts of situations in participants' own

language, and for, Jorgensen (1989; 12) this gives access to the concepts that are used in everyday life. The technique is also desirable when the problem is concerned with human interactions and the phenomenon of investigation is observable within an everyday life situation or setting (ibid). Through these gatherings and interactions I was able to forge stronger relationships with the NGO officials and most of the migrants. I also spent time 'hanging out' and observing interactions in the Medicins San Frontiers clinic (MSF) located next to the church where migrants sought health care. In this way I was able to have informal discussions with patients and this was often the start of many relationships I had with people leading to more formal, structured interviews.

In the study I also took a close and textured approach in trying to understand the ways, individuals live and deal with suffering manifest in various uncertainties including illness and death; or loss of a job and their coping strategies. Following Das and Das (2007) I used diary studies. The diaries are a systematic way of organizing home or household visits to informants and they provide a way to have discussions and conversations regarding everyday life. Under this technique I gave a member of a selected household a notebook (which they could treat as a diary) and would write some short entries about occurrences during the week; which we would then talk about in greater detail every week for eight weeks. I selected the twelve respondents purposively on the basis of gender, age and the duration of their stay in South Africa and their different locations within the church building. Das and Das (2007; 69) argue that within poor settings 'the stories that the participants write about of their illnesses often become stories of 'kinship relations' or reflections on the social and economic conditions in which people live'. The decision to use diaries was partly inspired by the fluid nature of the site where individuals saw their stay within the church and at times within Johannesburg as temporary and in this way I managed to be in constant contact with them. In addition, I was also able to learn about the various occurrences within the church building such as the violence and controversies that occurred or some of the NGOs that visited and initiated a project- issues that I would never have been able to know about in my absence. This approach allowed me to build familiarity and trust with informants whom I visited over time and in the course of these visits I would also have informal conversations with people who stayed next to them.

In addition to these approaches, I also conducted formal interviews with both migrants in the church and officials from the different organizations who spoke about the interventions their respective organizations ran as well as the way categorized migrants. The interviews with migrants often took the form of narratives whereby I traced their family relations, education, previous employment in Zimbabwe and their trajectories into coming and staying within South Africa and the church. My interviews with both migrants and officials followed a semi-structured guide with questions and themes formulated beforehand but I adjusted these to suit particular situations and the individual I was talking to. Such an approach allowed me to elicit as much information as I could with informants that at times I would not be able to meet up with. In addition I also collected official documents such as government statements, asylum rejection letters, newspaper articles, and materials from NGOs. The bulk of the information gathered from these materials provides background information on the patterns of Zimbabwean movement as well as the popular discourses surrounding the church and its inhabitants.

In all, the empirical material on which the analysis of the thesis is based consists of 61 recorded and transcribed in-depth interviews. These are mainly key informant interviews with migrants, staff at the church and those working in NGOs and they follow institutional narratives and discourses around migrants in South Africa, the Methodist church and state practices. The interviews range from 30 minutes to an hour and a half. The rest of the recorded material includes 15 refugee fellowship meetings at the church; three group counseling sessions at the Southern African Centre for Survivours of Torture (SACST) as well as asylum rejection letters and minutes of meetings at the church. Many of my interviews with the migrants are unrecorded owing to the reluctance and unwillingness of the migrants to be voice recorded. The informal conversations and interactions I had in the course of my fieldwork are perhaps my richest source of data and these are captured in the form of field notes.

Negotiating and reflecting on a difficult field

There were difficulties in carrying out the study. Before commencing fieldwork I sought permission from the Bishop of the church, Paul Verryn and this was granted through a letter in January 2009 and I was also asked to attend a weekly meeting with the inhabitants where I was formally introduced and I informed them of my project. Prior to the letter and introduction, I had towards the end of 2008 visited the church on an irregular basis and interacted informally with some of the people residing in the building at the time, while getting empirical insights that I needed in formulating an informed proposal for the study. Despite these efforts and 'gaining official entry' into the field, I still had to request for permission to have conversations and interviews with potential informants- in accordance with basic research protocols. Gaining people's trust proved much harder than I envisaged. The church brought together different ethnicities and individuals with diverse political histories. Some of the individuals were active political activists and leaders, one also encountered former army and police officers, teachers and so forth. There were therefore constant- and well founded- fears of state surveillance and research involving interacting and speaking with individuals, carried with it an immense risk and threat of violence and negative consequences given the political situation in Zimbabwe. People's sense of fear and reluctance to talk to a Zimbabwean stranger was understandable. Some of the fears arose from the fact that potential informants did not always have the requisite legal documents granting them residence in South Africa and because I was interested in finding out some of the everyday contingencies they encountered, they never felt comfortable discussing and revealing such aspects of their lives.

The overcrowded nature of the church created practical problems in carrying out the study. It was often difficult to conduct inteviews with participants inside the church building at certain moments due to the high noise levels. Interviews, were also at times, disturbed or even disrupted by other individuals who wanted to talk to informants, especially participants who were engaged in particular modes of livelihoods such as vending. In most instances, I had to request to talk to participants within the church sanctuary, which was deserted during the day. My fear was often that in a place of profound hardship and tensions between different ethnic groups, selecting participants to talk to in the large auditorium created suspicions of favouritism of one group over the other as well as raising expectations that there were some form of rewards

to being interviewed. These suspicions were at least reduced by my ability to converse in different languages and hence, to some extent, escape suspicions of favouritism. The constant disruption to the interviews were not, however, a challenge per se, but also allowed me to capture daily life as participants exchanged stories and rumours and discussed issues that were of concern to them such as illness and death as well as their fears about impeding threats to their occupancy of the church building.

Some of the challenges I encountered emerged from the intense attention the church and its inhabitants received in the media as well as from researchers and humanitarian organizations alike. The church was a typically 'over researched' site. There were often strongly held views that researchers were 'making money' from conducting research at the church and these expectations never appeared to have waned even towards the end of my fieldwork. One day, I attempted to set up an interview with a young lady who was often involved in recruiting participants for workshops that were held by a trauma counseling organization. In addition to my explanations about what the study was about, I handed her an information sheet. After quickly reading through, she retorted:

> No! You people make a lot of money from the information we give you. People have made a lot of money from this place. You people are the same, you come here with the same questions; *'why did you come here?'; 'how did you come here?*' You're like HIV, you're like that virus, always changing but looking for the same thing' (Fieldnotes, 06 October 2009).

While I found the analogy to a deadly virus extremely disconcerting; exchanges such as these, permitted for more reflexivity on the role that 'we' as researchers and NGO practitioners alike, play in the lives of people considered 'victims' and how they feel about the attention accorded them.

In addition to this, the church was perceived as a 'political hotbed'- a highly politicized site. On one occasion, an official from the Local Government department, in the presence of several of her colleagues declined to tell me about the purpose of a UNHCR registration exercise that was being conducted at the church with the assistance of her department. She retorted emphatically:

No! This place is very political! I do not want to say anything!

Although our conversation was very short and uninformative, her response as well as many similar encounters, were nevertheless insightful and made visible, to me, a silenced and invisible everyday were mere expression of one's views could entail severe consequences. These inspire the nuanced approach I adopt in the study. In my analysis, I do not only take account of language simply as 'spoken' but also, as 'expressed' through individuals' deportments in my interactions with them. The 'politicization' of the place was also not a challenge in and of itself. It allowed me to be attentive to the tensions between the police, church authorities, the congregation and the disagreements among the migrants and some of these form part of the anecdotes I provide in the thesis and these, in many ways enrich the analysis by bringing out the texture of everyday life.

There were other personal, intimate hindrances that nevertheless created barriers against talking to respondents. Most informants expressed the fear that their images or experiences would be shown in newspapers or appear on television programmes or various internet websites, potentially alerting their relations back home of the place they lived in. Throughout my fieldwork informants told me of how they did not want their plight known back home. I was often confronted with statements such as '*Kwete m'kwasha*[6]*! Handidi kubuda pa e-tv'.* ('No my son-in-law! I don't want to be shown on e-TV'[7]) Staying at the church was seen as shameful and individuals were keen to avoid word reaching home concerning their place of abode and it allowed individuals to maintain some form of power upon kin relations who in most cases could have been reliant on the goods and money, some of the church inhabitants, remitted. In another sense it also spoke of the temporality with which they regarded their situation- betraying a desire to return home or to stay within more decent places.

[6] Mkwasha literally means son-in-law but its often used on an ordinary basis by older women to refer to any male to convey some sort of respect

[7] E-TV is a privately owned South African television channel, which used to broadcast in Zimbabwe through free-to-air decoders. Due to strict media regulations and the presence of only a single television channel most households in Zimbabwe had resorted to the use of free-to-air decoders, which gave them access South African TV channels among a host of other channels.

I was throughout the duration of my study mistaken for a journalist. Some of the people I attempted to talk to, informally, in establishing rapport, often asked me to show them the proof that I was a student. I would equally be stopped at the church entrance by the security details and asked about the project I was carrying out, my migration history and the sources of my funding. These conversations enabled me to open up and share my story; also in the belief that I would gain the trust of the people I wanted to talk to. However, in sharing my story I was often seen as an, 'insider-outsider', an individual hailing from the same country as my informants but coming from a background and circumstances relatively different from theirs. Such impressions were solidified, after I accompanied a group of Danish students into the church just a few weeks after starting fieldwork and on one occasion I overheard (and was offended) when one of the women referred to me as a 'musalad[8]'. Amidst lingering suspicions, I eventually managed to build rapport with quite a number of informants over time, and I was assisted in no small part by a former university graduate I had taught at the University of Zimbabwe, who privately vouched for me among some of the people in the church. Over the course of time, some of the participants requested for information on new or changing immigration requirements and I would bring them newspaper cuttings or official statements and this helped in gaining their trust.

Apart from the frequent dismay some of these challenges created, they alerted me to the hidden hardships like constant fear, insecurity, precariousness, exploitation, shame and embarrassment that were part and parcel of lived everyday life, which people within the church had to endure and contend with. They also spoke of indigent migrants' desire to live their lives away from the glare of researchers, the media and organizations that in different ways made their lives visible spectra. These reflections inspire the approach I take in the thesis- which is to examine the texture of everyday life focusing on the silent, invisible and inchoate aspects of indigent people's lives as a way of opening up ways in which we understand how suffering is lived with and how people's everyday lives foreclose on what is important for them and what is at stake.

[8] In Zimbabwean urban parlance 'musalad' refers generically, to individuals of a higher socio-economic status as determined by such variables as one's profession, residential status, educational level etc. The word is used in dichotomy to the acronym 'SRB' (Strong Rural Background) which refers derogatively to people who are seen as exhibiting working class /peasant traits. While SRB is generally frowned upon, 'musalad' connotes different meanings and interpretations depending on the situation. In the context and circumstances of the church the woman probably saw me as someone who could not endure the hardships encountered in a difficult living space.

The young woman's HIV analogy, while deeply hurtful ties up with the criticism scholars such as Mbembe (2001) have given on the negative portrayal of Africa and Africans in much scholarly writing where Africans are seen as perpetual victims, 'hungry' or 'suffering strangers'. My purpose in undertaking the project was never to be cynical or to look for the 'same thing' as the young woman stated in apparent reference to the images and popular stereotypes of negativity associated with the African continent, as the apocalyptic 'dark continent'. In certain ways the study, carried out in a context of crisis in Zimbabwe, touched on processes that I was, at one and the same time a part of, like sending money and foodstuffs back home and hosting friends and relatives on shopping trips. While I cannot divorce the thesis entirely from the difficulties and hardships I witnessed, which speak to the broader and pervasive realities of structural violence, inequality, poverty and suffering within the continent, I was throughout my fieldwork also alive to the solidarities, mutual assistance and resiliencies that people exhibited and which in some ways helped them cope or manage everyday difficulties.

Structure of the thesis

The **second chapter** of the thesis details the historical, contextual background that has shaped and informed the movement of individuals from Zimbabwe to South Africa. The chapter discusses two related questions. In the first instance, how have the changing socio-economic and political realities in Zimbabwe and South Africa come to impinge upon the possibilities of individuals and how have they influenced contemporary migration? The second concern, which is addressed concurrently with the first question, is how contemporary mobility has reconfigured material and social relations amongst migrant communities and individuals over the years. The argument made in this chapter is that, notwithstanding the scale of contemporary movement from Zimbabwe, individuals have always moved in pursuit of livelihoods. The purpose of the chapter is to trace these movements but at the same time examining structural factors that have given contemporary migrations immense impetus. By mapping out the historical antecedents of migration and displacement, the chapter relates the current displacement and mobility to long-standing migratory patterns and establishes resonances, which help to illuminate (in subsequent

chapters) how individuals at the church understand their predicaments and the meanings they attach to their circumstances.

In **Chapter three** the study discusses how individuals and families came to inhabit the church buildings as well as the meanings they attach to the place. The main questions explored in this chapter are: what kind of place is the Central Methodist Church in the eyes of the Zimbabwean migrants? How and in what ways does inhabiting the church building contribute to the suffering of the people who reside within its confines? The main purpose of this chapter is to offer a nuanced understanding of the complexities that structure and affect the lives of the immigrants within the inner city church as well as, more broadly, in Johannesburg. The argument put forward in this chapter is that the church is a complex, intricate and indeterminate place and inhabiting the place impinges on the lives and subjectivities of the migrants in mainly problematic and perverse ways. Secondly, this chapter puts forth the argument that localities such as the Methodist church ought to be read in a number of different ways, not least, as liminal 'spaces of exception' where people are devoid of their rights. Neither are these localities inert. Rather, the locality may also be read as a place of transition, economic sustenance and political sanctuary where survival strategies intersect with mobile sensibilities.

Chapter four builds on the preceding chapter but it precisely examines how the complex, fluid and varied locality, that is the church building, is managed by the religious authorities and the logic(s) and rationalities that govern their intervention. The purpose of the chapter is to explore the governing practices, power and authority structures obtaining within the church. The argument presented here is that there are numerous rationalities used by the church authorities that underpin their intervention. These produce an ambiguous dynamic where the governing practice and management structure is loose and amorphous. Such a structure and management practice becomes a strength that ensures the survival of the church. On the other hand, this mode of practice and authority regime is a major weakness and cause of persistent conflict. While the main focus of the chapter is on how the church authorities deploy practices of governance the chapter then explores how categories of migrants relate to these practices. The chapter does through looking at the trajectories of three individuals who held influential positions at the church but who employed different strategies to be in positions of power and influence.

Chapter 5 looks at the practices of humanitarian organizations at the church. The chapter provides a mapping of the organizations that frequented the church and takes an indepth look at two organizations that ran interventions programmes at the church. The focus of this chapter is on the ways the different organization manage the inhabitants of the church. The chapter argues that the organizations' interventions interact and articulate with the aspirations of the inhabitants but not in the ways that the organizations intended. In the final analysis the chapter shows the church to be a place of contestation and to be a site that is creatively and strategically deployed by different actors.

Chapter 6 focuses on a particular domain that the humanitarian organisations were absent from but which was a source of immense insecurity for the inhabitants. The chapter looks at the chronic illnesses, death and dying and how these issues materialized particular forms of insecurity. The chapter also looks at how the migrants sought to deal with this form of spiritual insecurity. The chapter argues that the manner in which the indigent migrants deal with illnesses and death is fraught with tensions and is mediated by material deprivation as well as spiritual insecurities. The manner in which the inhabitants manage instances of illness and death paradoxically produces exclusions and hardships for the sick and anguish for the deceased. The main purpose of this chapter is to show how people live through conditions of suffering and how they manage the difficulties they encounter.

Chapter 7 proposes the final analysis, overall discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 2

Migration, displacement and migrant social relations: The historical antecedents

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the historical, contextual background that has shaped and informed the movement of individuals from Zimbabwe[9] to South Africa. The purpose of this chapter is to try and construct an account that will help us here, as well as in subsequent chapters, to understand how individuals and families came to migrate to South Africa and specifically, how particular individuals came to stay at the Central Methodist Church and the meanings they attach to their settlement and predicaments within the church. In this chapter, I consider two related questions. How has the changing socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe and South Africa come to impinge upon the possibilities of individuals and how has it reconfigured material and social relations amongst migrant communities and individuals over the years? The first concern is to trace the historical and contemporary patterns of migration and displacement from Zimbabwe to South Africa. What are the broader, historical, structural processes that have shaped and influenced the migration and mobility of individuals from Zimbabwe? Concurrently, the chapter traces the role of migrant social relations and social organization in the movement, settlement and survival of individual migrants and how these have been impacted upon by the contemporary displacements. One of the arguments I pursue in this thesis is that, notwithstanding the scale of contemporary migration from Zimbabwe, individuals have always moved in search of livelihoods and survival for many years. In this regard, the chapter traces these movements and at the same time accords particular attention to the structural factors that have given migrations- historical and contemporary- immense impetus. By mapping out the historical antecedents of migration and displacement, I seek to relate the current displacement and mobility to long-standing migratory patterns and to establish how these resonate. In doing so, the chapter

[9] Zimbabwe, which lies to the north of South Africa, was formerly known by its colonial name of Rhodesia. Throughout this text I use the name Zimbabwe to refer to either the colonial or post-colonial state for purposes of clarity.

attempts to broaden our understandings of structural violence, migration and displacement and also to foreground the ways in which individuals at the church talk about and understand their present predicaments.



A map of Zimbabwe showing some of the places mentioned in this chapter and in subsequent chapters

The first part of the chapter will give a brief account of migration and displacement within the colonial era looking at the individuals that moved and the livelihoods they pursued within South Africa. This section will also examine the places these migrants used to stay or live in, as well as the rationalities and meanings attached to these places of accomodation. The second part of the chapter will focus on the patterns of migration and movement against the backdrop of large-scale socio-economic and political transformations within the first two decades of Zimbabwe's post-independence era 1980-2000. This is followed by an account of the contemporary political and economic upheavals in Zimbabwe. The section on the Zimbabwe

'crisis' and its outcomes is juxtaposed with developments in South Africa from the demise of apartheid to the present situation with a focus on how large scale political and economic transformation have impacted on the treatment of migrants in general. For clarity of presentation, the last section will discuss the ways in which migrant social relations were constituted and the role they played in the movement and settlement of individuals in South Africa. The section will also attempt to analyse the ways in which contemporary movements have impacted upon these social relations as well as the settlement patterns of migrants.

The aim of this presentation is neither to provide overarching interpretations and full historical analysis of migration, mobility and displacements from Zimbabwe to South Africa nor to suggest direct causal relationships. Rather, the chapter attempts to point out how broader, significant, historical events and moments illustrate the relationships between structural forms of violence such as poverty, inequality; exclusion and (in)visibility intersect with individuals' aspirations at different moments and also to reveal the nature, characteristics and patterns of migrations within Zimbabwe and South Africa in a historical perspective. Further, the objective is to trace the continuities and changes in patterns of movement and the individuals that move. This will enable us to understand the trajectories of the actors discussed in later chapters as well as the meanings they attach to their movement and how the Central Methodist Church came to accommodate transient and indigent individuals. In general by historicizing the discussion, I open up the thesis to a discussion, and an analysis and understanding of the ways in which victimhood and victim claim making are historically embedded processes in as much as they draw from contemporary developments, transformations and upheavals.

Migration in colonial Zimbabwe

Pre-colonial Zimbabwe was occupied, for about a thousand years, by groups of Shona people. The Ndebele migrated to Zimbabwe from South Africa about two hundred years ago[10]. The pre-colonial, historical period, is dominated by processes of assimilation, displacement, constant movement and fragmentation (see Ranger 1999; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). Without discounting the significance of the pre-colonial history[11] the focal concern of what follows, is the history of labour migration and the living arrangements of miners.

Migration from Zimbabwe, within the colonial period is better understood within the complex labour migration system, which has been a central and persistent defining feature of the southern African region's history. De Bruijn et al (2001) state that 'flexible mobility' has been part and parcel of life and livelihood since the pre-colonial times, affording both individuals and communities survival, the maintenance of social relations, the exploration of opportunities and the fulfillment of hopes. Among the regional countries, which were sources of cheap labour, Zimbabwe was in a unique position where it was both a sender and a receiver of migrant labourers. Mine workers from mainly Malawi and Zambia came to work in the Zimbabwean mines. In colonial Zimbabwe, individuals migrated to South Africa to work mainly in the burgeoning mining industry as contract labourers. The South African mines, in particular, attracted labourers not only from Zimbabwe but also from Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho and other far-flung regional countries such as Tanzania (see Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2010). Peberdy (2009: 4) alludes to the fact that, while it is commonly assumed that black African migrants were:

> …..excluded from South Africa, this is not entirely [true]; on one level it masks the long-history of state sanctioned black African temporary migration from Southern Africa to the mines and commercial farms of South Africa, as well as the tacit sanctioning of other forms of migration from the region, including 'clandestine' migration, for much of South Africa's history

[10] The Shona is the largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe and is made up of a mosaic of smaller ethnic and linguistic groups, which, collectively, constitute about 83% of the population, while the Ndebele, also constructed from smaller ethnic and linguistic groups, make up 15%. The rest are other minority ethnic groups such as the Tonga, Kalanga and Venda.

[11] Thabisani Ndlovu (2012; 101) argues, for example, that despite processes of alliances and intermarriages between the two biggest ethnic groups, there are long term and persistent tensions between the two that emanate from pre-colonial historical events and these tensions manifest themselves in the present.

Labour migration tended to be mainly temporary. Michael Burawoy's (1976) critique, as well as the writings of Stitcher (1985) demonstrates that state coercion and the temporary nature of the labour system served the capitalist interests through renewing and maintaining a stable but fluid labour force. Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu (2010: 238) assert that, since labour sending areas were diverse and far-flung being spread out through out southern Africa –'regimes of control varied and were shaped by local and national politics'. In general, however, under the mine labour migrancy system, labourers, were recruited from neighbouring countries on temporary contracts and were paid part of their wages while working in South Africa and the remainder when they were returning home. This arrangement served the interests of the apartheid system in that it militated against the organization of African workers and it ensured that the workers did not settle, permanently, in urban areas (see Vidal 2010: 55; Crush et al 1991).

Many migrant, mine workers were often, initially, forced into contract employment but some of the workers also later moved voluntarily in search of employment[12]. Traditionally, these labour migration streams were dominated by single young men who migrated for economic and social reasons (see Tevera and Zinyama 2002; McDonald, Mashike and Golden 1999). For many communities within the regional countries, labour migration came to be perceived, over time, as a 'rite of passage' for young men, as people sought wage work in the Kimberley diamond and Witwatersrand gold mines in the 1870s and Rhodesian gold mines in the 1890s (see Stitcher 1985, Kaarsholm 2008, Crush 1999, Jeeves 1985; Maharaj 2004; Maharaj and Moodley 2000; Miller 1999). While the mines profited from cheap labour, incomes earned from mine work played an essential role in supporting families and communities in the migrants' home countries (see Ranger 1989). Vidal (2010) illustrates, for example, that the extended nature of labour migration transformed the meanings attached to labour migration leading to a pervasive imaginary of migration into Johannesburg. This imaginary was often captured in such expressions as 'Only a man who went to the mines is an adult man' or 'The boy has to eat a lot to be able to work in the mines of South Africa' (Vidal 2010: 57). Vidal's (ibid) as well as Madsen's (2004) study on Mozambican migrants in Johannesburg illustrates that the migration imaginary has persisted and many young men from Maputo still see migrating to South Africa as a pathway to adulthood. In Zimbabwe, expressions, which speak about labour migration,

[12] The literature on the Southern African labour migration is fairly abundant, Van Onselen (1976), in a classical text provides a much detailed account on forced labour

especially into Johannesburg, abound. These include such expressions as *Wachonera Joni* [One has gone forever/disappeared into Johannesburg] or in isiNdebele, *Wadliwa yi Goli* (He/she was eaten or swallowed by Johannesburg); *Mujubheki* (lit. 'A Joburger'; or an individual who has been to Johannesburg) (see Ndlovu 2012: 110). There are, therefore parallels between the migration imaginary held by the Mozambican migrants and communities within Zimbabwe.

During the apartheid period, the migrant mine workers, recruited by employment agencies[13], were accommodated in single-sex hostels and compounds and this arrangement supported capitalist notions of semi-proletarianization, whereby mine workers maintained their rural homes and their families were engaged in subsistence modes of farming whilst they were involved in a capitalist mode of production (see Dansereau 2002; Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman 1991; Crush and James 1995). According to Adepoju (2003: 7) the strict influx control laws prevented families from moving with or eventually joining migrant workers and in the process this disrupted normal family life. Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu (2010: 238) concur and they contend that mine hostels and compounds had 'devastating consequences for the social fabric of the black mineworkers and their communities'. The two scholars also make a point about mining compounds, as 'places' that is particularly insightful, more generally, for this thesis and its focal concern on a particular locality. They highlight that while hostel compounds were 'nodes of control' to satisfy political and economic agendas, they were also 'sites of mobilization' where workers' collective agency shaped re-shaped landscapes (ibid: 239; see also Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008).

It is imperative to note that the history of labour migration and the perverse nature of mine hostel compounds have been important within claim making. Migrants from countries that surround South Africa such as Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe have often claimed 'space' and belonging within South Africa basing such claims on the fact that South Africa was constructed and developed on the back of migrant labour.

[13] Some of the most well-known labour recruitment agencies was the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) and The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA)

Migration and Displacement 1980- 2000

Prior to the attainment of independence, Zimbabwe was a British colony up until 1965, whereupon the white minority settlers led by Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front unilaterally declared independence. The history of Zimbabwe from the 1960s to the late 1970s is marked by the nationalist movement, which culminated in a protracted liberation struggle and the attainment of independence in 1980[14]. Since 1980, the country was, for 28 years, under Robert Mugabe and the nationalist Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU (PF).

Migration in the first two decades of the post-independence era is better understood as occurring in intermittent waves but side-by-side, a continuous stream of labour migration, all closely related to political and socio-economic developments and circumstances occurring within the two countries.

Mobility and displacement in the First Decade of Zimbabwe's independence 1980-1990

The first decade of independence held immense promise and optimism for the new state and the country was spoken of glowingly, as the 'jewel of Africa' (Mlambo, 2008). In this period the nationalist government focused its attention on 'reconstruction, reconciliation and redistribution' under a socialist banner (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003). The state aimed to redress the inequalities of the colonial era by rapidly expanding education, health and other social sectors to improve access for hitherto marginalized black communities. During this time, President Mugabe enjoyed a lot of international support and Zimbabwe was favoured by the international community and received substantial donor funding which enabled the state to develop the health, education and agricultural sectors (see Raftopoulos 2004, Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003). The state also attempted to expand the weakly developed state bureaucracy[15] as a way to bestow fundamental civic and human rights and at the same time reverse the racial inequalities of colonial and white minority rule. The expansion of the bureaucracy was, however, done in a repressive mode whereby the state relied on undemocratic control over dissenting voices (see Cheater and Gaidzanwa 1996).

[14] Between 1979-1980 some leaders signed 'an internal settlement' and the country, was known as Zimbabwe-Rhodesia under Bishop Abel Muzorewa

[15] Cheater and Gaidzanwa (1996) make the point that the colonial state bureaucracies were meant to govern a small settler minority and when necessary to control the majority by undemocratic or indirect means.

The post-independence state undertook the task of nation building in a context of relative instability, characterized by military threats and political and economic destabilization emanating from the apartheid regime in South Africa. Adebajo et al (2007: 18) note that the apartheid government viewed its immediate neighbourhood in southern Africa as an area of 'penetration, exploitation and destabilization'. In the first instance, the South African government drew cheap labour from regional countries, for its mining and farming industries. The military also bombed Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe between 1980 and 1988. Development, within Zimbabwe, however, remained uneven, especially in the Southern and Western parts of the country, which were opposition, Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People Union (PF-ZAPU), strongholds. A military uprising by embittered former combatants coupled with destabilization activities by armed groups sponsored by the apartheid regime, was violently crushed in the Midlands and Matabeleland region in the immediate post-independence years (1982-87)[16] (see Alexander, McGregor, and Ranger; 2000). This forced ZAPU to agree to an uneasy unity pact, which ostensibly transformed Zimbabwe into a Shona dominated one-party state. Alexander, McGregor, and Ranger (2000: 204) suggest that, while:

> The war of the 1970s and its attendant suffering seemed purposeful and 'open', in comparison, the arbitrary and unacknowledged terror of the 1980s, [was] unleashed not to achieve an intelligible and widely legitimate goal but for reasons which came to be interpreted, as having party and ethnic roots. The violence of the army's fifth brigade stands out as uniquely humiliating, tribalistic and political in civilian accounts[17].

The failures of Zimbabwe's transition to independence, manifest in the grotesque violence of the early 1980s in the Southern and Western parts of the country seem to have precipitated two, albeit unrelated, but significant waves of movement from Zimbabwe to South Africa. The first one was the movement of skilled white people, which in migration scholarship has been referred to as, 'the white flight' immediately after independence (Crush and Williams 2002; see also Tevera and Zinyama 2002). Politically, their departure was unlamented, as they were perceived to have spurned the reconciliation policy offered by the new state. The second

[16] According to a 1997 report by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and the Legal Resources Foundation *(Breaking the silence- Building True Peace)* an estimated 20 000 people from the Ndebele ethnic group were brutally massacred during this period by a specially trained military unit, the Fifth Brigade. This was known as the *Gukurahundi* operation. Gukurahundi is a Shona term, which refers to the early spring rains 'that wash away the chaff'.

[17] See also Sachikonye 2011, *When a State turns of its citizens: institutionalized violence and political culture in Zimbabwe*

was the displacement of individuals from the Southern and Western districts of Zimbabwe, as a direct consequence of state sanctioned violence (see Crush and Tevera 2002, Solomon 2003). Beyond these two main waves young people also moved as labour migrants, from their rural homes in the Southern and Western parts of the country, areas prone to recurrent droughts and severe food shortages.

An important point to make about the violence of the 1980s in Matabeleland is that, apart from displacing an unknown number of individuals it remained an unacknowledged, invisible and muted issue within Zimbabwe and even beyond. Alexander, McGregor and Ranger (2000, 8) in documenting the history of violence in Matabeleland, note, for example, that memorialization of this violence was 'forced into the realms of silence, of private arenas of discourse, and of possession and ritual' even within the affected areas. The *Gukurahundi* massacres and the inequalities and systematic exclusion of the Matabeleland and Midlands region, for example, were concealed and made invisible under Mugabe's reconciliation policy towards the Smith regime and other internal opponents; the impressive broad social indicators in health and education had a similar effect even though these were concentrated in the other parts of the country. The silence and invisibility surrounding the atrocities in Matabeleland were not only internal but international as well. Bourne (2011, 108) states that while fear and a media blackout prevented internal discussion of the atrocities in Matabeleland, internationally, 'concern with human rights, which became more salient after the end of the Cold War, was not so pressing'. Bourne (ibid) argues further that the international community wanted Zimbabwe 'to succeed' so as to facilitate a transition in South Africa which was, at the time, seen as more imperative but equally difficult to attain.

Displaced individuals, who fled the early post-independence violence in Matabeleland, also seemed to have settled largely unnoticed within South Africa due to their cultural and linguistic affinity with South African Nguni ethnic groups such as the Ndebele, Zulu and Sotho (Solomon 2006; Sisulu et al. 2007)

The economic development and social services expansion of the first decade was also achieved at the back of massive donor support and huge debt from international financial institutions and this had a huge bearing on the adoption of economic austerity measures of the 90s and the mobility of new categories of individuals. In the section below, I look at these

developments and I also examine how political developments within South Africa had a massive impact on the mobility of Zimbabwean individuals. I also examine how the migration of other individuals from within the African continent transformed South African urban spaces and affected migrants in general.

Structural Adjustment and Mobility 1990-1999

In the second decade of Zimbabwe's independence, the government, reeling from massive debt accumulated from the spending of the 1980s as well as the pre-independence debt inherited from the Smith regime, coupled with other economic pressures adopted neoliberal economic reforms, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). These economic reform packages were implemented in many of Sub-Saharan African countries on the advice of the Bretton Woods institutions. In Zimbabwe, the austerity measures were instituted in 1991-1996. ESAP entailed the 'rolling back of the state' with budget cutbacks in key sectors such as health and education, the public sector and privatization of state entities (Bond and Manyanya 2002; Bond 1998). Signs of a declining economy became apparent during this decade. These were seen through rapidly rising unemployment rates, increasing food prices and general social disenchantment (see Muzvidziwa 2005; Dansereau 2003). The severe social stresses reached a crescendo through the spontaneous food riots in 1998. Reflecting on the 1998 food riots, Sachikonye (2011, 23) who states that the riots were a culmination of a series of protests by restive sections of society especially workers, students, informal traders, the poor and unemployed, signaled 'a political containment of discontent' and resulted in the first mass violation of human rights since the end of the Matabeleland conflict in 1987.

The economic pressures of the 90s were further exacerbated by the state's decision to award a once off gratuity payment to members of Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Associations (ZNWLVA) in 1997. The veterans demanded greater political recognition through the payment of financial compensation and progress on land redistribution (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003, 7; see also Ndlovu 2012).

Politically, the second decade of independence, marked, as it was by the economic retraction of the state and contraction of the economy became an era of increasing public discontent and there were numerous civic protests and labour strikes. In the late 90s, labour

groups organized under the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), which was formerly in alliance with the ruling ZANU (PF) party, broke ranks and forged alliances with a flourishing civil society movement (comprised of student organizations and women's organizations). The growing political strengths of these movements threatened the governing regime, galvanizing the state's response, which became 'increasingly authoritarian and coercive' (Hammar et al 2003: 7). Civil society groups, led prominently by the labour movement leaders, coalesced to form a broad based opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999, which went on to contest national and local level elections in subsequent years[18]. The initially, highly regarded Mugabe and his ZANU (PF) party were isolated internationally for what was perceived to be their authoritarian rule (Bond and Manyanya 2002; Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003)

Economic decline and the growing political disenchantment within Zimbabwe coincided with the dismantling of the apartheid borders and reconfigured patterns of migration into South Africa. The growing ranks of the unemployed and disenchanted individuals, particularly, unskilled young men continued to migrate in search of economic opportunities and the levels of clandestine migration also increased. During this time, unemployed individuals illegally crossed the border into South Africa and they were joined by black professionals and skilled groups who could now utilize the South African visa regime and also move within South African urban cities, which no longer had the strict movement restrictions of the past. The most noticeable among these groups of migrating professionals were the health personnel such as doctors and nurses some of who moved to Botswana and later on, to Namibia (see Crush and MacDonald 2002).

Maphosa (2007) posits that many of the migrants who moved during this period tended to lead dual lives. This duality is apparent in the manner individuals, established families in both countries and they often travelled to Zimbabwe during long public holidays. In some ways this practice mirrored the manner in which labour relations where structured within the colonial era.

The legal and illegal, 'undocumented' migrations of the 1990s occurred parallel to the transnational and circular movement of informal, cross-border traders. The swelling ranks of

[18] The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) contested parliamentary elections in 2000, 2005, 2008 and presidential elections in 2002 and 2008.

cross border traders, were dominated by women, most of whom, moved into this informal economy to supplement reduced household incomes or became the main breadwinners since their spouses had been retrenched (Crush and Tavera 2002) see also McDonald and Crush 2002). Cross-border trading constituted a key survival strategy, which individuals engaged in, to escape or cope with the vagaries of economic decline in the mid to late 90s. The trade attracted enterprising individuals that sold luxury goods in Zimbabwe sourced from a neighbouring country, usually South Africa or Botswana. In some cases the traders would take with them handicrafts to sell in South Africa or Botswana, which meant that they could stay for periods which ranged from a couple of weeks up to a month (Muzvidziwa 2005). Despite the importance and significance of cross-border trading in supporting families and households affected by neoliberal reforms, mobile individuals that participated in this trade, where immensely vilified in state discourses in Zimbabwe. Muzvidziwa (1998) as well as Gaidzanwa (1996) point out that the female traders, keen to maximize their profit margins, often 'slept rough' in Johannesburg, especially at the main bus and train station (Park Station). In the official state discourse they were constructed as 'prostitutes' or 'traitors' bent on tarnishing the country's image. Muzvidziwa (2004, 51) states, further that, these women were seen as parasitic and making no meaningful contribution to the economy since they were perceived to be selling nothing but sex and spreading HIV and AIDS.

Zimbabwe's political and economic problems worsened beginning in the year 2000 and this triggered off the mass exodus of individuals and families to regional countries and to those further afield such as the United Kingdom, Australia and so forth. The period from 2000 onwards is known as the Zimbabwe 'crisis' and it denoting the complex, multi-layered and intricate political and economic problems that bedeviled the country from that time.

The Zimbabwean 'crisis' and contemporary mobility

The political and economic difficulties experienced in Zimbabwe are intricately intertwined and interrelated as are the consequences emerging from these. In this section, for ease and clarity of presentation, I discuss the two separately starting off with the political developments.

The implosion of the Zimbabwean economy and the unprecedented migration and displacement of individuals from Zimbabwe to South Africa and other countries further afield is often traced to the year 2000. This period has come to mark the genesis of what has come to be referred to, generically as the 'Zimbabwean crisis'[19] (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003; Bond and Manyanya 2003). Landmark political developments took place in this particular year and these had a bearing on the nature of migration and displacement that subsequently ensued. The government lost a key constitutional referendum and the newly formed MDC won nearly half of the contested seats in the legislative plebiscite held in the same year. The political atmosphere prior to the parliamentary elections was permeated and pervaded by violence, intimidation and a shrinking public space. The violence included arson attacks, threats and intimidation, arrests, beatings, torture, rape, deliberate starvation, abductions and in some instances murder (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003). The opposition also had to operate and campaign in a severely restricted environment as draconian legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) curtailed freedom of association[20], while the police have consistently, been accused of selective application of the law. Legislation, such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) hindered the flow of information by restricting the work of journalists and generally shrinking the media space[21]. The political atmosphere, from 2000-2008, was generally polarized, with on one hand, a ruling nationalist party and, on the other, opposition groups and government opponents advocating reform in what has often been alluded to as an agenda of regime change. In 2007 there was, for example, international outrage and condemnation of the

[19] Johnstone et.al 2000 quoted in Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003) states that, although there is often a wide ranging debate and contestation as to whether the situation in Zimbabwe constitutes a 'crisis' there is evidence that the political, economic and social situation has severely interrupted 'the reproduction of economic, cultural, social and/political life'

[20] POSA, before 2007 amendment, required (among other requirements) that any meeting of five people be sanctioned by the police

[21] Five newspapers have been shut down since the enactment of AIPPA in 2002

assault and brutal beating up of opposition leaders. While politically-motivated violence was persistent and pervasive, state sanctioned violence was particularly gross in 2008 in the immediate aftermath of a relatively peaceful general election, which the former opposition party, the MDC, won marginally, but which did not produce a clear-cut winner in both the parliamentary and presidential elections (see Sachikonye 2011). In 2009, Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party agreed to the formation of a coalition government with their erstwhile, political opponents in the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). This followed keenly contested elections held in March 2008 whose outcome was disputed[22]. Under the Government of National Unity (GNU) ministerial responsibilities are shared between the different political parties.

Internationally, Zimbabwe was largely ostracized in the first eight years of this decade. In response to the political situation in the country the United States of America and Western governments imposed what they termed 'smart sanctions' which targeted government ministers and officials as protest for undermining democratic and human rights norms. These sanctions, some of which are yet to be lifted, included travel bans, which prevent the officials from entering or transiting the United States or the European Union. Their assets – held abroad – were also frozen. The sanctions included the withdrawal of donor support in development in general (except for humanitarian support).

The last decade witnessed the near implosion of the Zimbabwean economy. The Government embarked on a nationwide land reform programme whereby white farmers were dispossessed, often violently, of vast tracts of farming land, which was re-distributed to black farmers. The land reform programme, implemented under the banner of the *Third Chimurenga* (Third revolution) largely disrupted agricultural production and output from this sector, declined. The situation was exacerbated by severe droughts. The outcomes, for much of the decade, were erratic food supplies, shortages of other essential commodities and low foreign exchange reserves. During this time, the country's macroeconomic problems were most clearly seen in the critical shortages of gasoline and other fuels, power, deteriorating infrastructure and significant declines in savings and investment.

[22] The parliamentary elections were held under relatively peaceful conditions in March 2008 but they produced a 'hung' chamber where the former opposition won the lower house of assembly with a slight majority whilst ZANU (PF) secured control of the upper house. In the presidential elections, MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai won the first round of voting but with an insufficient majority to be declared winner. The run-off election was characterized by violence and was won by Robert Mugabe whose legitimacy was disputed.

The socio-economic environment for much of the decade was unsurprisingly, characterized by unprecedented levels of poverty, perpetual uncertainty, and profound insecurity, with 75% of the population being ranked poor and unable to access life's basic necessities. In order to cope with economic difficulties, individuals resorted to a diverse range of informal economic activities (see Duri 2012; the Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2003, Muzvidziwa 2005, and Dansereau 2003). Duri (2012: 122) illustrates, for example, that in the Zimbabwean eastern border town of Mutare, individuals resorted to clandestine cross border activities in order to enact livelihoods and survive. This included circumventing border controls and the payments of taxes and smuggling goods[23].

In managing and coping with the economic hardships, individuals had to resort to buying goods especially foodstuffs from nearby countries. As part of the growing repertoire of survival strategies, individuals also resorted to cross-border trading, which was hitherto and traditionally, dominated by women. The new entrants into the trade were men rendered jobless in the formal job markets and also those reeling from severely declining incomes, and most of these individuals were filling in for the failure of the formal markets to supply basic goods.

Government policies and initiatives meant to manage the effects of an economy under severe stress, paradoxically, exacerbated the scale of poverty, homelessness and extreme vulnerability and, of relevance to this thesis, some of the policies, resulted in the displacement of individuals outside the country's borders (Hammar 2007; 212). Such initiatives, include the 'urban clean-up', *Operation Murambatsvina*[24], carried out in May 2005, which affected (directly or indirectly) close to 2.4 million people and deprived an estimated 700 000 people of their homes, livelihoods or both (Hammar 2007; ibid). *Operation Murambatsvina* has been interpreted as a retributive strike against urban opposition supporters who had voted for the broad based opposition movement in the elections. *Operation Reduce Prices*, carried out in June 2007, a

[23] Jeremy Jones (2010: 286) who looks at the range of 'survival strategies' in crisis ridden Zimbabwe distills informal sector activities such as 'vegetable vending; illegal foreign currency trading; bribe-taking and pilfering at work' into an economic logic captured in the Shona term (*kukiya kiya* (loosely translated- 'to make do'). Jones equates this to *debroullier* in francophone Africa.

[24] In the official state discourse this was translated to mean Operation Restore Order, literally Murambatsvina means, *Drive out Filth/Dirt*

campaign to force businesses to lower prices of goods and services and charge at a state-dictated level, resulted in a run on supermarket goods and eventually empty shelves.



Image showing empty supermarket shelves after *Operation Reduce Prices*[25] in 2008. (Photographer Margaret Kriel)

The political and economic situation improved marginally from 2009, with the formation of a coalition government, the Government of National Unity (GNU). Under this arrangement, the three main political parties that contested elections in 2008 share ministerial responsibilities. Political tensions eased within the country.

The GNU ushered in a period, of relative economic stability. The government dropped the use of the moribund, Zimbabwean dollar and replaced it with a multi currency system and the move significantly reduced inflation rates, which had hitherto, reached hyper levels. However, acute hardships still persist and this is manifest in the rate of unemployment, which has remained

[25] Picture accessed from:
http://digitaljournal.com/img/2/5/7/7/3/3/i/4/4/8/o/BulawayoShop_Nov2008_MargaretKrielPicture.jpg

high and the salaries for formally employed individuals have remained pegged at low levels- such that individuals have struggled to sustain themselves.

The persistence and multifaceted nature and depth of the Zimbabwean crisis became patently manifest through a cholera outbreak that affected the country in August 2008-July 2009. A total number of 98 585 cases were reported and there were 4 287 deaths (Pruyt 2009). The number of reported cases and the high fatality rates highlighted the deterioration of the country's sanitary and health infrastructure such as the lack of safe drinking water and the poor health services (ibid).

From the foregoing, there are several negative outcomes that emerged from the last decade of the Zimbabwean crisis. These include household food insecurity, internal displacement, flight of individuals and key human skills, particularly in key social sectors of health and education to various regional and international destinations in a clear attempt to escape the worsening economic and social conditions in the country. The majority of the displaced, mobile and fleeing individuals migrated to South Africa. In the following section, I juxtapose the migration of Zimbabwean individuals against the immigration governance and socio-economic realities obtaining in post-1994 South Africa.

Patterns of migration into South Africa 1990s- present

The period from the 1990s demarcates the demise of apartheid rule in South Africa. Since 1994, the country's political landscape has been dominated by the African National Congress (ANC) party, who have to a large extent, been successful in successive electoral polls. Although the country has retained its position as an economic powerhouse within Africa, economic disparities, which to a large extent, mirror the racial cleavages of the past, poverty, violence, unemployment and other social ills have remained, seemingly, intractable. This assemblage of hardships has affected migrants not least, at the political level but even at societal level where migrants have come to be an explanation for the failure of the South African 'miracle' to deliver the expectations of the many indigent citizens. In the sections below, I examine the South African immigration regime at the level of law and within the contours of discourse and its

effects upon categories of migrants. I then focus on how the economic realities besetting South Africa have impinged on the possibilities of both indigent South Africans and migrants and the consequences that have emerged.

Migration and Migration governance in South Africa

The last two decades since the fall of the apartheid regime transformed patterns of migration into South Africa from many African countries. In the first instance, there was an increase in the numbers of the African migrants- particularly- black migrants who moved into South Africa. Although the South African 'miracle' held a promise of inclusivity, migrants had to confront an ambiguous immigration legal framework and an exclusionary nationalist discourse. Scholarship on the South African state and its relationship to black African migrants' points to a contradictory immigration regime, a xenophobic nationalist discourse, the maltreatment of migrants and exclusionary nation-building mechanisms which are all poised against the energies of individuals who have traditionally relied upon movement for livelihood and survival (Kaarsholm 2007; 37; Jensen and Buur 2007 see also Mattes, Crush and Richmond 2000; Nyamnjoh 2006, Robins 2009; Murray 2011). Kaarsholm (2007: 37) asserts that there are also new confrontations around belonging, citizenship and entitlements.

The period after the democratic transition in 1994 was characterized by increased mobility into South Africa as a result of the removal of apartheid era mobility restrictions (Landau 2007). However, this period 'influx' of African migrants was marked by massive legal changes to South African immigration laws. The new South African government instituted an amnesty period beginning in 1995, which enabled thousands of migrants to apply for residence permits. Broadly, the state promulgated the Immigration Act, which came into effect in 2002 having been preceded by two policy outlines- the draft Green paper (1997) and White Paper (1999). With respect to Zimbabwean nationals, the South African government announced a moratorium on the deportation of Zimbabwean citizens. This was at the height of political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe in 2009. This was followed by a special dispensation for Zimbabwean citizens, whereby individuals were offered free temporary work and study permits, which were issued for up to four years.

Notwithstanding the 1995 amnesty, which enabled earlier migrants- who came as miners or general labour migrants, to acquire legal status as well as the 2009 special dispensation for Zimbabweans, the state's focus remained one of 'control and enforcement' (Klotz 2000; 831 see also Peberdy and Rogerson 2000). Scholars point out that, the striking features of these immigration laws, is that they have remained restrictive and are cast in the spirit of the last piece of apartheid era migration legislation, the Aliens control Act (1991) established to reinforce strict controls on the movement of people. According to Crush, Grant and Frayne (2007; 11) the state's attention has been on 'undocumented', 'illegal' or 'irregular' migration with a focus on identifying, detaining and deporting violators of immigration laws.

The identification of illegal migrants has closely mirrored apartheid practice predicated on racial cleavages. Here, black migrants, referred to pejoratively as *Makwerekwere*[26] by South African nationals, can be arrested based only on their physical appearance and their inability to speak one of South Africa's official 'African languages' or 'fitting an undocumented migrant profile' (Landau 2006; 133, see also Algotsson 2000, Lubkemann 2000, Jensen and Buur 2007 and Nyamnjoh 2006) The identification of illegal migrants this way has also created 'extra legal practices' whereby state bureaucrats violate constitutional principles and the rights of refugees, migrants and South African citizens (Landau and Monson 2008; 329).

The immigration policies and practices implemented after 1994 have also contradicted the urban, self-settlement Refugee Act (1998), which was passed partly to forestall a perceived abuse of the asylum system and has been described as 'progressive' and in line with South Africa's constitutional and international obligations[27] (see Klotz 2000; 832, see also Landau 2004a). The restrictive and strong enforcement measures effected by the Immigration Act (2002) means that those with an asylum or even refugee status face challenges in realizing these rights and the regulation of migrants (legal or illegal) in South Africa depends 'less on law and more on discretion, courtesy and the ethical sense of the various law enforcement agencies' (Jensen and Buur 2007; 79 see also Landau 2004 and 2006)

[26] Makwerekwere is a word used to refer to, what South African nationals, believe are unintelligible languages, used by African foreigners. According to Nyamnjoh (2006; 39-40) Makwerekwere also means different things in different contexts but as used in South Africa it not only means a black person who cannot speak one of the 'South African' languages but one who comes from an economically and culturally inferior context.

[27] South Africa ratified the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, the African Union (1967) Refugee Convention and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

The treatment of Zimbabwe migrants, especially the individuals who migrated to South Africa in the midst of the political and economic crisis, is illustrative of the legal ambiguities and contradictions inherent in the two pieces of legislation and how those who do not aptly meet definitions of a refugee have to depend more on their ability to navigate state laws and popular definitions of identity or to show that they are 'victims' in need of assistance and recognition. At the end of 2005, for example, only 114 Zimbabweans had secured a refugee status while nearly 16000 had pending cases, with officials stating that 'there is no war in Zimbabwe' (Human Rights Watch 2007; 18).

Vale (2002: 7) who argues that South African immigration regulations remain steeped within security rationalities that informed the practices of the old regime, asserts that:

> Notwithstanding the sacrifices of Africa's people to the cause of the South Africa's liberation or the reality that South Africa was made by migrants, foreign African migrants in 'liberated' and 'democratic' South Africa have been subjected to a regime of violent othering.

The 'othering' of African migrants has been much more manifest in the realm of discourse. The state has over the years maintained, two contrasting and competing discourses, one being the official pan-Africanist inclusionary rhetoric and the other a xenophobic nationalist discourse (Jensen and Buur 2007; 63, see also Peberdy 2002). The official state rhetoric attempts to closely align South Africa with the rest of Africa. The South African constitution's preamble for example, proudly states that the country belongs to 'all who live in it'. Former President Thabo Mbeki was also at the forefront of championing what he perceived as an imminent African renaissance[28] and was instrumental in the transformation of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) into the African Union and the formulation of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) (see Landau 2006; Crush and William 2003; Kaarsholm 2008). The 2010 FIFA World Cup that was held in the country was also cast in the vein of Pan Africanism, as 'a victory for Africa' (Jensen and Buur 2007; 63; see also Landau and Monson 2008). All these measures are perceived as a way to reciprocate the support that the country received from other African states during the struggle against apartheid.

[28] On the 8th of May 1996 then vice president of South Africa opened his address to the constitutional assembly prior to the adoption of a new constitution with the words, 'I am an African' an inclusionary speech symptomatic of post apartheid South Africa. The speech outlined a vision for a post-racial, post-apartheid South Africa comprising not only the nation's aboriginal population but also migrants from Asia, Europe and the rest of Africa (Landau 2006; 129)

Alongside this discourse of pan-Africanism, openness and inclusivity, lies a competing conception 'grounded within a xenophobic national discourse on immigration' which frames black migrants as 'problems and threats', a drain on national resources and the prosperity offered by South Africa to its citizens (Crush 1999; 124; Dodson and Oelofse 2000; 126, see also Crush 1999ab; McDonald et al 1999; Kaarsholm 2008; Jensen and Buur 2007). As Dodson and Oelofse (2000; 126) argue:

> An important even definitive feature of this dominant discourse is that it tends to be expressed and interpreted at a level of generality that lumps together all international migrants to South Africa, legal and 'illegal', temporary and permanent.

Landau (2006; 228) states that public pronouncements by some senior government officials'[29] present migrants both as outsiders and 'threats' to the country (see also Vale 2002). Landau (ibid) illustrates that, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi the Interior Minister (1994-2004) expressed disquiet over the proposed Southern African Development Community (SADC) draft protocol on free trade and free movement and in outlining a series of challenges facing the country, argued that:

> South Africa is faced with another threat and that is the SADC ideology of free movement of people, free trade and freedom to choose where you live or work. Free movement of persons spells disaster for *our* country' (own emphasis) (Landau 2006; 228)

In April 2004 Buthelezi also published in the Government Gazette a highly repressive set of immigration regulations tightening regulations for Chinese, Indians and Africans (Nyamnjoh 2006; 36).

The White Paper on International Migration published in April of 1999 by the Republic of South Africa [RSA] apart from suggesting that the government would pursue a 'restrictionist' immigration policy, expressed concern with the negative impact that the influx of migrants into the country was having on the provision of social services to locals and on the country as a whole in terms of crime and violence (RSA, 1999). The paper revealed a construction of 'good' versus 'bad' immigrants. The 'good' immigrants being those seen to add value to the country, included investors and skilled migrants whereas the 'undesirables' are by default the poor and unskilled

[29] The Mayor of Johannesburg in a 2004 'State of the City' address argued that 'while migrancy contributes to the rich tapestry of the cosmopolitan city, it also places a severe strain on employment levels, housing and public services'

migrants who 'compete for scarce resources' and 'insufficient job opportunities', and who become 'involved in criminal activities' and otherwise 'weaken the state and its institutions by corrupting officials, fraudulently acquiring documents and undeserved rights and tarnishing *our*[30] (own emphasis) image locally and abroad' (McDonald and Crush 2002; 11)

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)[31], instituted in 1996 as a nation-building and transitional justice mechanism is also illustrative of the way migrants who, according to, Kaarsholm (2007; 43) previously embodied the 'inhuman perversities of the apartheid system' were 'ignored and squeezed out of the national recasting project' (Jensen and Buur 2007; 69). While the TRC, with its limited brief, could not remedy the far-reaching effects and injustices of apartheid its focus on the 'exceptional', 'extreme' and 'gross' human rights violations obscured the damage caused by the more inordinate but everyday and pervasive routines of apartheid violence: the legal, medical, economic, bureaucratic acts of violence against black Africans (Biehl et al 2007, Terreblanche 2003). Also concealed in the thinking of the TRC, are the social, economic and political consequences suffered by the neighbouring countries of Southern Africa (see Biehl, Good and Kleinman 2007; Buur, Jensen and Stepputat 2007). Through the work of the commission there is a delineation of the political from the economic in ways that renders those who suffered gross violations victims and others, including poor migrants, a threat.

The contradictory and ambiguous discourse has had consequences for the survival of migrants and their integration within local communities. One of the consequences as Murray (2011: 168) suggests is that, immigrants have been located in a difficult liminal position where they are subject to a double 'victimisation':

[30] As Jensen and Buur (2007; 68- 69) analysing the language and phrases in the Final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) illustrate, there is the use of exclusive and selective language where national identity is defined through birth within the South African territory, a conceptualization not unlike apartheid's external boundaries. In this sense apartheid's Southern African dimensions are ignored and invisibilised as are those individuals not born within the nation state.

[31] Richard Wilson argues that the much celebrated TRC was designed primarily to legitimate the post apartheid state by promulgating the image of the new South Africa as a world leader and defender of human rights and liberal democracy (Biehl 2007: 189)

> Immigrants have been subjected to a double-pronged attack: by criminalizing their survival strategies, the agencies of law enforcement have incorporated them into the polity as lawbreakers, subject to penal sanction. By demonizing them as unwanted aliens, vigilante mobs have subjected them to extralegal violence, effectively excluding them from the ordinary protections of the law.

Within poorer communities such as townships and informal settlements in South Africa, migrants have been subjected to violent attacks and other forms of discrimination. One explanation for the persistence of the violence against black foreign nationals has been structural and contextual factors such as the growing poverty and inequality within the country and the increased influx of migrants into the country especially as a result of the Zimbabwe crisis (see Murray 2011)

The socio-economic context of the 'new' South Africa and xenophobic violence

Contemporary South Africa is confronted by serious political and social challenges and is still a far cry from the envisaged 'rainbow society'. The country is bedeviled by glaring economic disparities and widespread and pervasive poverty, violence, unemployment, crime and HIV/AIDS (see Beinart 2010). The initial optimism generated by the transition from apartheid rule has largely given way to despair among many of the country's poor majority. In recent years, this is evinced in widespread discontent and violent protests in townships and informal settlements. Peter Alexander (2010: 25) who argues that the protests have, in some instances, reached insurrectionary proportions 'amounting to a rebellion of the poor', points out that the violent protests, which are concentrated in shack settlements and townships rather than suburbs, have been concrete expressions of disillusionment over the provisions of basic services such as water and housing. The protests, which often place demands on people in power, have been largely driven by unemployed youth and are perhaps also an expression of disquiet over rising unemployment (ibid).

Successive ANC governments have attempted to redress some of the economic inequalities of the apartheid era. This, for example, has been attempted through the auspices of the broad based black economic empowerment (BEE), which has resulted in the emergence of a small black middle class in business and the professions. However, many scholars such as Nyamnjoh (2006: 17) argue that, 'the structural inequalities of apartheid are yet to be resolved in a way that benefits more than just the Black, Indian, or Coloured elite' (Nyamnjoh 2006; 17, see

also Adebajo 2007, Worden 2006, Terreblanche 2002). According to Terreblanche (2002; 382), a very high percentage of the South African population, are abjectly poor and there is a conspicuous relationship between race and poverty. As is the case with unemployment, poverty affects mainly blacks.


Image showing a group of armed protesters during the 2008 xenophobic violence (Photographer Gianluigi Guercia)

The present socio-economic dynamics have affected black migrants in innumerable ways and one significant consequence has been an upsurge in violence directed towards, mainly black migrants. This is evidenced by the 2008 xenophobic violence, which spiraled in informal settlements and squatter encampments in areas such as Diepsloot, Tembisa, Kya Sand, Jeppestown, Ramaphosa and Zandspruit. Within a few weeks individuals identified as foreigners were viciously attacked, some fatally and their property was destroyed or looted. The violence claimed about sixty-two lives, while hundreds were seriously injured and between, thirty-five to fifteen thousand individuals were displaced (see Murray 2011). Robins (2009: 637) illustrates that in Cape Town, some 20 000 foreigners fled their homes in anticipation of violence spreading

to the city's townships. Murray (2011: 167) argues that some of the causes of this xenophobic violence:

> ….were the deep seated resentment of ordinary South Africans over the failure of the municipality to address the ongoing high rates of crime, unemployment, lack of housing and poor service delivery in impoverished areas. Immigrants- many of them political refugees and asylum seekers from Zimbabwe who had fled their own country's economic collapse- bore the brunt of this misplaced anger.

While the 2008 xenophobic violence stands out in many writings, migrants have, over the years, become a target of social disenchantment within restive informal settlements and township communities. Murray (2011) illustrates that Somali traders have often been attacked for 'unfairly' undercutting the prices of local traders. Disquiet and discontent over the presence of migrants has persistently been hovering under the surface within South Africa. In many accounts, migrants have therefore come to be an explanation for the widespread crime, disease and unemployment while immigration itself has increasingly come 'to be experienced as competition in labour markets, where demand was not expanding to the growth of the South African economy and where unemployment figures continued to be high' (Kaarsholm 2008; 39 see also Landau 2006; Landau 2006; 130).



Image showing part of the Central Methodist Church building in June 2008 in the immediate aftermath of a violent attack on the church (Photographer. C. Rogerson)

There are several other perverse outcomes that emanated from the 2008 xenophobic violence but of particular salience here are the 'multiple displacements' that occurred in the immediate aftermath of the gruesome attacks and that have perhaps transformed modes of settlement within urban spaces. Individuals initially sought temporary shelter/sanctuary within churches, police stations, town halls and schools and this culminated in the establishment of temporary shelters (Robins 2009). The Central Methodist Church in inner city Johannesburg, which was already housing some migrants, was one of the places where individuals sought shelter during the violent upheavals. Murray (2011, 167) states that, 'for several days, the Central Methodist Church became the focal point of a tense standoff between rampaging mobs and the frightened immigrants who had sought refugee in the building' (see also Bourne 2011).



Image showing displaced individuals at the temporary shelters set up after the xenophobic violence [Photographer: Greg Bennick]

Of interest here are the contradictions and ambiguities in the state and humanitarian organizations' responses to the victims of the xenophobic violence. Robins (2009: 640) states that there was uncertainty about how to define the victims of the violence and the categorizations shifted from 'refugees', 'asylum seekers', 'undocumented persons' and 'internally displaced people (IDPs)'. For Robins (ibid) the fluidity and ambiguities of the categories conveyed profound uncertainties around classifications for humanitarian aid purposes and for the state there were possibly legal, social and political implications around the use of certain words and precise categories. As the violence subsided and media interest in the victims waned, the government shut down temporary shelters and sought to encourage the 'reintegration' of the victims into the communities where they had hitherto been attacked. Beyond these measures, the state shifted the discussion from humanitarian and human rights concerns to one that sought to examine 'questions of technical-bureaucratic administration, effectively making a distinction between the legal and illegal status of non-nationals' (Robins 2009: 641). The consequences of such a discourse were far reaching; Robins (ibid) argues that 'the state's framing of the refugee problem in international immigration law terms shifted the political discourse away from compassionate concern about displaced victims of xenophobic violence'.

The uncertainty and fluidity of the definitions and categories under which the state sought to locate the migrants created profound insecurity and pushed migrants to look for shelter within inner city places such as the Central Methodist Church which were perceived to be safer and provided a political sanctuary (see Murray 2011). Below I detail, in a historical perspective, the places where migrants used to settle in as well as the role social relations played in the settlement of migrants.

The Role of Social Relations in Migration

South Africa's political transition in 1994 attracted migrants, not only from Zimbabwe but from the rest of the African continent, as well, most notably West Africans; and this added to the numbers of migrants within South African urban spaces. Migrants- the term used in its broader sense- also encompassed South African nationals, who sought livelihoods in urban areas where they had hitherto, been strictly restricted from (Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu 2010; see also Murray 2011). While scholarship has looked at these patterns of migration into South Africa, it is also beneficial to examine how the complex mix of migrants in the 'new South Africa' survived, more precisely how they made use of social networks and community ties in securing livelihoods in a much more competitive environment and in getting practical assistance such as securing a place to stay upon arrival.

In the face of the collapsing racial segregation in inner city areas, migrants moved to inhabit residential buildings in the vicinity of the inner city. These areas included Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville and Joubert Park. Murray (2011) who writes on the history of the Johannesburg inner city areas, states that the aforementioned residential areas historically served as the main ports of entry for expectant and hopeful newcomers into Johannesburg. Initially these places were popular with young white professionals and the urban ambience and high-rise apartment blocks attracted successive waves of white European (particularly Jewish) immigrants in Johannesburg. In the 1970s and early 1980s white Rhodesians fleeing majority rule in Zimbabwe also moved into these residential areas (see Murray 2011: 141). In due course, during the 1980s, black wage earners, on modest salaries, began moving into these neighbourhoods aided by

landlords who took advantage of the then tenuous and ambiguous legal status of blacks tenants, to raise rentals, and allow the overcrowding of residential units by 'encouraging the subdivision of residential units to maximize occupancy' (Murray 2011: 143). Historically, the inner city residential places were popular because they offered less expensive accommodation for unemployed new arrivals and the area is located in close proximity to the central city were opportunities for casual employment could be found.

In the past two decades, the inner city areas have severely declined and deteriorated from affluence to decay and since the 1990s have attracted many of the city's working poor, such as those engaged in the informal economy, the casually employed, the unemployed and new arrivals hoping to gain a foothold on forms of livelihoods. There are also substantial numbers of African migrants who occupy these residential areas. The attraction of the inner city areas for individual migrants lies in their proximity to places where they can search for casual jobs or enact diverse forms of livelihoods. Murray (2011: 145) postulates that in the crime ridden environment of the inner city, migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia 'have tended to cluster together in distinct residential pockets' for their protection.

Emerging writings on migrants' social organization such as by Worby (2010) point to a repertoire of practices that characterizes the occupancy of these places. Worby (ibid) points out that some of the migrants have resorted to staying within warehouses or flats where owners rent out sleeping space. This is sometimes done on a shift basis for a relatively small amount per night or shift. The practice is known as 'hot sleeping'. Some of the warehouses and rooms in flats are subdivided to accommodate a number of families in constrained spaces. The inner city is characterized dilapidated buildings and rapid residential relocations as migrants evade evictions, rental increases and threats of violence.

The growing inequalities and widespread poverty combined with the increased influx of migrants has over the years resulted in other categories of indigent migrants moving to inhabit informal settlements where they either construct their own makeshift structures alongside marginalized South African nationals or rent a place to stay within these settlements. This is

common in places such as Alexandra were squatter camps such as Setswetla have emerged. Here migrants and poor nationals have over the years constructed tin shacks known as *imikhukhu* (see Worby 2010; Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008).

There are other determinants of places migrants settle in. These include the social ties a particular individual has with other migrants already in the city. Madsen's (2004) work on the social organization of Mozambican migrants emphasizes the centrality of social ties in the settlement and social survival of migrants. Madsen (2004; 177) demonstrates that among Mozambicans, the migrant community provided practical necessities such as accommodation and work opportunities and within these communities, 'there is an obligation to help "neighbours from home" find a place to stay, usually by accommodating newcomers in already crowded rooms'. Worby (ibid) also alludes to 'the burden of *ubuntu*', which is a 'burden to acknowledge and provide for the other in need'. This logic often informs relations amongst individuals, within migrant communities.

While historically, social relations have been imperative for securing residency and opportunities for newly arrived migrants Worby's (ibid) recent work points to the ethical dilemmas that have confronted indigent Zimbabwean migrants in maintaining social ties with kin and friends who intend to pursue livelihoods in South Africa. Worby (2010) highlights that, in the face of increased mobility from Zimbabwe as well as the increasingly difficult social and economic realities in South Africa, migrants who are beset by complex material obligations and responsibilities were escaping the obligations to provide shelter for individuals intending to stay. In the context of economic hardship both in Zimbabwe and South Africa coupled with increased migration and mobility, migrant social relations have been reconfigured and have become brittle. This has, in turn, pushed many individuals to reside in dilapidated city buildings and some of them into the Central Methodist Church.

Conclusion

In this thesis one of the arguments I present is that, labour migration and mobility are long standing features of the southern African landscape. The contemporary movement of individuals from Zimbabwe to South Africa, notwithstanding its scale, is part and parcel of these historical processes were individuals move in search of life and livelihood possibilities. There is resonance between historical processes of migration and contemporary movements.

In this chapter I have provided an account of how large-scale structural, economic and political factors have over the years structured patterns of mobility and migration within Southern Africa and specifically, the movement of Zimbabweans to South Africa. The chapter shows how political violence and instability particularly the post independence atrocities and the post-2000 violence led to the movement and displacement of many individuals to South Africa as well as other regional countries and those further afield. Equally, economic decline triggered most significantly, by the austerity measures of the 1990s and worsened by the political polarity of the post 2000 period, which resulted in the near collapse of the economy, diminished the possibilities of individuals and pushed ever more individuals out of the country's borders. In this regard the presentation makes the central point that there are structural forms of violence and constraints that have shaped and informed recent migration and mobility.

The chapter gives the history and context within which we may analyse and understand the emergence of 'victims' and how they are re-made and how victimhood as a political category arises. The chapter shows that the historical context has fostered silences and invisibilities to forms of violation particularly those that emerge from the violence and atrocities of the post-independence years in Zimbabwe. There are also patterns of exclusion from citizenship and nationality. The category of victimhood is however contested. Within South Africa, the persistent economic disparities and the perceived failures to address the past patterns of exclusion manifest through, crime, high unemployment rates and lack of housing among other difficulties, which are often poised against previously disadvantaged groups has fostered resentment and violence towards black migrants.

In addition to tracing patterns of mobility, the chapter has also highlighted the places mobile individuals and migrants have, over the years settled in. These include mining hostels, inner city flats and informal settlements. I point out that the circulation of individuals between these places has not only been a function of structural factors but has also emerged out of the upsurge in xenophobic violence and the break up of social ties amongst indigent migrant communities. The settlement of migrants within different places has to be seen in terms of temporality, part of the rationale being individuals' desire to live in close proximity to places where they pursue or enact livelihoods.

The following chapter gives an ethnographic description of the Central Methodist Church and using the embodied accounts of individuals that stayed and lived at this church examines the precise rationales of how- at an individual level- different people came to stay at the church. The chapter will also look at the meanings that people attach to inhabiting the church.

Chapter 3

'Inside-out, the predicaments of place': The Central Methodist Church and its inhabitants

Introduction

Bishop condemns raid on refugees

Central Methodist Church Bishop Paul Verryn has condemned the heavy-handed way in which police arrested up to 1500 refugees housed at his church in the Johannesburg CBD. The arrests were made during a late-night raid on Wednesday. The church is seen as a sanctuary for Zimbabwean refugees, and many stay on the premises. Members of the South African Police Service in Johannesburg, metro police officers, provincial reservists and immigration officers took part in the raid. The refugees were arrested for being illegal immigrants. More than 500 were released after they showed the authorities their asylum papers. Verryn said on Thursday that he was verbally abused and shoved by police officers when he asked them why they were breaking down doors and beating up the immigrants. He questioned why police had to break down doors when he had keys to the doors. "We can have the doors fixed," he said, adding that the church had not been desecrated at all. "The most serious violation is of the people—that is the desecration I find worrying." Verryn said one of the police officers told him that the police would return as "these people are not allowed to stay here". He said if the raid "was a statement from the government to the church, then we are at the dawn of a sad era" reminiscent of "the 1970s". Some of those who were arrested had their papers in order, while those who didn't have were still trying to acquire them. "I saw them assault people as they took them away in their vans," the bishop said. "One of them kicked a bottle at me and pushed me. I am able to identify those who pushed me. One of them said I am a disgrace to the church for allowing these people to come in." Verryn insisted that the church will continue to be a refuge not only for Zimbabweans but also for South Africans who are without shelter. On Thursday, the Mail & Guardian spoke to Nicholas C (not his real name), who wore a plaster cast on his ankle. Nicholas, who was walking with the aid of crutches, said he had been pushed down the stairs by a police officer during the raid. "I won't be able to work for the next four weeks. What will I eat?" he asked. Captain Bheki Mavundla, spokesperson for Johannesburg police services, said the raid on the church started at 10pm on Wednesday night and finished at 8am on Thursday morning. He said it was part of sustainable crime combat operations, which were "legally authorised to eradicate criminal elements from the district and building". "We did the raids in response to public complaints, and the church was raided because people complained of muggings. Robbers, after mugging people, run into the church," he said. However, Verryn said that if the police had been looking for drugs, guns or any other evidence of crime, he would have been more than willing to assist in apprehending the criminals. Immigration officers were on Thursday verifying the legality of residence of those who had been arrested. "They will verify the citizenship of the people and if they can produce the appropriate documentation and it can be verified, they will be released," said Mavundla. "It

> [raids] will continue over time and in future we will get the environmental health services involved to inspect the churchyard. There are more people in the church than the church can hold," he added. Some suspects were to appear in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court on Thursday and Friday, while others were still being processed. "Bottom line, this here is about crime fighting and our service to society. This is in the interest of the public," said Mavundla.
>
> *-The Mail & Guardian, 31 January 2008*

The newspaper report concerned a raid that was conducted at the Central Methodist church in early 2008. The raid at the inner-city Church occurred a year before I commenced fieldwork. The issues raised in the aftermath of the raid continued to permeate and dominate conversations throughout my fieldwork. These were issues and conversations associated with suffering and harsh forms of life- hardships and violations which the Bishop of the church perceived and alluded to as 'desecration' of the lives of the immigrants. The piece also revealed the contradictions, tensions and shifts in the discourse surrounding the inhabitants of this church. To the police Captain, they were 'criminal elements' responsible for the muggings and robberies occurring within the inner-city while to immigration officials the individuals were 'illegal immigrants' whilst some of them were asylum seekers and others were 'people without papers' or 'documentation'. The media perceived the individuals as 'refugees' while the Bishop of the church saw the people through the lens of victimhood, as 'pure victims[32]' whose violation was reminiscent of some of the injustices inflicted during the apartheid era. Behind such media headlines and news stories, Paul Verryn's perception of violation was best encapsulated, for me, in the response that one of the women I spoke to, often gave with unceasing regularity. Oftentimes, our conversations began as follows:

Reason: *Makadii henyu, Mai Danda. Iri sei mhuri?*
[How are you, Mrs Danda? How is your family?]

Mai Danda: *aaarrhhh; tiripo hedu pano pachurch m'kwasha. Ndimi murimu South Africa*
[aaarrhhh (sigh); We're fine, we're here at the church; you're the one who is really in South Africa.]

[32] I take this inference from Verryn's use of the term 'desecration'. The Oxford English dictionary defines the word 'desecrate' as treating something sacred with violent disrespect.

The response was seemingly at odds with Verryn's bold outcry about the violation of the people yet it captured Mai Danda's sense of resignation, even hopelessness, about her situation and that of others like her living within this place. Her response spoke of and emphasized the specificity of her physical location- the church- which she perceived to be divorced from the materialities of South Africa where I was, supposedly, located and shielded from the harshness of daily life which she and others bore, perhaps with much stoicism. At another level, her phrasing, subtly illustrated the ambiguous position of the church and the predicament of the migrants. The church was located within the inner-city but the majority of the inhabitants fell outside government refugee and immigration administrative policies[33]. The migrants' predicament was often compounded by an uncertainty, trepidation and occasional violence these legal and administrative dictates often brought to bear as manifest in this particular raid and similar raids that followed[34]. Even though she did not verbalize it expressly, in her brief and tepid answers as well as her demeanour the woman embodied the desecration that Verryn had alluded to. Unlike Verryn, hers was a violation that was unspoken, perhaps even silenced by the devastating everyday life at the church. It was attuned to what Fiona Ross (2003), in her study of the experiences of black women and their testimonies to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, termed a 'space of silence'. According to Ross (2003: 3) this was:

> ….a kind of will to silence, generated to protect one another from the knowledge of the extent of hurt. It may also be a silence of being unable or unwilling to meet the extent of pain suffered.

[33] South African legislation does not permit the setting up of refugee camps. Refugees and asylum seekers have to 'self-settle' within communities. A notable exception to these laws was applied in 2008 in the wake of xenophobic violence when temporary shelters where set up for victims of violence.

[34] One of these raids was conducted on the 3rd of July 2009, dubbed '*Operation Chachamela*'. In this raid an estimated 350 individuals where arrested in the vicinity of the Central Methodist Church for loitering and they were detained for an entire weekend. Some amongst the arrested individuals were beaten up and pepper-sprayed. At the time there was intense speculation that the city was being 'cleaned up' in preparation for the 2010 Football World Cup.

On the 30th of October 2009, a dawn raid was conducted by the Head of the Gauteng Legislature portfolio committee on Health and Social development, Molebatsi Bopape, who demanded the immediate eviction of the immigrants on the grounds of poor living conditions and the abuse of children (see *The Mail & Guardian* online edition 30 October 2009).

Occasionally, a private security company contracted by the Johannesburg municipality, Wazara, whose employees are called the *Red Ants* due to their resplendent red overall uniforms, would clandestinely pour water on migrants sleeping outside of the church premises at night.

In this chapter I follow Ross' (2003: 3) lead in permitting research and writing to 'offer a form of witness' through 'recognizing and acknowledging suffering'. Specifically, I write about the physical space of the church as constructed and experienced by some of its inhabitants. The broad question the chapter seeks to address is what kind of place is the Central Methodist Church in the eyes of the Zimbabwean migrants? Essentially, how and in what ways does it contribute to the suffering and violation of the people who reside within its confines? Some of the questions I seek to address are: who are the people living within the churchyard and building? How did they come to live within the church? Situated at the interface of a generally contested and negative discourse, how and in what ways, does inhabiting the church constitute suffering for the inhabitants?

The main purpose of the present chapter is to offer an ethnographic elaboration or a nuanced understanding of the complexities that structure and affect the lives of the migrants within the inner-city church as well as in Johannesburg. What are the predicaments they face on an ordinary and everyday level? Drawing on the embodied accounts of different individuals, I examine how they came to reside at the church as well as their self-representations. What are the meanings they attach to inhabiting the church? The chapter will enable us to grasp how the migrants, understand, talk about and experience suffering. In addition, we examine the precise social, political and economic processes that constitute and shape the domain(s) these migrants inhabit. How do the differentially located individuals live through conditions of immense hardship? Here and throughout the thesis, I do not see the physical space of the church as being merely inert or just political but I see it as producing particular modes of behaviour and practice among the migrants. I therefore question how residing within the church building impinges on the subjectivities of individuals who live within its confines.

While the preceding chapter focused on the large scale political, economic and historical factors that have shaped Zimbabwean migration, particularly that of indigent individuals into regional countries this chapter focuses on the less visible or inchoate lives that are lived within the specific domain of the church building and its immediate environs. What are the dynamics and social processes of living within the church and what are some of the consequences for the inhabitants? These are aspects that are often missing from journalistic accounts and often evade description in writings whose focal concern is on large scale political, economic and historical

factors.

The chapter is structured as follows: the first part of the chapter gives an ethnographic description of the church complemented by visual images. In the same section the chapter, drawing mainly from interviews and narratives presents accounts of some of the church's inhabitants looking at how they came into South Africa and specifically to the church. This section will also focus on the hardships these individuals encounter within the confines of the church. The second part of the chapter examines how these individuals represent themselves in order to acquire legal rights to stay within South Africa and pursue livelihoods. While these sections are seemingly disparate they ought to be seen as complimentary as they are intricately intertwined. Taken together, the different sections analyse interlocking economic, political and social processes that affect the migrants within South Africa as well as at the church. Residence within the church informs the daily life of the inhabitants and their legal status (or lack of) structures their physical, economic and social terrain both at the church and within Johannesburg. By so doing, I treat inhabiting the church as well as the legal presence of being in Johannesburg as the foreground for analyzing individuals' experiences and what we may view as suffering.

Migrants, Refugees and Encampment

An expansive body of literature that talks about the 'undeserving and suffering others', particularly irregular, 'illegal' or 'undocumented' immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, often draws on the theoretical insights of Giorgio Agamben's concept of the *homo sacer* which denotes a 'bare life' that is depoliticized[35] (Agamben 1998, 133; see Fassin 2005, 366). In Agamben's theorisation, 'states of exception' are occupied by individuals who are dehumanised and often reduced to bare life whose inclusion in the political community or polis (the city or city state) is through their exclusion. The Sangatte transit centre as well as Calais camp, both in France, are often seen as concrete expressions of such 'spaces of exception' (see for example Fassin 2005; Rygiel 2011, Millner 2011). Categories of individuals occupying these spaces are bereft of their rights as citizens and they can legitimately be exposed to particular forms of harm.

[35] There are numerous studies that have been influenced by Agamben's ideas and these include Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007; Darling 2007; Papadopoulos et. al 2008)

Fassin (2005; 367) argues for example that:

> Refugees thus occupy a central place in our moral economy because they reveal the persistence of bare life in contemporary societies: deprived from their human rights by lack of citizenship, they can only claim to stay alive, most of the time confined in camps settled in countries near the one from which they have fled.

Scholars such as Murray (2011: 168) have viewed the Central Methodist Church as the 'outcast ghetto' – 'a liminal space defined by the suspension of the normal' and also as a zone of exclusion and abandonment wherein inhabitants are subject to the extralegal violence of mobs and state sponsored harassment. While the Central Methodist church might, in some ways, be plausibly seen and defined in a similar vein to such places as the Sangatte Centre and the Calais camp, in this discussion, I build my analysis upon the recent work of Rygiel (2011) and I propose to take both the camp, in this case the church, as well as the migrants who occupy the church, as units of analysis and not merely the church as an exceptional space. Rygiel's point of departure is that viewing camps in terms of exceptionality focuses much of the discussion on the 'state, sovereignty and the law' and by so doing it ignores:

> The specificity and historical material reality that such camps take and the various social, political, geographic and economic relations that constitute them (2011, 3)

By examining the inhabitants' accounts as well as the meanings they attach to inhabiting the church, I cast attention on the agency of the migrants who occupy these places and what is at stake for them.

The Central Methodist Mission



Image showing the Central Methodist church building in the afternoon

The Central Methodist Mission is located at the corner of an arcade (Small Street), along which lie food outlets, banks, jewellery shops and clothing stores. Opposite the church is the Johannesburg High Court and within its precincts are several office buildings some used by law firms. Black iron gates, erected on either side of the arcade, transform part of the arcade which includes the churchyard, into an enclosure open only during the day (6am to 6pm). The church building is, itself, an imposing labyrinth six-storey structure with a two tier auditorium, a chapel on the ground floor, a large kitchen called the Roberts room, storerooms, a vestry, boardrooms and offices. There is an underground basement where there is a storeroom and a large room called the Minor hall and the corridor adjoining the two is termed *Soweto*[36], occupied mainly by a group of young men who ethnically identify as Ndebele. A partitioned section of the basement forms a clinic run by the Medecins San Frontiers (MSF). The entire church building accommodates thousands of individuals. They occupy the different rooms and all the available

[36] South West Township (SOWETO) in Johannesburg and was a political hotbed during the struggle against the oppressive apartheid regime. The occupants of the basement space attempt to draw a symbolic link with what is seen as a subversive township.

spaces within the building and at night this includes the entire stairway, the lobby, landings and even the arcade. Some of the large rooms are designated for specific use and occupancy of these rooms is determined by particular considerations. These include two rooms, one on the top floor and another underground which are nurseries. The underground nursery caters for the children of members of the congregation who do not reside at the church whilst the one above caters for the inhabitants' children. There is an infirmary on the fourth floor- euphemistically called the 'Home Based Care' and on the third floor are church offices. Some of the rooms, previously church offices, are occupied according to set criteria for example, women and their infants (occupied the Roberts room kitchen and the Minor Hall); married couples were housed in the Vestry (a large hall called *kumaCouples*); school children (a large room on the fourth floor). There are particular hierachies that determine the occupancy of the different rooms. The majority of the inhabitants, many of whom are recent arrivals and the less influential sleep in the church's 'public spaces' such as the auditorium, chapel, stairways and as a rule, are required to vacate the church building at dawn and re-enter in the evenings.

When approaching the church in the mornings, or sometime in the afternoons, the place is seemingly in a slumber with mainly shoppers moving along the arcade and a few migrants sitting in the courtyard overlooking the High court. Some of the people hang out in smaller groups across the entrance to the MSF clinic. Huddled together, some of the inhabitants sit around at the corner of Von Brandis street, just below a larger than life statue, which they term *Chimunhu,* smoking, talking and killing time away after returning from arduous job searching or after knocking off from bit-part jobs and occupations. The hungry and daring amongst them pester passers-by with requests for a few coins or food left overs. In the evenings and at nightfall the picture changes and the churchyard transforms into a hive of activity, teeming with people, mainly women vendors selling pap, gravy and meat, vegetables, tea and coffee. Most of the individuals can now be seen carrying around polyethylene bags containing their belongings, cardboards and thin grey blankets which form part of their bedding- as they seek an appropriate place to lie for the night. Some attend the daily evening church services conducted mostly by the Bishop Paul Verryn in the auditorium.



Image showing migrants sleeping outside the church at night in February 2009

For the duration of my fieldwork an estimated 3500[37] individuals lived within the church. The church brought together different ethnicities. While the majority of the inhabitants were Zimbabwean migrants, I also came across Kenyan, Congolese, Malawian and South African nationals. Apart from the obvious lack of space and congestion which was most apparent at night, the desperation and extreme precariousness of some of the inhabitants is clearly seen in late afternoons. Inhabitants who could not secure some form of livelihood or were hard pressed for money had to queue for a free meal. A long queue would be formed after intense commotion, outside of the Roberts room kitchen and at the entrance one would be given a plastic plate which would be filled with pap or rice served with dried beans; cabbage or just plain soup scooped from large enamel pots. One of the people who regularly queued for the afternoon meals was Ian

[37] The precise number of people staying at the church was difficult to ascertain owing to a number of factors. The church did not keep a record of the people staying within, even though they had initially tried to done so. Some of the people were transient, staying at the church for periods ranging from a few days to a number of months or years.

Chikwakwa whose experiences I recount below as an insight into both pathways into the church as well as the profound hardships that individuals encountered.

Pathways to the church

Ian Chikwakwa

> I was smart when I came here. At home I never used to be like this. If I decide to go back home today I can't go back like this. For someone coming from South Africa, you know how it is.

Ian began our conversation by responding to my unconscious, perhaps inquisitive gaze after the customary greetings. Despite the relatively warm weather, Ian was wearing a long sleeved shirt underneath a black t-shirt. A black jacket lay on top of his backpack containing a few belongings. The clothes he was wearing as well as the jacket and the bag were all very dirty. His hair was unkempt. We were seated on a bench in the courtyard overlooking the High Court. Keen to explain his dishevelled appearance despite my best efforts to politely ignore the issue, he continued,

> I didn't want to stay at the church but the Bishop protects us. Away from the church premises we risk deportation. The life we live here is not normal though. As things stand, it's really bad. *Pano pakaoma* (This place is tough). South Africans don't see us as human beings. Maybe it's the dirt; that we don't bath. They look down upon us. But there's nowhere to bath. *Tirikushupika, hatisi kuramba* (we are suffering, we cannot deny that)

Ian explained to me that he was wearing many articles of clothing because he had nowhere to pack his clothes and he risked getting them stolen within the church building. The 29 year old, father of one, used to stay in Chitungwiza, a small dormitory town outside of Harare, where he worked in the burgeoning informal sector as a carpenter. 'In October 2008, you could not withdraw money from the banks, it had been eroded, I wanted to look for a job and get money' he said as he told me of the frustrations and hardships that made him leave Zimbabwe. These included the constant shame of failing to provide adequate food and clothing for his small family. The amount of money he made from his enterprise was meagre, in real terms, as a result of the hyper inflationary Zimbabwean economy. Ian left his wife and three year old son in

Chinhoyi, a farming town 200kms outside of Harare, in the care of his father. He initially headed to Botswana but could not secure decent employment in the month that he spent there. He went back to Zimbabwe, sold a few of his belongings and decided to leave again, this time for South Africa. The decision to move to Johannesburg was inspired by prospects of better employment opportunities he envisaged; having seen basic and luxury goods that people in his neighbourhood- already outside Zimbabwe- sent back to their kin. He describes the journey to South Africa as one of his worst experiences.

> I had no passport, so I boarded a *gonyeti* (colloquial for haulage truck) because I had to do 'border jumping'. [At the border] I stayed behind in the truck while the driver completed the immigration formalities and I paid two Zimbabwean policemen R20 each when they came to inspect the truck. On the South African side of the border there are two gates manned by police. I paid R100 at the first gate and R150 at the second. I was left with very little money but I wanted to proceed to Johannesburg so I disembarked in Musina with the intention of looking for employment within the farming areas around the border town. I was however, arrested and taken to the SMG[38] the same night and only managed to bribe them in the morning. When I left the camp, I walked along the railway line till I reached a nearby farm at a place called Mopani.

Without money Ian sought wage work at a farm in Mopani (near Musina)[39]. 'We were promised mealie-meal and R600 (approx. US$75) at the end of the month as our monthly wage. However, towards the end of that month *murungu*[40] (the white farmer) came and said we would be paid on a Saturday instead of the Thursday he had initially promised'. The farmer complained about some unfinished tasks and decided to pay Ian and his co-workers R250 (approx US$40). With these wages he managed to travel to Johannesburg where he thought the employment prospects were better. He spent two days sleeping at Johannesburg's nodal bus and train centre, Park Station, up until he was told of the church by Zimbabwean traders selling wares at the station.

[38] SMG is the acronym for Soutpansberg Military Grounds. The place used to operate as an immigration detention centre. Before its closure, the detention center was run and overseen by the Musina police instead of the Department of Immigration)

[39] There are rich scholarly works on working conditions in the farms around the Zimbabwe/South Africa border that provide important insights. See for example: Rutherford, B., & Addison, L. (2007). Zimbabwean farm workers in northern South Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, *34*(114), 619-635.
Bolt, M. (2012). *Rooting production: life and labour on the settler farms of the Zimbabwean-South African border* (Doctoral dissertation, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)).

[40] The term murungu refers to individuals of a white racial identity. Often it's also used to refer to a Businessperson/Boss regardless of their racial identity. In this case Ian used the term to refer to a White Farmer invoking the two meanings of the terms.

Prior to his departure from Musina, Ian had bought ‘a paper’, he said in reference to an asylum seeker permit bearing someone else name. He used the permit together with another identity card issued at the church to fend off the police, ‘If you show the police this ID (church identity card) they normally leave you alone because they say you’re from that Bishop [Paul Verryn] or from that church’. The permit does not however, spare him from the fear he has of South Africans.

> I don’t want to stay here. KuBots (In Botswana) I could walk freely. Jobs may be available here but I fear walking around. I saw Mozambicans and Malawians in Zimbabwe but they were never killed. I never saw that.

For Ian and many others, the church was a place of ‘safety’ particularly in the aftermath of the 2008 xenophobic violence against black foreign nationals in poor informal settlements across South African cities. The church offered sanctuary from the persistent fear of xenophobic attacks and the hovering threat of arrest and deportation on account of not possessing legal papers allowing the right to reside in South Africa. Inhabiting the church may not only be seen in a limited, physical sense but also in a political and legal realm where the relationship with the Bishop of the church through an identity card and residence within a place structures and informs the relations between the police and the migrants and becomes the means through which state officials (in this case the police) relate with the migrants. While the church is an ‘unofficial’ refugee camp or an adhoc intervention, the identity documents issued by the Bishop of the church are given tacit legitimacy through being recognised by some police officers.

However, the sanctuary or safety provided by the church was not unproblematic in itself. Ian feared leaving his belongings inside the church as they could be stolen. He therefore had to carry his belongings around and this included wearing several articles of clothing. A second concern for Ian was the overcrowded nature of the building and the lack of basic amenities for the inhabitants to bath. In his appearance, demenour and account, Ian found the church to be an abject living space where he could not even bath.

In Ian's account there is a strong congruity between his trajectory and Zimbabwe's political and economic collapse. His account reveals the hardships that the economic and political collapse brought to bear within the lives of the ordinary citizens. In this case migration out of Zimbabwe into any of the regional countries was a means through which to pursue meaningful livelihoods and to support families. It is clear from Ian's account that some of his difficulties within the church building were practical emanating from overcrowding, the lack of amenities and a secure environment. Despite these physical and practical difficulties the church was still a place of 'safety' offering security on an everyday level, from the police. Ian's account resonates with that of many other inhabitants of the church and in particular Richard Chapfika's account that I detail below.

Richard Chapfika arrived in Johannesburg in 2008, leaving his job as a telephone technician with Zimbabwe's government owned, fixed telephone company, *Telone*. Richard was a political activist, working as an organiser for the then opposition political party MDC. Following the MDC's marginal parliamentary victory in the March 2008 elections and the violence that ensured, Richard felt his life and that of his family was in danger. He also accepted what he saw as the inevitable loss of his job. He left Gweru and initially headed to Botswana:

> I went to Botswana because I thought it's a safer country compared to here [Johannesburg]. But eish, *kanyika kayivava kaya* [it's a bitter, sour-tasting, little country]. There were too many of us [Zimbabweans] going there during that time and Tswanas do no like foreigners. I stayed for three months but could not get a job. That country has nothing, it has no industry, nothing, it relies on South Africa. All their food comes from here. All you see are Shoprite trucks transporting food to supermarkets there. In Botswana that's where I met Sam [an MDC activist as well] and he told me about the church. That's how I came here. When I got here we started putting in place [party] structures and mobilizing people for different events.

Richard had initially headed to Botswana because of the belief that it was was a relatively safer country- in terms of crime and xenophobic attitudes- compared to South Africa. For Richard, the church was a place of political sanctuary and Johannesburg was a city that instilled hope for the pursuit of both social and economic livelihoods. In many of my casual conversations with Richard, he claimed to work on a part-time basis as a security guard as well as doing the odd job whenever one arose. He was however, almost ever present at the church, except during

the times that he led groups of pickets to the venues of SADC brokered Zimbabwe negotiations or attended workshops organised for victims of political violence and the like.

Some of the migrants had made their way to the church after their relatives or friends refused or ignored to offer them accomodation upon their arrival in Johannesburg. One of these, was Lillian Mberi. Emerging writings on Zimbabwean migrants and their coping strategies in Johannesburg, notably by Eric Worby (2010) point to the breakdown in social relations. Worby observes that migrants, often beset by numerous and complex social and material constraints resort to many strategies to escape the obligations which come with accomodating newly arrived relatives and Lillian's story below is illustrative of this conudrum.

Lillian, 27, had made her way to South Africa in January of 2008. The woman's parents had died, both in the late 90s. Her brother, the first born in the family and a teacher, who had taken on the mantle of household head and main breadwinner after the death of the parents, had died in 2007 in what Lillian termed a 'sudden death'. Lillian, whose family stayed in Glen Norah- a sprawling township in Harare, was working in a supermarket but decided to migrate to Johannesburg after her brother's death and upon realizing that she could not afford to buy anything meaningful with her income including having adequate transport fare to go to work on a daily basis. She asked for transport money from her cousin already based in Johannesburg, who gave her R350, which was just enough for her to travel from Harare to Johannesburg. To augment this amount, Lillian sold three mobile phone sim cards[41].

Lillian: When I left Zimbabwe, I didn't tell anyone….

Reason: 'Why not?' I interrupted

Lillian: *Vehukama vanonetsa* [Relatives are problematic]. They were going to be against the decision without offering me any assistance or viable alternatives.

[41] In Zimbabwe's hyper-inflationary environment and economy characterized by scarcity, mobile phone sim cards were in short supply, and like several other goods and commodities could be sold in a parallel market at exorbitant prices.

Lillian travelled to South Africa with the intention of heading to Cape Town where a neighbourhood friend [‘sahwira vepanext door’] had offered to accommodate her. She did not have enough money to proceed to Cape Town and she headed to the church having known of its existence whilst in Harare. Lillian had been told by friends to look for ‘church yemaZimbabweans’ [Church for Zimbabweans]. Upon arrival in Johannesburg, informal traders directed Lillian to the church.

> When I got to the church, I had to do an interview with the Bishop after which I was issued with a refugee card [a church identity card]. I still wanted to proceed to Cape Town, so I looked for a job. My first job was that of distributing pamphlets. Subsequently, I worked in a phoneshop. After two months I had saved a total of R500 and I called my friend in Cape Town but her phone was going into voicemail. I called her, like today but for a week after that it [the phone] was unreacheable directing me to her voicemail. Afterwards, I just decided to stay in here. It was never easy staying here at first. I was staying in the Roberts Room when I arrived. *Manga musingaite netsvina* [It was very filthy], I struggled to the point of being sick. I always had flu. The food was equally bad. I was no longer buying food here but at Spar [supermarket]. Its also very noisy in here especially after people return from the bars. Sometimes Soweto guys would barge in and harass everyone. Mable, Barbara and Jennifer gave me a place to sleep [in the Roberts room kitchen].

Lillian’s cousin who gave her the transport fare that enabled her to travel to Johannesburg stayed in the affluent suburb of Sandton together with her elder sister. The elder cousin had warned Lillian against migrating to Johanneburg because of concerns that the country’s high unemployment rate militated against her cousin’s chances of securing a job. To underline her opposition she had never visited Lillian at the church even though the younger, unemployed cousin did keep contact and occassionally visited Lillian. Lillian’s elder cousin had told relatives back in Zimbabwe that Lillian stayed at the church. While Lillian received some form of support and assistance from her friends within the church, she generally found life in the church to be immensly tough and in general the inhabitants did not assist each other:

Pano aita chake, aita chake [Here you’re basically on your own]

The overcrowding within the church building coupled with a lack of basic amenities to enable individuals to bath or even freely dispose of themselves constituted a significant threat to the inhabitants’ bodily integrity. The evening daily church services were, for example,

characterised by incessant coughing among those who attended. In the Friday refugee meetings, the clinic staff from MSF often gave reports on the spread of communicable diseases such as Tuberculosis and pneumonia. In many of the informal conversations I had with men, most of them indicated that before the erection of iron gates which transformed the churchyard into an enclosure, they preferred sleeping outside the church building, to avoid sleeping inside the church as it was often humid and sweaty and there was a risk of a catching communicable disease such as TB.

'This place is Sodom and Gomorrah'

A recurrent complaint in many of the narratives given by the migrants was that the church shelter was an overcrowded place replete with tensions which often culminated in violent incidences.

In a diary entry one of my informants, Richard Chapfika noted that:

> Fighting erupts in the building late in the evening of this day, as in most cases, Fridays are pay days for most of the people living in the church. This is normal. One was injured (a man) and was hospitalised. (Friday 9 October 2009)

Ordinarily, I would have found Richard's comment about the normalcy of the violence in the building absurb but having spent a considerable period in the church incidents of violence were not an aberration but were instead characteristic of the everyday. What differed was the extent and scale of the violence. Most of my informants spoke the eruption of violence among the inhabitants. In her diary entries Mrs. Danda made reference to incidents of serious in-fighting occuring almost on a daily basis. In many of the weekly refugee meetings I attended, there were numerous complaints of violence and in-fighting and some of these were levelled against the church security guards. Mrs. Danda's disenchantment with residing at the church emanated from these violent episodes of fighting. She and her husband and their two daughters had come to Johannesburg at the end of 2005 after the cottage they stayed in was reduced to rubble in Operation Murambatsvina in early 2005. Staying with relatives proved problematic and with their livelihoods destroyed, they decided to migrate to Johannesburg. While the couple slept in the Couples room at the church, their two children had to put up in the Chapel and later in a large

room on the fourth floor. Mrs. Danda found this unsettling given the frequent fighting amongst the inhabitants. Two migrants had been stabbed to death since the family's arrival at the church and of equal concern were the raids conducted by the police as well as the simmering tensions between the migrants and the church congregation. She recounted that:

> There was a major raid here last year (in 2008). The Bishop [Paul Verryn] brought in lawyers and there hasn't been any major raid since then. We are scared of the police but its now better. We used to be very fearful of the police but now if you tell them you stay here, they get scared, they leave you alone, they say, 'These are Paul Verryn's people'. The church congregation however, do not want us here. In March 2006, a meeting was called and church members confronted the Bishop asking him, 'why are you keeping people here?' The meeting was heated and Paul was accused of being a homosexual in our presence and they declared that this is their church and he had to pack up and go. At the end of 2006, they came armed with knobkerries and the Bishop had to seek police protection. The congregation are hostile because Paul welcomed people against their will. Most of the members have actually left the church altogether. [Interview Mrs. Danda 22 October 2009]

For Mai Danda, such incidences created immense consternation and made the church a hostile and unpredictable living place. The woman and her family could not even attend church services on Sundays in the same building as congregation because they were known to complain that the migrants were 'smelly'. Despite such unsavoury remarks and the fear of violence and harassment, Mai Danda and her family persisted in staying in this place because it enabled them to fulfill some of their ambitions:

> They treat us like…..I don't know. They look down upon us, but we are focused. I've managed to educate my children, I've bought a housing stand in Waterfalls [in Harare] and I send groceries every month. We just ignore whatever they say. We act as if we are oblivious to everything they say. [Interview Mrs. Danda 22 October 2009]

Despite the reported departure of several members of the congregation, during fieldwork I witnessed occassions of such tension pitting members of the congregation against the inhabitants or the church authorities. One day while awaiting a scheduled interview with Verryn, one of the church members stormed the reception lobby where I and a few people were seated and fumed at Verryn. The woman, whom I learnt was called Mavis, apparently had her mobile phone and identity documents stolen just outside the church premises. Suspecting the inhabitants, she shouted:

> These people get things for free. I work at Johannesburg hospital and these foreigners all they do is steal. Wait and see I'll go to the media. (Fieldnotes, 06 April, 2009)

The distinction between the migrants who inhabited the church and the congregation who worshipped at the church was often played out on Sundays, where the migrants had to vacate the church building en masse for the congregation to worship. Only a few migrants attended the Sunday morning church services. For the likes of Mai Danda, such practices and the open hostility exhibited by some members of the congregation made living in the church dreadful as it affected the inhabitants' sense of self-worth. In order to cope with being associated with abjection, dirt and squalor, the likes of Mai Danda had to 'suspend dignity[42]' and focus on enacting livelihoods and in the process derive satisfaction and sense of being and worth from their ability to acquire capital goods and the survival of their families.

Amidst such tensions and hostilities most of the migrants dreaded the fighting that erupted over sleeping places amongst themselves. Inside the building the physical spaces often mattered more than they seemed. They often determined the type of rules an individual was subjected to and they also showed the social differentiations and hierarchies among the migrants. Sleeping in the auditorium, for example, meant that one had to vacate the building at dawn- this being non-negotiable whereas staying in a room that was previously used as an office perhaps, meant that one could keep their belongings safely and were not strictly subjected to some of the rules. Privileged migrants who held leadership positions were placed in charge of large halls and often had private rooms which they used as bedrooms. In exchange they ensured that the Bishop's 'rules' were adhered to. In many of the conversations with informants, the process of accessing privileges was contingent upon a range of actions being undertaken, including bribery-coming in the form of material resources, money or food or in some instances, sexual favours. Upon arrival at the church and before any accrual of resources and privileges one, however, had to show agency by narrating reasons for their relocations within an acceptable broader template.

[42] Worby (2010: 430) points out that 'many Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg are thrust into a condition of abjection- a condition in which an appropriate or desirable morality is impossible to maintain, and therefore, one in which the possibility of realizing one's full and proper personhood is indefinitely suspended'.

I give an account of a woman I call, Nonhlanhla who faced sanctions for failing to tell a story that adhered to the collective narrative and for allegedly feigning 'vulnerability'.

I met Nonhlanhla in March 2009, a week before she was due to return to Zimbabwe as a beneficiary of a repatriation program by initiated and coordinated by SAWIMA with funding from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Nonhlanhla had only stayed at the church for two months. Upon arrival she had been allocated a space to sleep in the Minor Hall. A mother of two, she had separated from her husband upon discovering that he had fathered children out of wedlock. Her former husband was a manager at a 'reputable company' in Harare and financially they were doing well even in the face of a complex and deepening economic crisis in Zimbabwe:

> I decided to leave my marriage and move to Cape Town to stay with my sister whom I thought was doing well. I also wanted someone I could relate my problems to. The betrayal by my husband hurt and I did not want to compete for a man. Our living standards were also dropping because he was now supporting other children outside our home. My sister did not understand at all. You see, I'm the last born in my family and my sister's daughters are my age but they are not married and they felt that I was leaving a marriage [*ngitshiya indlu*] when they actually desired to be married. My life was different, very different. I never thought I would live like this, in a place like this. (Interview Nonhlanhla Dube, 21 March 2009)

Nonhlanhla's sister refused to support her financially and this compelled her to seek a 'piece job' in Cape Town to raise bus fare to Johannesburg:

> My plan was to come here [to Johannesburg] get a job and raise some money to start something at home [in Zimbabwe]. When I got here I slept at the station for a couple of days up until I was told of this place. I had heard about it before but I didn't know where it was and I also thought it was political- you know, for those people who are political. When I got here, there was serious bullying. I have never experienced such bullying since boarding school. When you get here they look at you; ask you where you come from, why you came and when they see you're different then they turn around and use those things against you. I was once ordered not to sleep on my space. I was ordered to sit there [pointing to a stool at the corner of the room] for three nights. They told me 'you don't belong here!' I fell sick after that. When I write a book about this place I will say its Sodom and Gomorrah[43]- it's terrible, I can't relate to this place.

[43] Sodom and Gomorrah are two cities mentioned in the Christian Bible, which were destroyed. They are closely associated with impenitent sin and vice.

Nonhlanhla did not regard herself as a 'political' asylum seeker nor did she see her migration to South Africa as being inspired by the search for better economic prospects that inspired many of those who inhabited the church. She saw herself as someone who was escaping an unhappy marriage because of her husband's infidelity. Her narrative differed sharply from that of many of the migrants and she was victimised as she was not seen as the ideal victim both by her sister and the migrants at the church. The church for her was a place of violence and it was also a place of iniquity similar to the Sodom and Gomorrah in the bible.

In Nonhlanhla's narrative the church can also be seen as a site of negotiated and contested meanings. While she came to the church to seek shelter as she attempted to raise money to travel back home and perhaps enough to also start a form of livelihood in Zimbabwe, she was not seen by the other migrants as an individual who deserved to inhabit a place that they saw as being meant for political and economic victims.

'A goat grazes where it is tied'



Image showing two vendors in the Roberts Room

Vanessa was a woman aged 35. My conversation with her was in the Minor Hall, a place at the basement of the building where only women were allowed to stay. The room was lined up with the women's bedding, such that the pillows were against the wall. At the centre of the room were stoves, boxes containing fruits and foodstuffs prepared to be sold in the churchyard. On the other side of the hall, opposite the entrance, women lined up their belongings in large polyethene bags. There was very little space for one to move around without actually jumping over and stepping on some of the blankets placed down on the floor. I decided that it was wiser to jot down notes as we spoke rather than attempt to record the conversation as my presence had already attracted attention and with the amount of noise in the room, recording might have been a futile exercise. There are a sizeable number of people in the room, maybe twenty-five which is way less than the total number of the women who ordinarily, reside in this hall. In this humid room most of the women are conversing in loud voices, laughing on occassions and I get numerous curious stares as well as the odd question and chidding retorts, 'what is he doing here?' 'Hey *wena*, we want to dress up!' and this does little to calm my nerves as I feel that my presence is somewhat intrusive and invasive. Vanessa does her best to fend off the questions but our conversation was frequently interrupted, as much, by her coughing as her cooking. She was frequently attending to some round fatty buns, *amagwinya* in a deep fat frying pan. I am seated on a small stool and I do my best to remain composed.

Vanessa came to South Africa in September 2006 after resigning from her job as an accounts clerk at Parirenyatwa Hospital- a major referral health centre in Harare. Vanessa and her husband acquired what was commonly referred to as a 'civil servants visa[44]' valid for three months. Vanessa's husband, Simba was a 'Journeyman. He was a printer and he used to run a small printing business which also did CD writing, editing and recording and producing some demo CDs for musicians.' Vanessa says she came to South Africa because she was running away from hunger in Zimbabwe and South Africa held promise for economic survival both for her and her husband:

[44] This was a visa given to individuals working within Government departments and public institutions. The visa was issued at South African ports of entry upon the production of a pay slip and an official letter indicating that one had been given permission to travel. The letter also stated the duration of stay within South Africa.

> To tell the truth, *ndakavinga mafuro manyoro,* I was not affected by politics (I came in search of greener pastures). We were being paid low salaries and one couldn't buy anything. Here (in South Africa) we're not free but we are running away from hunger. Our country (Zimbabwe) is very free. We used to see our aunts, who came shopping here in Johannesburg, bringing home stoves, fridges, food and I envied that kind of life. Here you can make more money to survive than in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe if you don't have money, you don't have. When I left Zimbabwe, everything was scarce- food, money, water, electricity. So while I love my country, [there is] hunger *vahanzvadzi* [my brother]. All these people here want something better. (Interview with Vanessa, 6 June 2009)

Although she claimed not to have been affected by politics, Vanessa's frequent use of the term 'hunger' seemed to me to index the whole gamut of hardships that were afflicting the country at the time- unemployment, scarcity of commodities and injustices and exclusion that the political situation brought into the lives of citizens[45].

Upon their arrival in Johannesburg, the couple stayed with one of Vanessa's former classmates in Yeoville- located in the eastern part of Johannesburg. Vanessa says there was tension within the first few days they put up with her friend who then suggested that they seek accommodation at the church, 'Why not go to a free place, it's a refugee camp, you just need to buy food'. Her husband proceeded to talk to the Bishop who gave them a place to stay within the church. Tragedy struck for Vanessa, however, as her husband who was sick at the time of coming to Johannesburg, passed away a few weeks after moving into the church. Simba was taken to Zimbabwe for burial after his family, back in Harare, contributed money for embalment and repatriation of his remains to Zimbabwe. The now widowed Vanessa stayed for nine months in Zimbabwe following her husband's burial. She decided to come back again to Johannesburg as the economic prospects in Zimbabwe remained bleak and in many ways, worsened. On her return she came back to stay at the church, where she joked 'everything is free, free boyfriends, free husbands'. Vanessa added:

[45] Scholars such as Bayart (1993); and West (2005) argue that in many contexts in Africa the term 'hunger' is used to talk about issues of scarcity and inequality as much as it references political and material accumulation. Hunger in this sense becomes a direct outcome of social, economic and political forces that constrain individuals and produce suffering (see Farmer's 2004; pp 307-308 see also Farmer et al 2006)

> Most people are flocking to the church because they do piece jobs. Piece jobs are painful, people are paid less than R25 per day [~$3/day]. I am a street vendor and I survive by selling tea, sweets, fruits and magwinya. I once worked as a domestic- cleaning people's houses and taking care of their children and because of the low wages I have to stay here.

The short-term, insecure and precariousness nature of the livelihoods that most of the migrants engaged in, created a context of desperation which made staying in the church almost mandatory rather than optional. Most of the migrants sought work as casual labourers at construction sites or as domestic maids and security guards. Some distributed pamphlets or went begging for food and money at traffic light intersections within the city. Most of the part-time jobs were few and far between and generally paid a pittance. Without adequate money individuals opted to live within a building where they did not have financial obligations, at least, beyond trying to buy food on a daily basis.

While Vanessa was fortunate in that she had managed to enact a livelihood within the church building where on a good day she made R250 [~$27] she found residence within the building to be shameful to the extent that she did not want her family back home to know that she resided at this place:

> People at home [in Zimbabwe] envy me, but they don't know I stay here. They'll think I'm crazy. With what is said about the Central Methodist Church, I tell them I don't stay here. I once forgot and wrote the church address on a box with goods I sent them and they asked if I stayed here. I had to deny and say it was just a box I got from a friend. My mother has high blood pressure. With the images that are shown (on TV channels) I don't want to stress her. There are many people, coming from different countries, some are thieves, some are prostitutes and people are always fighting. If you're not working, you don't have food. There is prostitution- if I don't have money and a guy says 'I can buy you a meal', I'll agree. Ndebeles and Shonas are always fighting. There is that thing from the past. They hate us, so they often say, '*Leli liShona leli*' (This one is a Shona person)

Vanessa perceived the church to be a shameful place from a moral standpoint because the precariousness of some of the church's inhabitants meant that there was a high possibility of transactional relationships. Despite the myriad problems that Vanessa saw within the church, from her account there is another dimension that made individuals inhabit the church. This was the ability to enact certain forms of livelihoods inside the confines of the church building.

Vanessa survived through vending and was among some of the fortunate inhabitants in the church. Others like Anna Hove also made a living through vending. The woman together with her husband had their livelihood intrinsically tied up with the church. The husband left Zimbabwe in 2004 while Mrs. Hove followed suit at the end of 2005 following the destruction of her market stall in Operation Murambatsvina. Anna, like Vanessa survived through cooking food and selling it to people staying at the church while her husband was employed by the Bishop as one of the security guards. During the day, the husband worked at a construction site and the income earned at the church augmented the couple's total income. Their household income amounted to R3600/month (approx. $450), a princely amount that only a few of the inhabitants managed. With this amount, Anna and her husband could afford to send their two children to the nearby church run school and to also remit some of the money to their three children back in Zimbabwe. I asked Anna if she would like to move from the church to a different place with better amenities, given the problems that often beset the church, and while conceding that:

> Life here is like war- we're at war! People fight everyday and as you can see we are overcrowded. It's also very dirty but *mbudzi inodya payakasungirirwa*[46], the church is where I work and it's also the place my husband is employed.

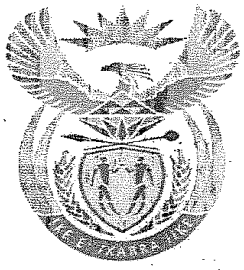
For the likes of Vanessa and the Hove couple, living within the church, while not ideal in practical terms was imperative for securing economic sustenance and social survival. Other inhabitants who made a living through a range of formal and informal activities also saw living within the church in the inner-city as strategically positioning them to secure a foothold on different forms of livelihoods within the city itself. Writings on the modes of living among migrants and other indigent individuals within the Johannesburg inner city, show striking continuities with that of the church's inhabitants. Places such as flats are not merely places of abode but they are spaces of economic survival where livelihoods are enacted. Rasmussen (2007) for example, highlights that individuals staying within dilapidated inner city buildings often pursued such livelihoods as sub-letting where rooms are demarcated into smaller spaces and rented out. In contravention of city by-laws, individuals also sell vegetables and fruits etc. These modes of survival are similar to those pursued by Vanesa and Mrs. Hove.

[46] This saying literally means that 'a goat feeds where it is tied'. In the context of the church it referenced how Mai Hove's livelihood and her sustenance was, at that moment, strongly dependent on her place of abode.

Seeking Sanctuary

Undoubtedly, the major constraint that hindered the majority of the migrants at the church was the lack of proper documentation. While the migrants were most commonly referred to as refugees this was a status that they had not been granted and most of them struggled to acquire an asylum seeker permit which granted them permission to stay in the country for a period ranging from three to six months. Without proper legal documents migrants, especially those who held qualifications such as teaching and nursing certificates or were trained and skilled in numerous trades could not secure employment within their particular fields of training. Acquiring an asylum seeker permit was one of the few avenues through which individuals could be allowed to work or study and open a bank account among other things. Whilst this was a seemingly easy route, it was never easy for individuals, particularly those hailing from Zimbabwe to be granted an asylum seeker permit. In the thinking of immigration officials, Zimbabweans were economic migrants rather than political victims. Denied of legal asylum migrants resorted to various indiscretions to stay within South Africa. Whilst Ian Chikwakwa had bought a 'paper' and essentially acquired a new form of identity, Rumbi Tapfuma was one of the unfortunate migrants staying at the church. Her asylum application had been rejected. Rumbi had traveled into South Africa together with her sister in 2008. She used to work as an auxiliary nurse in Harare. 'I came here to work like everyone else. I came to work for my daughter', she told me [Interview with Rumbi, 28 June 2009]. Upon her arrival in Johannesburg, Rumbi and her sister stayed for a week in Tembisa, a township in Johannesburg, with a relative but left because there were no job opportunities in the township. Rumbi and her sister wanted to work in people's homes as domestic workers, cleaning and looking after children and inner city Johannesburg was more promising in terms of securing such opportunities. A brother of the two sisters advised them to stay at the church as he could not accommodate them. Rumbi says on arrival at the church there were too many people but the major concern was that 'People were cruel, they lacked love. When I arrived I slept near the Roberts' room on top of a bench'. The

woman's worries were further compounded by the denial of her asylum application. Her asylum denial letter read:



Refugee Reception Office
19 Planet Street, Crown Mines, 2092
Tel: (011) 226 4600, Fax: (011) 226 4603

MISS
RE: APPLICATION FOR ASYLUM: YOURSELF
REFERENCE NO:JHBZWE 1180508
COUNTRY: ZIMBABWE

DECISION

INTRODUCTION

The applicant is an adult female from Harare in Zimbabwe born on the 10 October 1982.The applicant left her country of origin on the 23 January 2008 and arrived in South Africa on the following day 24 January 2008 through the Beit Bridge Border Post.The RSDO conducted the second interview on the 14 April 2008.

APPLICANTS CLAIM

The applicant **on the BI-1590** she claims that she run away from her home country because of politics.Her father is an MDC member, theZanu-PF members were always after her family.She is a MDC strongholder so, they beat her father and is now disabled.She decided to leave her country because they wanted to kill her.
During the second interview with the RSDO she claims that she she was an MDC youth member.She used to attend his party meetings and arleting her fellow members about the Zanu-PF plans.She left Zimbabwe because of political problems,the Zanu-PF members arrived at her house and beat the whole family.Her father is now dissabled and on wheel chair as a result of the beatings.The father suggested to them to leave and go to a safe where they can not be beaten by the Zanu-PF.The police are not responding or taking any action when we report to them.

THE LAW RELATING TO REFUGEE STATUS

The law relating to refugees is set out in the Refugee Act 130 of 1998. The relevant Provisions are summarized hereafter.

Section 3. A person qualifies as a refugee if:

(a) he or she has a well-founded of being persecuted by reason of his or her race tribe religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group or

(b) he or she was compelled to leave his or her habitual place of residence in order to seek refugee elsewhere owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing or disrupting public order in either part or the whole of his or her country of origin or nationality or,

(c) Is a dependant of a person contemplated in paragraph (a) or (b).

BURDEN AND THE STANDARD OF PROOF

The burden of proof is on the applicant to show that he or she is entitled to refugee status. The standard of proof is that of "real risk" and must be considered in the light of all the circumstance i.e. past persecution and a forward-looking appraisal of risk. The RSDO has taken into account all the relevant circumstances surrounding the applicants claim.

FINDINGS

The applicant claims that she left her country because of political reasons,she was an MDC youth member.She used to attend his party meetings and arleting her fellow members about the Zanu-PF plans.She claims that she left her country because the Zanu-PF was after her family they were beaten up for supportin MDC and her father became dissabled.She also claims that they wanted to kill her.The applicant was not a high profile activist of the MDC.If they wanted to kill her they should have killed while they were beating the whole family.Most of her family member are still in Zimbabwe yet they bwere beaten up annnnd the Zanu-PF members were always after them.If the Zanu-PF was always after them they were not going to remain or stayed there after being beaten up.Also if the Zanu-PF member were after them they should have done whatevr they wanted to do to them exactly at the time they were beating them.To prove that they were

not after them they are nstill safe in Zimbabwe.The applicants fear for persecution is not well-founded and therefore her claim does not complies with the provisions of Section 3(a) or (b) of the Refugees Act 130 of 1998.

According to the recent repot of The Zimbabwe Gazzette published on the 08 July 2008 titled Political Volance Eases, Intimidation at its peak ,it said trhat Political motivated violance has ceased in Zimbabwe, just after MDC candidate, Morgan Tsvangaria announced his June 27 presidential election boycott,but terrorization from the Zanu-PF continues. Since last weekend, a few incident of violance have been reported whilst abductions and murder have stopped.In an around the Capital city Harare, residents spoke to this reporter start to feel at ease though not comfortable as a ruling Zanu-PF Party intimidation continue.

From the above information it is clear that the applicant if she returns in her country she will not suffer persecution.Her application for asylum is therefore rejected for she does not meet the conditions stipulated in Section 3 of the Refugees Act.

CONCLUSION

The RSDO finds that the applicant has not discharged the burden of proof thereof the **application for asylum is rejected as Unfounded in terms of section 24(3)(c) of the Refugee Act 130 of 1998.**

Should you wish to appeal against the decision of the RSDO your appeal written in English medium must reach this office within 30 days.

YOURS SINCERELY

X R GABA

REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION OFFICER

LETTER RECEIVED BY_____

DATE RECEIVED _____

SIGNATURE_____

The denial of her asylum claim made life immensely difficult for Rumbi. In many ways, it meant that the church that was a sanctuary for some could at some moments- in the event of a raid for example- not offer her the same protection that other more fortunate migrants could have. Rumbi lived in perpetual fear and she often referred, pejoratively, to the South African police (SAPS) as *tsikidzi* [bed bugs] while the Metro police officers were *inda* [lice]. The references simultaneously, highlighted the daily and incessant, dread and loathing the woman had for these authorities. At the same time they also spoke of the abjection of the space which she and her sister occupied.

There is a perverse ambiguity that emerges from the denial of Rumbi's asylum claim. Notwithstanding the possibility that her story might not have been true but meant for purposes of acquiring an asylum document, upon which her livelihood and security could be pivoted, the claim that she and her family were beaten up would classify her as an individual running away from manifest persecution and deserving of an asylum status. The South African immigration and refugee policy and practice, with regards to the woman's application, pointed to a desire for the recognition of spectacular, visible, physical forms of violation and harm as a legitimate basis for granting refugee status rather than the unseen, less obvious forms of suffering such as those that emanate from conditions of poverty and diminished possibilities. In Rumbi's case even a purported beating was insufficient to meet the criteria set out by the officials. Individuals such as Rumbi and Ian, that could not meet state definitions and conceptualizations of a refugee therefore have to depend more on their ability to navigate state laws and popular definitions of identity or show that they are 'victims' in need of assistance and recognition. This included residing within the church building and deriving collective security from the Bishop of this institution.

Conclusion

The accounts of many of the inhabitants highlight two fundamental points made in the entire thesis. Firstly, the movement of individuals from Zimbabwe into South Africa was by and large precipitated by large scale political and economic transformations and reconfigurations within Zimbabwe. The political and economic 'crisis' of the 2000 era in Zimbabwe, diminished many of the possibilities and prospects of large numbers of people who decided to pursue livelihoods in South Africa. In so doing however, individuals followed long standing migratory patterns that have for many years been central to the survival of households and communities. The meanings that many of the individuals attached to their movements are historically embedded.

In this chapter, the Central Methodist Church presents itself as a place of indeterminacy, which defies simple descriptions and characterisations. The place is varied, complex and intricate and can only be read and understood in a number of different ways.

The church is seen as a place of hardship. There are practical predicaments of residing within its confines. These include the lack of adequate amenities, overcrowding and lack of proper sleeping space. Such difficulties threaten not only the inhabitants' bodily intergrity but also their social well-being leading to instances of ill-health. The building is associated with squalor and there is shame and indignity which comes with residing in the place. Some of the hardships experienced in the church, such as the overcrowding, become a source of persistent conflict and tension among the inhabitants, at times with perverse outcomes.

The church building is located within a problematic intersection within South African immigration policies and politics. Most of the inhabitants lack legal residence and are subjcet to the hovering and real threats of arrest and deportation from the country. As such the church building is subject to raids and the inhabitants are targeted for arrest and harassment. Despite these legal dictates, politically, the building particularly through its Bishop, Rev. Paul Verryn provides what the inhabitants perceive to be a sanctuary that at particular moments, shields them from the insecurities of living with South Africa. This is through the church identity cards and

the elevation of the building, in a symbolic sense, to a place where victimized Zimbabweans reside. In the context of violent xenophobic attitudes among indigent non-nationals, the church is a place of 'safety'. In this way the church building is a political resource that shields individuals from everyday legal and administrative difficulties and violence.

In another sense, the building presents itself as an economic resource for some of the inhabitants. Some of the inhabitants use the church to gain a foothold on forms of livelihood and survival, through vending for instance. The church is also located within the inner-city which brings the inhabitants into close proximity to places where they can seek livelihoods such as at construction sites and other enterprises within the city. The absence of economic obligations such as settling monthly utilities makes the church attractive for precarious and indigent individuals as well as newly arrived migrants seeking economic opportunities.

The church building may also be analysed from a historical and contextual perspective. In Chapter 2, I highlighted some of the places that migrants have historically settled and lived in within South Africa. These include the mine hostels, dilapidated inner-city flats and informal settlements (*imikhukhu*). As shown in the previous chapter, such places are seen as characterized by indecency and hardship through overcrowding, lack of proper amenities such as ablution facilities and clean water. Cast within such a historical and contemporary reality of South Africa, the church building may also be perceived as a continuation of the living spaces that have been occupied by migrants within the Johannesburg urban spaces for many years. The church space mirrors and animates the shanty towns that exist within South Africa. Rather than being read only in terms of 'exceptionality' the church and the settlement of individuals within this church ought to be seen instead within a historical prism as well as through the specific meanings individuals attach to inhabiting such localities.

There is resonance between the church and other such aforementioned places. Within the building itself, migrants enact modes of livelihood that continue to play out within dilapidated city building- such as hawking and the attraction also lies in staying within close proximity to livelihood opportunities, which remains a key consideration for many of the indigent individuals. The modes of living that individuals adopt within the confines of the church are strikingly

similar to those adopted by migrants in other places. These include hot sleeping, sub-division of ‘spaces’ etc. In this sense, the church building is a resource that the inhabitants creatively use and mobilise in particular ways and is central and essential to their social and economic sustenance.

A key observation to make from this presentation is that the church brings together diverse personalities who in different ways utilise and mobilize some of the advantages that come with inhabiting the church. In the following chapter I examine how the church, as a place that brought together a number of different people, coupled with the harsh living conditions- is governed. The next chapter looks at these governing practices and rationalities.

Chapter 4

‘A religious imperative?’: The management and governance of a place

Introduction

> God hears us, it doesn’t matter whether people don’t like us; that we’re being chased from corner to corner, God loves us! If you read John’s gospel, Jesus is not tricked into dying; He died for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. No matter how you feel, treated like trash, God loves you, will you remember that?! Remember that even if you’re treated like dirt, God says I love you! Remember, remember, remember!!! We heard from the reading [of the bible] that it is better to free ninety-nine guilty people than to condemn one innocent man. But rules are there so that we live together as a community. The ethos of this place are; one, no drinking, two, no smoking; three, you’ve got to develop yourself; no beating up of each other; Do you hear me?! Five, no stealing; six, no sex in the building- if you’re not married! If you can’t adhere to these rules, my suggestion is that you find yourself a place to stay. Breaking of rules causes real suffering. Part of the problem why you’re here is that in your own country there are people who are corrupt, who are greedy; that are in power. The way some of you behave shows the corruption and greed in your country. People in your country are dying in their thirties. For women the age is thirty-three and for men it’s thirty-seven. That is a catastrophe. If you want to sleep with one person after another then you need to wear protection. Please take yourself seriously, don’t go around saying it’ll never happen to me. No condom, no sex, no sex, no condom! I plead with you, let us wake up! [Sunday evening church service, 22 February 2009]

Bishop Paul Verryn delivers the sermon with a passionate fervour. Clad in a clerical maroon shirt with a white tab collar and black pants, the bespectacled clergyman’s voice is pitched constantly but effortlessly and comfortably above the cacophony of coughing in the auditorium and is incredibly quite audible despite the wailing and occasional screaming coming from increasingly restless infants. The auditorium itself is, by now, quite humid but despite this, some amongst the audience are sleeping on the pews on the lower tier of the auditorium or on chairs in the upper tier. These individuals, seemingly exhausted from their daily exertions, cover their lower bodies with thin grey blankets. Verryn’s meandering sermon is punctured, fleetingly, by applause at some points and laughter at others from those in the audience. Now and again and in vocal support of some of the issues being raised by the preacher, one or two of those I am seated with in the congregation shout, as if to urge him on and emphasize his message:

'Taurai henyu mfundisi!' [Speak out preacher!] or

'Ndizvozvo!'; 'Ichokwadi!' [That's it!; That's true!]

Verryn is a man who does not seem to need much encouragement. His sermon- in a somewhat traditional missionary, evangelist mode is impassioned and is meant to instruct and at other times admonish the church's inhabitants who are expected to attend these daily, evening mid-week church services as part of the 'ethos of this community'. This chapter draws from Verryn's sermon above, particularly his reference to the 'ethos of the place'. The major aim of the chapter is to inquire how the Central Methodist Church is managed or governed and how such governance articulates with the aspirations of individual migrants who live within the confines of the church.

The previous chapter established the Central Methodist Church to be an indeterminate place replete with severe tensions and conflicts but essentially, where the interests of mobile individuals articulate with spatial sensibilities in mainly resourceful but also problematic and ambiguous ways. The preceding presentation therefore, raises, at least one fundamental question- how then is the Central Methodist Church- varied and intricate as it is, in political, economic, spatial and social dimensions- managed and governed? Taking into account the different forces and factors that act upon this place and the people who inhabit the church, the question above does not lend itself to a simple answer. I therefore attempt to answer this question in this chapter as well as in the following one, but in each case, looking at a different set of actors and interventions that attempt to manage or govern the inhabitants of this place. The focal concern here is mainly on how the church authorities manage and govern the place. This will enable us to interrogate a number of critical and related questions that speak to some of the broader questions posed in the thesis. In the first instance, what are the rationalities underpinning this seemingly religious[47] form of intervention? Which historical and contemporary humanitarian regimes and

[47] The term religion I use through out this chapter and in the thesis is drawn from Haynes' conceptualization. For Haynes religion can be understood in a spiritual sense where it is concerned with transcendence, sacredness and ultimacy. Secondly it can be understood in a material sense where the term defines and unifies social, political or community based groups or movements. I use the latter definition as it captures more the intervention and initiative at the Central Methodist Mission

interventions does this intervention effort reflect? On an everyday basis, how is this intervention articulated and in essence, interpreted and translated in practical and productive ways? What are the technologies, ideologies or philosophies that this intervention is predicated upon? In what ways does the management of this place alleviate particular forms of suffering?

Secondly, how does the church intervention articulate and interact with the lived realities and experiences of the individuals who stay within this church? What are the relations, authorities and modes of governance that emerge- in this case from amongst the migrants- in places such as the Central Methodist Church? What are the sources upon which authority and recognition are derived or predicated? A related concern is to highlight the relationships that occur between and amongst a group of people who are collectively assumed to be victims.

The argument, I present in this chapter is that there are multiplicities of governing practices that are at play within the church. There are two broad distinctions that can be made. There is the 'formal' authority instituted by the church authorities, which the migrants are expected to acquiesce to. Acting alongside, parallel and at times in conflict and competition with the formal authority are 'informal' strategies and tactics, which individuals deploy, at different moments, to gain leverage in a context of intense competition and lack. Collectively, these governing practices interact and articulate at different moments and for different ends. Taken together, the two broad questions outlined above seek to examine and illustrate the ways in which the church is governed through both these 'formal' and 'informal' practices. Within the thesis, this chapter therefore analyzes the governance of the place and the responses of some of the migrants to the governance practices. The chapter will therefore assist us in casting attention on the actors and interventions that in a sense exercise a form of dominance and influence on the lives of the inhabitants of the church. Continually, I attempt to then show how the migrants relate to these structures of authority and dominance and how they also 'carve out' or 'hollow out' their own spaces within overarching structures and authorities.

The chapter is outlined as follows: the first part of the presentation gives an outline of the formal authority structure at the church that specifically manages the inhabitants as well as organizes the life of the inhabitants. In this section, I provide the ideologies and rationalities behind the intervention as spoken by the Bishop of the church in my interviews with him as well as from his preaching at gatherings, services and events at the church. In addition, I explore the

ways in which the church is funded. In doing so, I draw from interview material and sermons delivered by other church leaders. The first part of the presentation, essentially tries to show how the church intervention is structured and how the narrative and rationalities upon which it is predicated is mobilized, deployed and translated in practical ways. In order to illustrate the utility as well as limitations emergent thereof, the second part of the chapter addresses how individual migrants relate to the religious ideology as spoken and practiced. How does the intervention and the manner it is organized, articulate with the aspirations of the individuals? I do this through detailing the profiles and trajectories of three individuals highlighting the 'informal' forms of authority that exist parallel to the 'formal' structure. In this way, I illustrate how authority is derived and exercised on an everyday basis and by different actors.

The practices of governance in local arenas

In accommodating migrants and the indigent at the Central Methodist Church, the Bishop of the church was treading on a familiar path. In Southern Africa, like in many other developing regions in the world, there is a history of how religious organizations have often intervened, charitably, in communities in the provision of relief and social services. There is a rich body of literature that traces church institutions and missionary activity in the fields of education, health care and social welfare provision (see Bornstein 2001; Bourdillon 1977; Dachs 1973; Ranger 1994).

Emergent literature within the field of humanitarian anthropology also points to the preponderance of humanitarian organizations within sites or localities of 'crisis' (see James 2004). The Central Methodist church seems to be an illustration of these processes. Within such settings a key question, which this chapter considers, is how do the different actors who intervene in such localities govern such places? What are the precise regimes of governance and how are they deployed?

The writing of Lund on what he terms 'twilight institutions' are insightful. Lund (2006, 686) writes that:

Asssociations and organizations which do not appear at first sight to be political may also

> exercise political power and wield public authority. Similarly, ostensibly non-political situations may reveal themselves to be active sites of political negotiation and mediation over the implementation of public goals or the distribution of public authority in which local and regional identities and power relations are reshaped and recast.

Following Lund, this chapter attempts to examine the ways in which church authorities wield and exercise power as well as the sources upon which legitimacy and authority are predicated.

The church locality presents particular dilemmas and ambiguities. In the first instance individuals were accommodated within a building that was not purpose built to house a number of people and the individuals were under the direct care of a church minister unlike in conventional organizations where the programmes are directed by 'program staff'. Scholars such as Norman Long who look at the interface- i.e. the 'space' where organizations meet with the beneficiaries- assert that such spaces are fraught with different interpretations, competing meanings and tensions. Essentially, Long who also alludes to the particularities of people's 'lived-in realities' attributes to individuals- even within restricted social and personal spaces- the capabilities and power to process and respond to their situation and in some instances to muddle their ways through difficult scenarios, turning 'bad' into 'less bad' circumstances Long (2001:17). When Long's conceptualization is applied to the church site, people often intepelleted as 'victims' respond to the power wielded by the 'dominant' church authorities. The chapter then tries to bring out their responses.

The chapter takes the church to be a site constituted of different authorities that attempt to exercise such power at different moments and for different purposes. In the section below I detail the manner in which the church is organized and the ways through which assistance is administered to the inhabitants.

‘An outpouring of compassion’: The Ray of Hope Refugee Ministry



Image showing part of a gate enclosure outside of the church; The message on the gate reads: ‘The mall will be closed from 18H00- 06H00. No sleeping in the Mall. Trespassers will be prosecuted’.

The Central Methodist Mission started accommodating individuals beginning sometime in 2004. The accommodation of the migrants was heralded by the arrival of, initially, a few individuals at that time with the numbers of people at the church rising gradually each year as conditions continued to worsen in Zimbabwe. Before the arrival of Zimbabwean migrants at the scale witnessed in 2009, Bishop Paul Verryn accommodated a small number of ‘homeless’ and ‘vulnerable’ South Africans. Describing the arrival of individuals, one of the church ministers, Reverend Kim stated that:

> They started with only a few but it’s not only Zimbabweans. There are other nationalities in the building. There are Congolese; there are people from Kenya. When they initially came they were 10 or 15 and then the number doubled the next year and then suddenly there was a mass influx. [Interview Rev. Kim- 13 August 2009]

At a refugee exhibition hosted by the church and sponsored by the Solidarity Peace Trust, the church claimed that over a period of five years, an estimated 20,000 individuals had been accommodated within the building. [May 2010]

Structurally, the church is divided into two broad categories. There is the conventional church where responsibilities are shared among a number of Reverends and ministers who conduct services and are responsible for teaching and preaching to the regular congregation, who mainly attend Sunday church services as well as some mid-week services. There is then a ministry[48] called 'Ray of Hope Refugee Ministry'. The migrants fall under the 'care' of this ministry and in religious parlance, the Ray of Hope 'ministers' to the needs of these migrants. The Ministry is an initiative attributable to the efforts of Paul Verryn rather than to the entire church as an institution. The refugee ministry operates with a vertical but rather loose, amorphous leadership structure headed by Verryn. The rest of the leadership comprised heads of different committees who were in charge of portfolios such as education, vendors, women affairs, health, security, social welfare, cleaning etc. The different heads of programme were Zimbabwean migrants, particularly those who had stayed at the church for a number of years or were selected for their perceived leadership capabilities. The committee heads were in charge of the day-to-day running of portfolios under their care and on a weekly basis they would report back on key issues that were arising within the building. Apart from these responsibilities, the influence as well as authority of the committee on the operations of the ministry was difficult to ascertain. It appeared to me that committee members played a mere consultative role and did not have any clearly defined authority, either, individually or as a collective. Most of the committee members made reference to Paul Verryn as 'murungu' (literally: 'white man'), which denoted more the clergyman's position as their employer than his racial identity. A past chairperson of the committee revealed that, while the committee was responsible for the day-to-day administration of the building in 2004 to 2008 it had subsequently been dissolved or had its power severely curtailed:

> Bishop [Paul Verryn] dissolved the committee without consultation. *Ndiye anemapowers ese anoita zvanoda* [The Bishop has got all the powers, he does as he pleases]. (Interview Matsika, 23 September 2009)

[48] A ministry is defined as the spiritual work or service of any Christian or a group of Christians, especially evangelism

Such observations did not appear misplaced. Any individual (researchers, journalists, visitors etc.) who approached the church was often told to seek the Bishop's permission even on issues that fell directly under the remit of a portfolio head. Bornstein (2001: 597) in her study of World Vision Zimbabwe an explicitly Christian NGO, highlights that the organization like secular NGOs, straddled the line between fulfilling the expectations of donors and the demands of communities within local sites where their work was located. World Vision thus concerned itself with issues of transparency, accountability, governmentality and the efficient use of donor funds. Such pre-occupations were not readily observable within the Ray of Hope Ministry and its structure and funding nature made the visibility of such issues problematic.

The refugee ministry received financial and material support mainly through donations from various individuals and organizations and this support enabled the ministry to settle monthly utility bills as well as support some of its projects aimed at 'empowering' the inhabitants. Part of the support that the ministry relied upon, came directly from organizations that ran particular programmes and interventions at the church. In a conversation with Verryn, he stated that:

> A lot of funding comes from sort of seed money. So our American counterparts [within the Methodist church] have given us $225 000 over the last two and half years, which has really helped us particularly the big problem- which is the utilities. But for instance we have a feeding scheme from Monday to Friday in the building that is funded by the Solidarity Peace Trust. We also got some Christian groupings that come in and try and help with the other two days. We also get quite a large number of food and clothing and baby wear from people on a constant basis. So for instance, yesterday just about at mid-day there were three or four donations that came in. So by and large there has been an outpouring of compassion from the public. And there have also been some gifts in cash that have helped us just to keep abreast of things. Sometimes we take some of that money to empower people because that's really what we want here. There is really a full scale empowerment programme and it enables people either to further their academic knowledge or enables people to grow a skill with academic knowledge or to teach or whatever or in some way to be involved in educating themselves and empowering themselves. We view dependency as the worst kind of prison. [Interview, Paul Verryn 6 April 2009]

I found Verryn's description of the donations as 'an outpouring of compassion' to be apt as it accurately captured the unstructured and often ad hoc nature of the donations and assistance the church received. The refugee ministry relied, in essence, on the compassion and ethical indulgence of corporates, organisations and individuals. Over the course of my fieldwork, I witnessed a number of individuals and organisations bringing in donations in the form of

foodstuffs, clothing and bedding. The most prominent and well known amongst these were the Gift of the Givers, who on one occasion brought an assortment of goods, comprising bottled water, baby formula, diapers and food packs. Support was also given by other religious organisations such as Peace for Africa, The Kingdom Dream Centre and Gospel Outreach among others. The Methodist church youth groups also chipped in with second-hand clothing at irregular intervals. Inhabitants of the church were sometimes encouraged to seek assistance from other organisations within the city, whose activities were are not specifically directed to the migrants staying at the church but to the broader migrant community as well as other indigent individuals living mainly within the inner city. These included church organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church, Salvation Army and the Jesuits Refugee Services (JRS) who provided food as well as limited financial support on a case-by-case basis[49]. Although everyday life within the church was characterized by profound hardships for many of the inhabitants, I observed that much material support was rendered to the migrants in instances were there was a form of 'crisis' and the church was featured prominently in the media. Such instances included days in the immediate aftermath of police raids and the subsequent arrests of some of the church inhabitants as well as the period following threats to close the church by the provincial government authorities. Reverend Kim, a minister at the Central Methodist Mission for three years, echoed Verryn's views about the nature of funding for the refugee ministry, as well as how it often followed intense media coverage most evidently in the aftermath of the xenophobic attacks in May 2008:

> There are some donations that come in but the church tries its best to accommodate what they can. During the xenophobia, a lot of donations came in when the numbers swelled dramatically but it's dropped since then. Other churches do come in but you'll have to ask the Bishop that. We're not always privy to it. Nestle helped with baby formula and food which is vital but there are on-going givers. You'll have to check with him. [13 August 2009]

Implicit in Reverend Kim's statement was that the financial support to the inhabitants of the church was given to the Ministry through Verryn. The perception that financial assistance to the migrants was given through the Bishop highlighted how the refugee ministry was perceived, quite plausibly, as the effort and initiative of a single individual- Paul Verryn- rather than of the Central Methodist Church, as an institution. In some instances, this perception, gave rise to

[49] In Chapter 5 I discuss the interventions of the different humanitarian organizations

accusations that Verryn was appropriating the presence and visible suffering of the inhabitants for personal aggrandizement rather than for the benefit of the inhabitants per se. In everyday conversations, many of my informants, whispered, statements such as '*Bishop varikudya nesu*' [the Bishop is benefitting from our plight]. I recall one particular incident, when a dismayed man who had been hoping to get an allocation of second hand clothing which were being distributed to those who were at the reception area by the Bishop's office but had been overlooked, angrily lambasted the Bishop as he walked away:

> *Murume uyu ndiMuzorewa*[50] *chaiye*. [This man is like Muzorewa] Our pictures are all over America. He is happy to answer the phone and he is always busy selling our stories. He is making money. (Fieldnotes 17 July 2009)

Amidst such perceptions, we ought to ask what then are Paul Verryn's motivations and what are the rationalities governing his initiative and intervention. Below I give an account of Paul Verryn's background, motivations and aspirations as they emerge out of my conversations with him as well as from some of his public pronouncements.

'Our Bishop': Reverend Paul Verryn

I had interacted with Verryn briefly before the start of my research during which time I made a request for permission to conduct an ethnographic study at the church and later to be formally introduced to the 'community'. These were quite brief interactions. The initial long conversation with Verryn took place in his office, ensconced on the third floor of the church building. I sit on the couch outside the reception area and patiently wait for Verryn. After what seems like an eternity Verryn emerges and summons me into his office. Courteously, he explains to the people seated on the couch that he is doing an interview, which might take an hour or so. The people who visit his office are probably used to such interviews acting as an additional barrier in their quest to talk to the Bishop. The prudent amongst them come to the reception area

[50] The late Abel Muzorewa was a United Methodist Church Bishop who was actively involved in Zimbabwean politics in the years prior to the country attaining independence in 1980. He is remembered most infamously as leader of the United African National Council (UANC) that reached an internal settlement agreement with the Ian Smith under which he became Prime Minister of the short-lived Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. The agreement was not recognized by the United Nations and Muzorewa is projected in nationalist narratives as an opportunist and sell-out.

prepared for such eventualities and often bring with them written letters outlining their requests and at the slightest opportunity they hand these over to him for consideration and thereafter they come and ask for a response. As I stand to follow the clergyman into his office, four or five people stand and seize the opportunity to hand over their letters. It's a way of getting their requests read and heard and it's perhaps an effective strategy to get to communicate with a busy man and often a highly sought after Reverend. The desks in Verryn's office are littered with numerous books and some neatly stacked papers. We settle down to talk and I naturally inquire about the problems and issues some of the people we have left behind bring to Verryn, as a way to start off our interview:



Image showing Bishop Paul Verryn praying for some of the migrants at the end of a church service [The Daily Maverick]

> These people are technically, strictly and technically speaking most of the people in the building are what you call asylum seekers. There are people in this building who are here because they are looking for a job or something and then there are also South Africans who find themselves

> displaced. Yes, and refugees and then displaced people from South Africa who don't have jobs, who don't have a future and they are also here to try and improve themselves and get themselves moving.
>
> You know the problems [they bring to me] are right across the whole range of social problems. Some of the problems are relational, some of the problems are with food; some of the problems are with health, some with marriage. Some of the problems have to do with spiritual matters, some are trying to find jobs, and some are concerned with families wherever these families may be. (Interview 6 April 2009)

The man, sometimes called affectionately, 'our Bishop', by the migrants, Rev. Paul Verryn was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1978 at the age of 26. Inspired by a Sunday school teacher Verryn had decided to dedicate his life to the church from an early age. He completed compulsory military training prior to working within the Methodist circuits in Transkei, Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth. In 1984 he moved to Roodepoort in Gauteng Province after which he was stationed at the Methodist Mission house in Soweto from 1988-1997. He was subsequently elected as the Bishop of the Central District in 1997. He served in this capacity as well as being a minister at the Central Methodist Mission until the end of 2009 when he stepped down and took up the position of Superintendent Minister in the same church. Verryn was also part of a Methodist programme called Paballo ya Batho (Caring for the People) an outreach initiative for the inner city homeless people that involved meeting the needs of the city poor through providing food, medical care, spiritual care and counseling. In 2010, Verryn was briefly suspended from the church on allegations that he had exceeded his authority in instituting legal proceedings without the authority of the church. The Bishop is an anti-apartheid activist, who assisted and accommodated some of the victims of apartheid violence.

Paul Verryn's name came to prominence in South Africa in the late 1980s and is associated, tragically, with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Verryn gave refuge to Stompie Moeketsi, a teenage activist of the African National Congress (ANC) at the Methodist Mission House in Soweto, together with other political activists. Moeketsi and four other activists were abducted from this house and Moeketsi was subsequently killed in January 1989. The teenage activist was accused of being a police informer- an accusation that, during the years of the anti-apartheid struggle, was punishable through a gruesome death. Following the death of Stompie, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and members of the Mandela United Football Club [a clandestine political group] accused Verryn of sexually

abusing the activists under his care. Verryn was eventually cleared of these allegations at the TRC hearings as well as in the criminal trial of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Madikizela-Mandela on the other hand was eventually, convicted of involvement in the kidnap and assault of Stompie.

Given Verryn's history and background it is essential to examine the rationalities and ideologies governing both 'his' intervention and how it is articulated and deployed. Such an endevour will highlight not only the governance practices within the church but will be revelatory of rationalities that foreground the intervention. Verryn's intervention might, on the surface, be taken quite plausibly, to be a manifestation of his religious values and beliefs and in many ways it is. I show however, and I argue that, there are multiple rationalities that apart from the religious imperative form the collective ideologies behind the intervention. These rationalities are varied but are, broadly, an intricate combination of religious and political considerations. They include a commitment to humanity and social justice for the poor and indigent. Verryn's rationalities are articulated to different audiences at different moments but contribute to the existence and survival of the church- as a 'refugee' shelter for the indigent and vulnerable- even in the midst of social and political contestation.

A biblical imperative

In my conversation with Verryn he anchored the intervention, in the first instance and unsurprisingly, upon a religious philosophy as such:

> There is a biblical imperative. It's very clear in both the Old and New Testament and in other scriptures as well that immediately, a person finds oneself in a situation in which they are vulnerable because of either poverty or political persecution our doors need to go open. I mean if you want a scripture that epitomizes it for me, is when Jesus tells the story of what the kingdom of Heaven is gonna be like and he said: 'I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me'[51]. There is a good biblical theological foundation for doing what we are doing (Interview, 6 April 2009)

[51] This bible verse is found in the New Testament, Matthew 25: 35

The ideology seems to have been a consistent philosophy for a number of years, as the cleric tells me of how he accommodated political activists during the struggle against apartheid even before being elected Bishop of the church:

> In the early eighties, 60 000 people were on the run, particularly young people, many political activists, many young people sought refugee in the house and I opened the mission house to them. It was in Roodeport first [a place in Western Johannesburg], then in Soweto. Hundreds of people have gone through my care. It's been there [assistance to individuals] a long time before I was Bishop, a long time before I was Bishop. Some of the senior politicians have had refugee at my house. [Interview Rev. Paul Verryn 6 April 2009]

Verryn's religious ideology permeates his initiative and intervention at the church. This rationale was articulated in many of the sermons, preaching and in his address to the inhabitants and at times it found resonance with some of the church congregation. In a conversation with a member of a Methodist youth group, who was part of a group that had just donated goods to the inhabitants, he espoused the same teachings that Verryn often gave, as the rationale for the group's benevolence. Dumi stated that:

> We cannot ignore a real need that we see. We might go to other countries and be stranded. We are giving back to the community. That's what the Bible says: If you have you give to those who don't have. If you have two jerseys you give one to someone without. That's what we're doing. These people are in need. [Conversation with Dumi, 6 June 2009]

Verryn often attempted to inculcate such values as part of the everyday life of the inhabitants. This included constantly reminding the inhabitants of the rules governing residence or 'the ethos of the place'. The ethos were not however, merely a set of 'rules' anchored upon a religious philosophy but they were also stipulations meant to effectively 'manage' the church and the inhabitants.

Closely related to the religious ideal is the Verryn's concern for humanity and human dignity. One day, commenting on the closure of an asylum holding camp, located in Musina, and the impeding relocation of an estimated 2000 individuals, hitherto resident at the camp, to the church, Verryn told the gathered inhabitants:

> Create space for the quick movement of the people. Next week people will arrive from Musina. They are traumatised, they are nervous. They're coming to a city they don't know. The area will be chaotic. The people who are coming tomorrow are people, they are not rats, they are not cockroaches. (Fieldnotes, 6 March 2009)

In this instance, Verryn's speech is targeted at the migrants and it is about other migrants that were poised to move into the church. His speech therefore reflects and encapsulates the way he perceives the migrants in general as well as his views on humanity. While Verryn's message and preaching spoke to an ideal for human dignity, I often found such teachings to be at variance with the overcrowding and harsh living conditions which characterized the church building. The migrants frequently complained about the harsh living conditions within the church and perceived the building to be mostly devoid of the dignity and decency that Verryn spoke about, yearned for and advocated[52].

The church building and the accommodation of the migrants served a symbolic purpose for Verryn and was a means through which to address broader issues of poverty, inequality and social injustice. This building together with other dilapidated inner city buildings epitomized and spoke most eloquently, to the realities of social and structural inequalities as well as profound poverty within the country. Such a perception was apparent at a refugee exhibition where a poster, defending the accommodation of migrants within the church, stood defiantly, identifying other buildings, suffering the same dereliction and overcrowding as the church. The derelict inner city buildings were less visible and faced relatively less political scrutiny. The exhibition, showcasing the stories of unaccompanied children, was held under the theme 'children's stories' and was in conversation with the wider South African publics and served to deliver a message across different segments and categories of the population. The exhibition, which attracted media coverage, might also have been delivering a message to the donor organizations[53]. A poster at this exhibition proclaimed:

> Those staying in the CMM are the visible tip of an enormous iceberg. 95% of the 30,000 Zimbabweans in downtown Johannesburg are not at the CMM; thousands are living in far worse conditions. At Chambers an abandoned warehouse are living 550 migrants, 55 of them are blind, 12 are in wheelchairs.

[52] Chapter 3 gives some embodied accounts of the migrants and how they perceived the building.
[53] I show in the next chapter how the category of 'unaccompanied children' was preeminent and was often a battleground of exchange and contestation.

> Chambers is one of the many 'hijacked' buildings that have been invaded by squatters, who end up paying rent to a third party, who is not the owner of the building. The conditions defy belief: there is neither electricity nor external windows. The interior of Chambers is black as pitch and as fetid as a dungeon. On the 10th of February 2010 the tenants were evicted without due process and spent the next week living in the open on the pavement while the Legal Resources Centre took their case to court. Although life is bleak in Chambers building- yet people are so desperate for accommodation that they are fighting for the right to remain there. Bleak as it is, it is better than living on the open pavement.
>
> 'Life in the big cities is extremely precarious and unpleasant for many':
>
> In China Square hundreds of tenants crowd into floor after floor subdivided by blankets on ropes to give families or groups limited privacy from one another. The going rate to quite literally share a 70cm wide mattress on the floor is R200. Jah Crucial another Zimbabwean strongholder, shrieks of poverty and decay. The building was identified as being too dangerous to enter.

A political theology

In his teachings and some of his conversations Verryn perceived his intervention to be addressing the obvious failures of the state, especially, in its obligations to indigent communities. In this sense the cleric's intervention was presented as a personal commitment to addressing issues of social injustice, social inequality as well as being a practical response to the predicaments and difficulties that individuals encountered within the city of Johannesburg. At the refugee exhibition, Verryn stated that his initiative was 'a protest against [the] disparity between the rich and the poor'. In a broader sense, Verryn perceived his work towards the migrants as both a response as well as a symbolic pronouncement on poverty and social injustice. In my conversation with the Bishop he proffered:

> The streets of Johannesburg are violent and very disrespectful to humanity especially after sunset. People who are completely unsuspecting are finding themselves dispossessed of everything even their shoes, qualifications and so forth. Africa is meant to be a place that practices Ubuntu. So besides everything else a lot of people come into this country as migrants wanting to gain an opportunity to realize their potential and to extend themselves in society but its very tough when you have very few resources. So the building is making a statement about poverty. It's trying to say that in actual fact we are one another's responsibility. I can't say your problems have nothing

> to do with me, get on by yourself, because one day I might be where you are and I'll come to you and I'll expect you to extend your hand and offer me something different from rejection. (Interview, 6 April 2009)

The justification of the intervention, 'in the name of humanity', are neither novel nor surprising. Ilana Feldman and Miriam Ticktin (2010: 1) in a book entitled *In the name of humanity* draw our attention to the ways in which 'humanity', being a universalistic category, is mobilized meaningfully across political, religious and social divides and is effective in claim making across different sites.

Subsumed under the religious ideology and commitment to humanity is a political attempt to challenge the state to fulfill what the Bishop perceives as its responsibilities and obligations towards both its citizens as well as non-nationals. Verryn exudes dogged determination as he makes his point:

> I'll tell you what; the state has signed very fancy conventions for which they have not anticipated the impact or the implications [in terms] of strategy or finance. And even now as they want to move people to another place. The people who have really come forward and said they will help with the finance are the United Nations. It was the ANC government that signed the conventions so in actual fact I am supporting them.

The Bishop perceived the presence and residence of immigrants within the church as indicative of the failures of the South African government not only in its obligations to the migrants but in its responsibilities to the country's nationals. Speaking at a church event, Verryn stated that, the presence of migrants within the church was, 'not a migration policy failure, it's a poverty alleviation policy failure':

> 1.2 million Zimbabweans have in terms of the South Africa Constitution the same rights to basic services as citizens. The failure to deal with migrants satisfactorily is simply part of the government's greater failure to deal with ever-widening poverty gap in South Africa. If 41% of South Africans live below the poverty datum line, how can one expect migrants not to fall through the same gaps that mainly poor South Africans do? (Paul Verryn, refugee exhibition, May 2010)

There is an explicit elasticity and fluidity in the rationale that Verryn gives for his intervention. However, by pointing out the failures of the state the clergyman, ironically, establishes a relationship with the state, in ways that legitimize his intervention and provide him with some form of authority among the migrants and other groupings operating outside of the

church. Christian Lund (2006: 687) writing on the exercise of power and authority within diverse local arenas argues that power and authority within local institutions is often bolstered by 'constant references, implicit and explicit, to the state'. Often and perhaps paradoxically, this implies a desire for state recognition. Such instances include claims by different groups to be to be 'doing the job that the state fails to do' (ibid; 688)

In some of his teachings, Verryn skillfully infuses religious teachings with political commentary. On the 6th of March after the heads of church programmes had given their weekly reports, Verryn picked on an issue that one of the officials, Evans Mutonda, had touched upon to give a short thinly veiled comment on issues of governance:

> Evans spoke about the issue of abuse. The abuse of people in the building, asylum being granted for women and not men. That is abuse! People are being abused; nothing is being done. People are being arrested. There are people who are abusing their positions. We need to be careful when we talk about abuse. If you are in power then abuse it, then no ways. We want leaders, formal or informal who are transparent. We don't want crooks that spend R2.5 million while the country is starving. Amandla!

Verryn's 'imperatives' for the intervention are indeed varied but the different messages are often made to specific constituencies. Below I examine some of the responses Verryn's message and pronouncements drew as a way to gain an insight into the ways in which his intervention was perceived. I then discuss how the clergyman's ideologies enabled him to govern the place and the modes such practices of governance were foregrounded.

'It is dirty in our eyes, not in our hearts'

Verryn's initiative courted controversy and attracted immense contestation within the church as well as among wider publics within social and political domains in South Africa. The clergyman was acutely aware of such criticism and he conceded that within his congregation:

> Some members of the church are irritated by the scruffiness of the building and sometimes by the disrespect of the building that's caused by the hurting of the building in some places. Some people are irritated by the noise levels; some people are irritated by over crowdedness of the place. So, it's not radically accepted by everybody, it's a hard and long journey that (interview 6 April 2009)

Despite the criticism and opposition Verryn's intervention was lauded by some of the Methodist church leaders. Reverend Kim, for example, saw Verryn's initiative and intervention as an embodiment of Christianity:

> It's a real ministry. I think, I believe passionately in a ministry. I mean no one is going to show them any kindness, you know they sort of feel they are a community here and that's what church is about. It's about caring for those who are marginalized or some of what its about, caring for the marginalized, displaced, lost- in whatever term. I believe passionately in the ministry here. I have no qualms about people being in the building.

The cleric was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University recognition of his work to migrants and the poor/indigent in general. Speaking at a celebration mass at the church, renowned Methodist cleric and guest of honour at the event, Mvume Dandala lauded the Bishop for his work towards the poor but also aptly captured the contradictions of Verryn's intervention when he remarked:

> It is dirty in our eyes, not in our hearts. The only way we can honour Verryn as South Africans is by caring for the poor. Verryn has shown that God does not favour certain group of people. He has shown that, even the weakest and the most vulnerable, are appreciated by God.

Beyond the contradictory and ambiguous responses to his initiative Bishop Paul Verryn was an authoritative figure that had legitimacy among the majority of those who stayed within the church. Verryn's benevolence, religious and moral philosophy, as well as his anti-apartheid background made his standing and authority before the inhabitants almost unquestionable. In numerous conversations with informants, the migrants were recognized as the 'Bishop's people' ('vanhu vaBishop'). On the 9th of October 2009, the inhabitants, threatened with eviction from the church staged a demonstration and some of them held banners stating: 'Hands off our Bishop'*;* with some stating 'Shut up and Help; the Bishop- Our Saviour'. Verryn's authority and legitimacy derived from his control of what I perceive as a moral or political economy as well as a material economy. Such power and control enabled him in many ways to govern and manage the inhabitants of the church building. The clergyman's teachings and preaching as well as a pro-poor political philosophy constituted part of a moral economy. His ideas found expression in the manner in which the inhabitants were compelled to make token contributions each week on Saturdays. On these days, the migrants had to give the security personnel at the door R5 or at

least any amount they could afford. The amount, which on average amounted to R300/week was given as an offering to the main church during the Sunday morning services as a gift from the migrants [Refugee meeting minutes].

On another level, Verryn's teachings particularly his constant enunciation of the 'ethos of the place' constituted a dominant, normative religiosity which on its regulated residency within the church. The ethos constituted a set of codified rules and regulations that on an everyday basis formed broad stipulations, which had to be followed, religiously, by the migrants. Outside of these rules one's behaviour could be held accountable. In certain instances, individuals could be thrown out of the church for failing to go and seek employment, failure to clean up their spaces or failure to attend church services or the weekly refugee meeting held on Fridays. Reflecting on how the Bishop managed the church one of my informants detailed in her diary that:

> Today the Bishop was in a very bad temper. As usual every Wednesday everyone must attend the mid-week service. No one attended. Only a few students and a few individuals were in the sanctuary. There was supposed to be Holy Communion, which never occurred because the Bishop had quit and ordered the security to drive everyone out of the church building. The security did according to the order. They came to Minor Hall and explained that the Bishop is very angry. A rumour is saying that it is because the whole church council wants all the refugees out of the Central [Methodist] Church. The Bishop and a few others disagree so Paul wants the refugees' cooperation to convince the council otherwise. He is angered because only a handful amongst the thousands that stay here attend the programs meant for them [Nyarai Alexis diary 12 October 2009].

Views and experiences such as the one recounted by Nyarai in her diary were given credence in November 2009 when a large group of women, accused of leaving their babies unattended and being drunk, were evicted from the church building. They had to spend a number of nights sleeping outside the church premises before a few of them were re-admitted back, while the rest had to find accommodation elsewhere[54].

One day, I met Loyce Chitongo, one of my informants, at the offices of a Zimbabwe welfare organization SAWIMA where I was visiting the Director of the organization, Joyce Dube. I had met Loyce, months before and had several conversations with her at the church. I had however, not seen her for a couple of weeks before our chance meeting at SAWIMA.

[54] See *The Star,* 9 November 2009, p.1 'Drinking moms' thrown out of the refugee church'

Reason: Hi Loyce, I haven't seen you in a span. Are you still at Central?

Loyce: *Ndakadzingwa naBishop* [I was expelled by the Bishop]. I am the only person *kudzingwa muchurch* [to be chased away from the church]. I went there last week and the security denied me entry at the door. Imagine, I am the only person to be denied entry to Central- everyone else can go in, even criminals.

'Why?' Joyce, who had been following the conversation, asked before I could pose the same question.

Loyce: The Bishop said I caused a lot of confusion because I told him; 'These are people not baboons, you need to put in place some systems. Can you imagine if these people were white, it would be different'? There are no systems. I told him it doesn't work. These are not baboons. When he ignored me I wrote him a letter and copied it to the DHA [Department of Home Affairs]. When I came back (from Zimbabwe), I heard all hell broke loose. So the Bishop doesn't want to see me anymore. (Fieldnotes, 21 September 2009)

The practice of governance within the church is such that all affronts to Verryn's authority are acted upon such as in Loyce's case and in the case of women who consumed alcohol. There is an expectation that individuals have to acquiesce to a particular order and perhaps to show loyalty to the clergyman. This might have had to do with the pressures- political, social and perhaps economic- that Verryn had to contend with almost on an everyday basis. When individuals disobeyed the set stipulations the consequences could include, as Nyarai explained, existential problems and threats for the church. The mode and practice of governance, seemingly, built upon loyalty and patronage and enforced, sometimes through evictions was crucial to the survival and very existence of the church.

The funding of the refugee ministry were funds were mainly paid through the Bishop was a source through which the Bishop derived authority and partially controlled a material economy within the church. The Bishop handpicked chairpersons of committees as well as gave some of the inhabitants, employment within these committees. He was also responsible for paying all the employees. In instances were Verryn was unhappy with the work being done by some of the individuals he would withhold payment even for a number of weeks and this tended to affect even those who would have been discharging their duties satisfactorily. The cleaners, for

example, went for four weeks without being paid as the Bishop was not satisfied with their work. (Fieldnotes 17 July 2009).

In the section below I examine how the migrants relate to the structure of governance within the church and also 'carve' out their own spaces of authority, and how this produces other modes and practices of rule.

Figures of Authority within the Ray of Hope Ministry

Bishop Paul Verryn is undoubtedly the central figure within the Ray of Hope Ministry. While he has immense influence and authority and in many ways, directly and indirectly, dominated the lives of the migrants, the church ought however, to be seen as an active site of contestation and negotiation offering and opening up different possibilities for individuals emplaced within its confines. The church is a place where multiple individuals exercise power in diverse ways and to varying degrees. In this sense the 'exercised authority becomes the amalgamated result of the exercise of power by a variety of individuals' (Lund 2006, 686). In this place, the practices of power and authority provide different possibilities for individuals. In this section, I examine how different 'key' individuals engage and relate to the Bishop as well as how they incorporate themselves within the governance system of the church. I look at the profiles of three individuals who individually adopt and deploy different strategies of governing. The individuals derive legitimacy and authority from diverse sources. The first of these is Evans Mutonda, an immensely popular personality who used representation to rise to leadership. The second is Mercy Moyo, a church veteran who uses brokerage; while the third individual is Adam Makanza who is part of the security leadership at the church.

Evans Mutonda

Evans' appearance was invariably at odds with that of many people resident at the church. His hair and beard were always neatly trimmed and often he was clad in neat shirts and jeans. On Sunday mornings, he would be smartly dressed complete with a tie and formal jacket, attire, which gave him a look of extraordinary importance as he attended the morning church services. Unsurprisingly, most of the migrants would refer journalists, researchers and the like to

Evans if ever one needed to be shown around the church building or needed practical assistance. The confident man was quite close to Verryn and would often travel around with the clergyman. In many ways he was the Bishop's aide. Seemingly unassuming, Evans' would however, often greet me as well as many of the Shona speakers with the immodest, *'Ndeipi, toita sei?'* [Hi, what can we do for you?]. His rhetorical question, complemented by a bunch of keys that he would often carry around, always captured a sense that Evans could indeed open up numerous possibilities, even the ones locked up in the intricate church building. The greeting always somewhat raised one's expectations but was, in fairness, perhaps not entirely misplaced, for Evans held multiple positions, which opened diverse possibilities for the inhabitants.

Unlike most of the church's inhabitants, Evans was one of the few who were involved in the activities of the main church having expressed a desire to train as a Minister in the Methodist church. In the structures of the refugee ministry, he was in charge of legal affairs having represented himself as a paralegal officer. This responsibility entailed that he gave advice and reports in the refugee meetings about applications for asylum seeker permits, prepared individuals for asylum application interviews and he coordinated the collection of affidavits, in instances where the rights of the church's inhabitants were violated. He also assisted failed asylum applicants lodge appeals with the Refugee Reception Office. Evans would liaise with, both, the Bishop and legal organizations such as the Legal Resources Centre and Lawyers for Human Rights who often took up the church's legal cases. In the refugee meetings, it was quite common for Evans to berate the Department of Home Affairs, as well as the abuse of the migrants by unscrupulous employers and individuals. These were issues that touched at the heart of many of the problems that the migrants encountered on an everyday basis but they undoubtedly made Evans a hugely popular figure among the inhabitants. His address to the inhabitants, such as the one below, would often draw a wave of optimism and huge applause among the audience:

> The most important issue I want to report on is that we continue to receive reports of abuse by the Department of Home Affairs. Home Affairs is incompetent. Right now asylum is being given to women not men. They don't want to see Zimbabweans [in this country]. People are being arrested and deported. People are being abused and nothing is being done. Xenophobia is institutionalized at Crown Mines and in Pretoria [Refugee Reception Offices]. The other issue is that people from this community, are also being abused, by employers. People are being abused at workplaces. There is non-payment of wages and people don't adhere to fair labour practices. I want to advise

> you that if you get a job, come to *us*, come to the Bishop's office and have the details of the employer or individual recorded so that if anything happens to you *we* can follow-up. [Own emphasis; Fieldnotes 6 March 2009]

Apart from his numerous responsibilities within the refugee ministry, Evans also worked for the Medecins San Frontiers (MSF-Belgium) a medical non-governmental organization that had a clinic next to the church building. During the course of 2009, Evans, was appointed community mobilization officer when the organization embarked on a project to assist 'unaccompanied children' living within the streets and abandoned buildings in the inner city. This position required him to identify and enumerate 'vulnerable' children. Most importantly, it placed him, strategically, at the intersection, between the church, its inhabitants and humanitarian and welfare organizations that worked at the church.

Although he was quite affable, I also found Evans an enigmatic character, a perception that was entrenched the day he invited me to have a drink with him in nearby Newtown, so I could talk to him in a much quieter environment than the church. The journey to Newtown seemed miles away, Evans drove the relatively new car, jerking it throughout the way and bringing it to abrupt stops at each traffic light intersection. I was extremely tense but being a late Sunday afternoon, I drew a measure of comfort from the virtually deserted streets and crucially, the absence of marauding *taxis*, which are driven in a legendary reckless manner. I wondered, though, if Evans was authorized to drive and how he, as he sometimes claimed, drove Paul Verryn around. The man aged 31, was a former member of the military in Zimbabwe. He had deserted the army when his political activism for the then opposition party, the MDC, became known and he feared victimization from his superiors. He arrived at the church in 2008, at a time when, the institution was immensely overcrowded and some of the men had to sleep outside the building, along the arcade. Relative to many of the 'refugee' leaders, he was a relatively new arrival, which made his rise to an influential position more remarkable. His rise to an influential leadership role had been inadvertently aided by an incident that occurred just outside the church, when he managed to stop a brutal fight among a group of young men. The dramatic event had seen Evans being regarded as a shrewd negotiator. Much of his elevation, however, owed more to his resourcefulness and pragmatism. During his initial days at the church, Evans volunteered to assist newly arrived immigrants prepare for asylum seeker interviews as well as draft letters of appeal when their asylum claims were rejected. In instances where the rights of the inhabitants

were violated, such as when some 350 people were arrested for loitering, Evans would collect affidavits from them for onwards submission to both Verryn and groups such as the Legal Resources Centre that assisted and represented some of the church cases in court. This made him one of the most sought after individuals at the church by organizations and the inhabitants. Inhabitants often asked Evans to make representations on their behalf to the Bishop in cases in which he could not personally assist.

As a result of the multiple positions he held, Evans was an influential figure among the church's residents as he could engage with the Bishop and other refugee ministry leaders as well as NGO staff which was crucial in getting much needed privileges and benefits. The Bishop, for instance, gave Evans access to and control of two large storerooms, where donated goods, such as blankets and foodstuffs, were kept. Evans' partner together with the couple's friends slept in these secure storerooms, shielded from the daily tensions and often incessant fighting in the rest of the building. In some instances, Evans would liaise with other key figures such as the security officials to allocate an individual space within the building. As the Bishop's aide, Evans was also given the task of distributing second hands clothes that were usually dropped off by individuals at the Bishop's office. As a result of his numerous commitments, Evans' could only carry out this task at night and this meant that goods and clothes could only be distributed to those who personally knew him or the ones to whom he disclosed the time and date the distribution was to be done.

The numerous responsibilities, the man held, also created possibilities for many other people he knew or those he decided to show favour to. In order to execute some of his duties, particularly those within the refugee ministry he had to delegate responsibilities to other individuals. He could also negotiate with NGOs such as the Solidarity Peace Trust, that needed people to carry out tasks such as cooking, for example, and place people whom he knew and trusted into these positions. Within a context of tension, deprivation and intense competition for scarce resources such relationships were essential as they were reciprocal. Individuals would often assist Evans execute some of his duties and in turn they could be granted better and secure sleeping places and some odd jobs whenever, these arose within organizations. While Evans rose through the leadership ranks through spokesmanship, pragmatism and sheer enterprise, Mercy, 'a church veteran' rose through brokerage. I detail her story below:

The church 'veteran': Mercy Moyo

In everyday conversations, church residents made a distinction between new arrivals and 'veterans'. Veterans[55] were among the powerful and influential people within the building. Most of these individuals had particular spheres of control and their classification as veterans meant they could make essential claims such as the places they could occupy and they could lay claims to some of the sought after donations or attend seminars organized by NGOs. According to one of my informants, Nyarai Mungai:

> 'Veterans' are people who have stayed at the church for three to four years and are known to the Bishop. These are people who have experienced a lot and seen a lot at the church. They arrived when there were fewer people and everyone had to register with Paul, get a card and be in the building before 10pm. In those days the Bishop used to lock the doors.

Mercy Moyo is one of the church veterans. The woman, who was approaching her forties, stayed in the female only, Minor Hall and was a much-feared personality. When I disclosed to one of my informants that I intended to visit the Hall and if possible talk to some of the women, she sounded a word of stern caution, 'That's a hall for the tough, Mercy, doesn't want someone who asks too many questions like you do'. (Fieldnotes, 23 June 2009). Indeed many of the informants who stayed with Mercy in the Minor Hall would not agree to have any conversations without ascertaining and fully satisfying themselves that Mercy had been informed and had granted her express permission for an interview to be conducted- despite the permission I had been granted by Verryn and most importantly their own willingness to be interviewed. Before meeting Mercy, I had conjured up an image of her as a stern, fearsome looking woman, probably with a large frame. On the contrary, Mercy was a short, lean and dark woman whose demeanour was however, stout and stern and unsurprisingly, was renowned for a fiery temper. She was generally feared. She was vocal and outspoken in refugee meetings, where she often spoke out against the abuse of women as well as admonishing the inhabitants to keep the church clean at all times. Away from the public domain, such as in meetings where I could observe her,

[55] The common dictionary definition of the term 'veteran' is that of a person who has had long experience in a particular field. Usually the word is applied to people who have served in the military. In post-2000 Zimbabwe, the term assumed new meanings, transformed from merely defining the former liberation war fighters, the term is used to lay claims and entitlements in given contexts but based not merely on experience but even suffering and hardship.

Mercy, played a representative role for the women in Minor Hall. In a conversation I had with Nyarai, who stayed in Minor Hall, she revealed that:

> If there is any problem, Mercy goes straight to the Bishop. Everyone knows Mercy, including Reverend Kim. We even call her 'Chairman', that's her nickname. She's been here for a long time. She and Clara allocate space in Minor hall. They enforce the cleaning regimes. They ensure that the bathroom and toilet in the [Minor] hall, are used by women who stay in here only. They've seen a lot. Veterans can't be denied a place.

The nickname 'chairman' ascribed to Mercy a masculine status and the qualities that are assumed to go with such an ascription- strong and aggressive. These qualities and perhaps her persona legitimated her position among the ordinary inhabitants as both a veteran but also a fiery leader. Her legitimacy among the inhabitants did not only derive from her authoritative running of the Minor Hall but Mercy was also an active political leader within the church. She would lead demonstrations against the ill treatment of the migrants at the church. Unlike most of the migrants she would avail herself for television interviews defending the residence of the migrants within the church and in many ways this earned her legitimacy within the eyes of many of those at the church. In my conversation with Mercy, she revealed that:

> We went through a lot in 2006 [at the church]. The men from *Soweto* would come and harass us but if you're cornered, you become strong and you have to survive. That's when we said enough is enough. We fought back and we would beat them up. Nowadays in Minor Hall, we guide, we offer advice and protection for other women. When someone [new] comes in, you want to lessen their burden. This is like a school; I have leant a lot from the Bishop. He's practical about helping; he doesn't just preach and send you away. He wants to practically help. That's what I try and do. [Interview 24 October 2009]

Within the church there were other personalities like Mercy who exercised their power or authority in the different spheres of the church. These included Charamba, who at one time was the chairman of the refugee ministry and Paul who worked as a plumber. Paul would at times go into the Roberts' room kitchen and admonish the women in the room as such:

> Some of you forget why you came to South Africa. You spend the whole day sleeping in Roberts room or just doing nothing *kuChimunhu. Chimbogezawo utsvinde uende konotsvaga basa. Tsvaga mapart-time anoitwa nevamwe* [Bath, look good and go and look for a job. Look for part-time jobs that others are doing. [Fieldnotes, 16 July 2009]

Others within the church curved out their regimes of 'rule' and authority within the jobs and occupations they did at the church. These included Adrien, a security guard:

Leadership through security: Adrien

Alongside authoritative figures such as Evans and Mercy there was also a group of powerful figures that worked mainly as the church security. The 'church security' was made up of Zimbabwean migrants, also resident at the church that had been appointed by Verryn to maintain order within the church. The deployment for security personnel at the church had been necessitated by the xenophobic attacks of 2008 when armed vigilante groups had attempted to attack the immigrants at the church. Unlike Evans and Mercy, the church 'security' relied mainly on brute force, aggression and at times extortion, to assert their dominance and authority. The presence and impolitic deportment of the church security highlighted the fatal flaws and limitations in the management structure of the church.

The church security was made up of a group of about fifteen, mostly men and a couple of women, who took turns to sit at the entrance of the church building. They would often quiz anyone entering the building and would accompany individuals and groups to the office of the Bishop or when requested by the Bishop, they would show a visitor around the building. Their brief seemed to be that of maintaining order in the building, a responsibility that entailed that they had to ensure that the Bishop's 'ethos' were followed by the migrants. This included the arduous task of ensuring that individuals sleeping within the 'public' areas of the building such as the stairways, the auditorium, the chapel and the like, were out of the building at dawn, as well as maintaining order when goods were being distributed. These were tasks that inevitably did not endear the security to the majority of the inhabitants. The security personnel however, often went beyond their 'formal' duties. In many informal discussions with the inhabitants, there were complaints about how the security extorted money, stole donations that were dropped off by the entrance and also that they were violent towards many of the immigrants. One of my informants, a man called Chuma complained bitterly about the security in a conversation I had with him:

> The security is a mafia. They boast that, 'The Bishop is in our hands'. Whoever is close to the Bishop can abuse anyone. Alpha, [the school principal] can abuse the teachers, he can hire and fire them at will. Eliza [the refugee ministry secretary] can beat up anyone, even men. These people have access to the Bishop. If you go to report your case to the Bishop, he won't attend to you for four days or up until you give up. The security, have strategies to oppress people and they have enough protection.

In one of the nights I spent at the church a young man was caught stealing from people's pockets while they were asleep in the dark. He was severely beaten up by the security guards who caught him. Bleeding, he was brought before a senior security guard whom I was seated with in the main auditorium of the church. The senior official quickly recognized the young man and scolded him for the alleged theft:

> When I heard you the other day selling a phone, *ndakakubigger* (I was impressed) because you had stolen it at Von Brandis (a street- a block away from the church). If you steal outside the church and sell here, it's fine by me because you can sell to us cheap. But if you steal in here then we'll beat you up because people will complain and we'll get into trouble with the Bishop for not doing our jobs. Do you want us to be fired?' (Fieldnotes 14 July 2009)

Incidents such as these as well as bitter accusations were commonplace and were often raised during refugee meetings. A conversation I had with one of the senior security official, Adrien Makanza, confirmed the widely held perceptions about the church security. The man, a former army officer in Zimbabwe, boasted:

> *Murungu akandipa nyembe. Ndinoita zvandinoda. Vanhu varikutonga mubuilding ndini na Ambrose.* [The Bishop gave me powers. I do as I please. Ambrose and I are the two people running this building] (Fieldnotes 01 October 2009)

A boastful man, I ordinarily would have taken Adrien's sentiments with a pinch of salt. However, my everyday experiences with him suggested otherwise. Adrien was often stationed at the entrance of the church even on days he was said not to be on duty. Whenever, one wanted to enter the building during the day, Adrien would ask numerous questions, the questioning ending with a refusal of such a request or with his request for 'a drink'. Adrien had been appointed as the second in command among the security officials. His military background had assisted in his appointment.

Conclusion

The governance practice at the Central Methodist Church is loose and amorphous. The chapter shows that the church intervention is an effort and initiative of one individual- Rev. Paul Verryn. The rationale for accommodating indigent migrants is foregrounded upon varied ideologies. These include religious ideals; there are also humanitarian logics as well as political imperatives that, taken together, underpin the clergyman's initiative and effort. In deploying his intervention, the church authority addresses numerous audiences within the church, amongst the migrants and beyond the confines of the church building he speaks to the wider South African publics through tackling questions of inequality, governance and xenophobic violence which among other issues continue to belie the 'new' South Africa. The amorphous nature of the intervention is in the manner through which it is strategically articulated, to different audiences, and then deployed in practical and productive ways, through loyalty to the Bishop and his ideals. The very nature of the intervention is an immense source of strength because it ensures the continued survival of the building as an improvised space for 'refugees'. The regime of rule also ensures that the Bishop's intervention continues to exist as constituted even in the midst of practical challenges and political threats to the existence of the church. These practices of governance allow the church to survive by appealing to different power structures and influences, at one and the same time.

Paradoxically, the loose and amorphous nature of governance of this church is also one of the sources of tension and conflict. There are a multiplicity of power relations and authority structures within the church and power within this place is not concentrated in the Bishop alone. Legitimacy could, however, be derived from associating with the clergyman. While the Bishop of the church was the dominant authority, individuals 'hollowed out' and 'carved out' their own spheres and spaces of influence and authority within the intervention. This then permitted violent practices such as those by the 'security' to emerge and even flourish under the surface.

The dominance of one individual in this particular intervention and its opaque nature when compared to other secular technologies also gave effect to pervasively held beliefs of exclusion and the appropriation of suffering. In a sense, and drawing from this presentation, the

church may be seen as a resource which the religious leader creatively uses to engage productively with different publics and different matters.

The following chapter looks at a different set of actors that were active at the church- the humanitarian organizations. It also examines a different form of rule and regime of governance- biopolitical- and how this regime is deployed and exercised. I also look at how the interventions instituted by these organizations articulated with the church's initiative as well as the aspirations of mobile individuals.

Chapter 5

Ambivalent compassions? Humanitarian organizations, interventions and the 'suffering' migrants

Introduction

This chapter examines the humanitarian organizations and some of the interventions they instituted for individuals that inhabited the church. The previous chapters highlight, in different ways, that the Central Methodist Church and its inhabitants were subject to many actors that attempted to manage the place. This chapter looks at one broad category of such actors- the humanitarian organizations and the interventions they instituted at the Central Methodist church to alleviate suffering among the inhabitants. In addition, the chapter focuses on how these interventions spoke to the lifeworlds and experiences of the migrants. The chapter is therefore located at an intersection or interface where humanitarian organizations and their interventions meet and interact with the lives of the migrants.

The main purpose of the chapter is to illuminate what happens at the intersection where the humanitarian organizations meet with their beneficiaries. Essentially, I attempt to show how the humanitarian organizations and their interventions articulate or interact with the aspirations and the everyday practices of the migrants. In the broader thesis, this presentation analyzes the rationalities behind humanitarian interventions as well as the practices of the organizations. In this sense, the chapter offers a purview through which to interrogate how humanitarian organizations deal with suffering in particular localities and at specific moments and how these organizations relate amongst themselves. A related concern is to examine how the deployed strategies and interventions resonate or articulate with the aspirations and survival strategies of the individuals and the outcomes that emerge in the process. What are the processes through which individuals enter into the realms of intervention programmes? How do the intended beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance live and negotiate these interventions? Which forms of suffering and hardships afflicting the migrants, are alleviated? What are the consequences?

In order to elucidate the different questions sufficiently, the chapter focuses specifically on two organizations that were active at the church or drew beneficiaries from the church, the Medecins San Frontieres (MSF), as well as the Southern African Centre for Survivours of Torture (SACST). In looking at these organizations and their interventions, the intention is neither to evaluate these entities nor to analyze the efficacy of their interventions, rather the idea is to explore the nature and practices of emergent and dominant ethical and humanitarian regimes concerned with the care and survival of individuals living in difficulties and how these ultimately speak to, articulate or impinge on the lives of the church's inhabitants. In this presentation, I also attempt to look at the politics, pressures and negotiations that surround the organizations and how these become deteminants of the interventions instituted.

The chapter is organized as follows: the first section of the chapter provides a cursory mapping of the different organizations that frequented the church and their interventions. The second section gives a detailed description and analysis of the intervention programmes of SACST as obtained through formal interviews and conversations with the staff at the organizations as well as through some of the meetings I attended at the organization. I also give the accounts of two of the church's inhabitants who were beneficiaries of the organization's programmes as a way to examine and understand the ways through which individuals accessed the interventions. The last section of the chapter traces the intervention programmes of MSF-Belgium particularly their programme on unaccompanied children. Apart from highlighting MSF's activities this section attempts to show how the organization's intervention sat alongside the activities of the church as well as that of other NGOs. Furthermore, the section highlights the consequences that the focus on categories on children had at the church for both the different organizations and the inhabitants. In this way the chapter shows the interactions and contestations between the different NGOs as well as some of the outcomes of these exchanges. Collectively, the cases in this chapter analyse the intersection where the organizations interact and also where they meet with the targets of their goodwill- the migrants.

Humanitarian[56] interventions and the 'politics of life'

Contexts or 'sites of emergency' such as refugee camps and asylum holding centres have very often become hubs of activity for humanitarian organizations (see Feldman and Ticktin 2010; Fassin 2010; Millner 2011). Likewise, it seemed to me that the church was characterized, at least at one level, by the sheer density of the organizations that sought involvement in managing and caring for the lives of the inhabitants. The context of extreme hardship that characterized the lives of the inhabitants attracted a number of organizations who either actively visited the place and whose activities and interventions were specifically deployed to 'care' for and alleviate different forms of suffering among the migrants. Broadly, these organizations provided legal, welfare and medical assistance to individuals. During the course of my fieldwork, I encountered Medecins San Frontieres (MSF) who ran a clinic at the church building that also provided trauma counseling; In due course the organization attempted to assist 'unaccompanied child migrants' within the church and the inner city. Care International provided medical assistance particularly, antenatal support. There were also legal aid entities and these included, most prominently, Legal Resources Centre (LRC) and the Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) who through their refugee and migrant rights programme provided legal assistance primarily to indigent categories of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the asylum or immigration system. These two organizations also provided legal support in legal cases whenever lawsuits were instituted by or against Rev. Paul Verryn and the inhabitants. The bulk of the other organizations provided welfare assistance such as food and clothing and these included the Solidarity Peace Trust (SPT), a non-profit organization, Gift of the Givers, Peace for Africa and the Kingdom Dream Centre (all religious or faith based organizations).

Within the city there were other organizations whose programme activities were not specifically directed to the migrants staying at the church but to which individuals sought assistance. These included church organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church, Salvation Army and the Jesuits Refugee Services (JRS). These religious organizations provided welfare support in the form of food and clothing and at times gave limited financial support depending

[56] I have used the term humanitarian rather loosely to encompass legal, medical, psychosocial and ethical regimes working within a human rights discourse. Partly this is a reflection of the fluid and varied nature of the organisations as well as the intervention programmes these entities offered.

on the needs of a particular individual and the resources at the organization's disposal. There were also 'secular' organizations such as the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), Southern African Centre for Survivors of Torture (SACST) who provided mainly psychosocial support and trauma counseling as well as limited humanitarian assistance in the form of financial and medical provision on a case-by-case basis. CSVR ran a campaign against gender based violence at the church and they had a desk that was manned by volunteers, from within the churches, who were appointed as gender monitors and to whom individuals could report forms of gender violence. The Southern Africa Women in Migration Association (SAWIMA) and the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum (ZEF) were set up by Zimbabwean migrants and at times with material support from such organizations as the USAid, IOM and the UNHCR offered a combination of welfare, legal and humanitarian support. SAWIMA, for example once instituted a voluntary repatriation programme that offered the church inhabitants free transport to Zimbabwe. In instances, where disease outbreaks were feared, such as when there was a suspected TB outbreak in the church building in August 2009, organizations such as Reproductive Health Research Unit (RHRU) together with MSF would spearhead disease control campaigns in the building where the inhabitants were encouraged to be tested and medications were administered to the afflicted. I also encountered such organizations as the African Human Rights Forum (AHRF) who would provide food and legal services to the migrants. Most of these organizations also had 'advocacy' for the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as an area of activity.

There were also political interests groups such as the Crisis Coalition South Africa desk (otherwise known as the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition) who, with funding from the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) as well as the International Crisis Group, sought to coordinate civil society initiatives and activities towards a resolution of the Zimbabwean crisis. For the political pressure groups, the church was a poignant symbol of the Zimbabwean 'crisis'. At the church, the Crisis Coalition and other civil society organization often mobilized individuals for demonstrations and discussions on the Zimbabwean 'crisis'. Most notably, individuals from within the church were mobilized for demonstrations and pickets at various venues where the regional bloc, SADC leaders met for negotiations with leaders of Zimbabwean political parties.

Although this locality attracted such a high number of organizations the paradox was that, while the organizations sought to be active and were at times allowed to institute particular interventions, there was a sense in which these organizations were seen as being absent or invisible from the everyday life at the church. In my conversations with the inhabitants, a common complaint was that the NGOs were benefitting instead of (or in place of) the migrants who were the intended beneficiaries or upon whom appeals for funding and donations were made. Such views seemed to stem from the fact that, apart from MSF-Belgium, none of the organizations were in actual fact (physically) located at the church. While AHRF tried, for instance, to maintain some visibility at the church they had only a single member of staff, Ms. Tsamba, who came to the church on a daily basis. Most of the organizations also had 'advocacy' for the rights of the migrants as an area of activity and there was at times difficulty in delineating their 'political' activity from their apolitical 'humanitarian' concerns. Granted, the two were perhaps related and could not be treated separately but in a place were there were people of diverse of political histories this posed quandaries and was a source of tension. Individuals who went for demonstrations also claimed to do so in order to benefit from the T-shirts that were distributed as well as some money that the organizers of these demonstrations gave them to purchase food during the march. In this way the organizations were often perceived not to be involved in the everyday lives of the inhabitants in substantial ways but only at particular moments and for efforts, which were not seen as having yielded broader social, political and economic benefits for participants.

The presence of a substantial number of governing entities at the CMC meant that there tended to be contestations over the categories of individuals to be assisted. Consequentially, different interventions meant that the church's inhabitants were seen through different lenses, at the same time and also at different moments. While CSVR, for instance, ran gender-based violence workshops targeted at women, presumably, as the victims, this defined men, indirectly, as the perpetrators. The organization selected female migrants to be gender-based violence 'monitors' within the church building and their brief was to report on instances of gender violence. In a sense, this rendered other forms of violence, such as the overt fighting between members of different ethnic groups invisible from the radar of the organizations. Equally, forms of suffering such as chronic illnesses were then not accorded much attention by the NGOs.

The high presence of the different organizations that acted upon the church, however, lended credence to the observation that the church and its inhabitants like other such localities, was subject to a form of 'biopolitical' management. An increasing number of scholars are casting attention on the forms of life emerging within particular localities or among groups of people and the organizations that act upon these groups. One of these, Nguyen (2005) points out that the increasing scope of humanitarian intervention is manifest in the emergence of diverse groupings under the banner of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) whose activities are concentrated around specific sites. These are often settings and localities of visible suffering, which threaten 'the lives and well-being of populations, as in the case of famines, war, and epidemics' and call 'for timely interventions' (Nguyen 2005; 126). In such settings, biology is paramount and often becomes the rationale upon which interventions are predicated. In these settings suffering bodies, pain and hardship become the medium through which individuals gain societal sympathy and access the benefits of citizenship (see Rose and Novas 2005; Petryna 2002; Fassin and D'Halluin 2005).

Many scholars who draw upon the writings of Agamben argue that humanitarianism tends to defend human beings reduced to their physical life at the margins and interventions are often times embedded on the universality of biological life where attention is on the apolitical, suffering body. With humanitarianism as the driving logic only the suffering or sick body (rather than the threatened political body) is seen as a legitimate manifestation of a common humanity 'worthy of recognition in the form of rights' (Ticktin 2006; 39).

While forms of humanitarian governance are increasingly gaining traction and attracting immense attention, opponents of these ethical regimes point out that there are limitations to such forms of corporeal governance. Some of the limitations are that individually targeted interventions often leave broader societal, economic, political and social structures- that, at times, produce suffering and hardship- intact. Furthermore, in instituting interventions, organizations and humanitarian actors may draw from global assemblages of agendas and categories and in the process may ignore or even destabilize local grievances and 'the historical contexts of conditions to which [they] respond' (Redfield 2005: 329).

While arguments put forward by many scholars on biological forms of citizenship and how these are reshaping lives and transforming identities and subjectivities among individuals

considered ‘victims’ are indeed compelling and undeniably, quite evident in a number of different contexts, I propose that the rationalities governing NGOs be understood also in terms of the pressures the organizations operate under. In this, I build my analysis upon the writings of Sally Engle Merry (2006) who argues that organizations often have to ‘map the middle’ between the demands of ‘local’ beneficiaries and ‘global’ donors. Merry (ibid) perceives NGO leaders, activists, academics and human rights lawyers as part of ‘translators’ who transfer and then mediate global or transnational concepts into local contexts. For Merry (2006: 42) as translators:

> scramble for funds, they need to select issues that international donors are interested in- such as female genital cutting, women’s empowerment or the trafficking of women and children- and connect these agendas to problems that interest local populations.

In this sense, a site of emergency, such as the church- with a high number of NGOs- has to be seen as a place of intense contestation and negotiation where the organizations attempt to satisfy different and perhaps, competing interests, such as donor funding requirements on one hand and the needs of their beneficiaries on the other.

Although Merry (2006) enables us to explicate the relationships, politics and negotiations obtaining between donors, NGOs and the beneficiaries, when her conceptualization is applied within the church, a place comprised of different organizations and individuals of diverse political histories, it does not go far in explaining the contestations and ambiguities that emerge among the inhabitants and the organizations. In addition to Merry, I therefore also utilize the elaborations given by Jensen (2012) who adopts a Deleuzian approach and departs from a focus on institutions (donors, the state, organizations and beneficiaries) and adopts an analysis that perceives sites occupied by NGOs as being characterised by intense negotiations, re-configurations and shifting interventions and classifications of those understood to be victims.

In such instances, ‘victims’ may enter into intervention programs but often in ways that may not capture how they comprehend their suffering. In the case of the church and its migrants- the different interventions, while alleviating some of the inhabitants’ hardships, do so at times in problematic ways that often leave broader structures and processes responsible for the production of suffering in tact. Interventions may also produce certain invisibilities to forms of suffering. Such dilemmas were most apparent at the church where the figure of the ‘victim’ was neither neat nor uniform since the church was constituted of a multiple realities deriving from competing

and conflicting geographic, social, political and historical experiences. In what follows, the presentation attempts to address the question of which 'victim' or 'life' is worthy of survival or intervention, under which conditions and what happens to the 'excluded' lives?

I attempt to do so through detailing a rehabilitative psychosocial intervention, the Tree of Life (TOL), instituted by SACST focusing on the rationalities it was premised upon as well as the ways in which it was deployed. The chapter will look into the formation and practices of this organization more generally, as a way to explore the ways in which the organization was funded and how this impacted on its interventions.

The Southern African Centre for Survivours of Torture

Healing and Empowerment through the Tree of Life

SACST was set up in 2005 and the organization was initially established under the name Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project (ZTVP) and at the time its mandate was specifically limited to providing services to Zimbabwean nationals. The organization provided medical, psychosocial and legal services to survivours of torture and other organized forms of violence. By 2009 the organization had expanded its mandate to also include the needs of tortured asylum seekers and refugees in Southern Africa, including survivors of gross human rights violations and this was reflected in the change of name. While the organization had started off with a staff complement of thirteen, in 2009 it had seven employees despite its expanded regional mandate and an increased focus on many other human rights violations[57]. The reduction in the staff complement was attributed to the global economic recession, which had resulted in reduced donor funding for the activities of the organization. Although the organization now had a regional focus, it continued to draw many of its clients from amongst Zimbabweans nationals[58]. A psychologist at SACST, who was working within the Counseling Unit, at the time and whom I call Gene Matthews, saw her work at this organization as being that of a human rights defender. She

[57] Interview with SACST Head of Counseling, Gene Matthews, 30 June 2009.
[58] According to Tanya Gumede '90% of the organization's clients were Zimbabwean', Interview

attributed this to the forms of suffering and hardships including torture that individuals in Zimbabwe were being subjected to post 2000:

> [The situation in Zimbabwe] It's a complex emergency. There is organized torture, rule of law has been destroyed and individuals are not able to sustain themselves especially after Operation Murambatsvina [Interview Gene Matthews, 30 June 2009]

According to Tanya Gumede[59], a lawyer and human rights advocacy officer at the organization, SACST had initially been set up to provide medical, psychological and legal services to individuals who had survived acts of organized violence and torture in Zimbabwe from the year 2000. Tanya stated that:

> We're an organization that deals with victims of torture and now we prefer to call them survivours of torture because the main reason they are here is that they have survived torture. So they are survivours of traumatic experiences they encountered in Zimbabwe. So we try to give a holistic approach towards their rehabilitation in terms of giving them medical assistance for those who still need to access medical services here in South Africa. Psycho-social support, psychosocial services ranging from psychological assessments and evaluations, psychiatric help and also documenting their experiences towards achieving some form of justice for victims as a way of healing and also an intervention of healing and empowerment through our tree of life process and also giving them very limited humanitarian assistance towards making sure that they are able to look after themselves although it's not very much money that we've gotten towards humanitarian assistance. The little that we have we try to give them. It's usually about R500 per month that they receive from the organization for those who apply stating their humanitarian needs. (Interview with Tanya Gumede, 20 August 2009)

SACST provided assistance to clients based on a clinical assessment that were made on the potential beneficiaries. According to a ZTVP report detailing the organization's activities between 2005-2006, almost half of the clients were referred for psychiatric intervention and treatment while the rest were deemed to require counseling services and were asked to participate in a 'healing workshop offered by the Tree of Life Project' (ZTVP 2006: 13). According to Gene, the Tree of Life (TOL) therapy had been 'inspired by the approach taken by the Khulumani[60] Support Group- an initiative set up around the South African TRC. These are groups run by survivours'[61]. Reeler et. al who provide an in-depth description of the TOL methodology (2009: 1) state that:

[59] I have used pseudonym for the staff of the two organizations

[60] The Zulu/Ndebele term Khulumani means 'Speak' meaning the therapy is organized around the survivours' ability to narrate their experiences.

[61] Interview with Gene Matthews, 30 June 2009.

> The Tree of Life is a group-based approach to the healing and empowerment of survivors of organized violence and torture. [TOL] is facilitated by survivors who have been trained and supervised in the methodology. It uses the metaphor of the tree to provide a framework for understanding the trauma experience, and, through a series of inter-related processes, leads the survivor into an appreciation of his or her strengths and the support of the community in surviving.

Reeler et. al (2009, 182) reveal that the TOL was 'originally developed as an approach for assisting unemployed youth. It was adapted to the needs of Zimbabwean political victims living in exile in South Africa in 2002'. The TOL processes that Reeler et.al (2009, 183-185) describe involved different aspects that participants had to engage in. These encompassed *working with nature*, whereby participants were taken to a rural setting where they spent sometime in outdoor settings- individually and collectively as a group. Such an environment was presumed to remind participants of the healing properties of nature. The metaphor of the tree is used during group discussions, related nature to the lives of the participants and their social milieu such as culture, and family, early development, the high points in their lives as well as the challenges and disappointments such as those emanating from traumatic experiences they encountered. The participants also did some *Body Work*, a process wereby they began each day of the workshop with simple exercises which enabled them to 're-connect' with their bodies, release tensions and enabled them to relax. Participants in the TOL workshops also participated in the process of *story telling* were they told individual stories and accounts of their experiences. Presumably, this process enabled individuals to 'listen to one another' and in the process trust and respect was built and fostered amongst the group members. During the process of story telling, participants initially introduced themselves talking about their backgrounds, hopes and aspirations, after which they spoke about the violations they suffered. The workshop concluded with the process of *empowerment*, whereby individuals're-frame' themselves as a group of people with power rather than as 'isolated and damaged individuals' (ibid)

In administering the psychosocial intervention SACST would take a group of selected 'survivours' to an eco-village on the outskirts of Johannesburg where they shared their experiences following the inter-related TOL processes. Apart from the psychologists who assisted in the selection of participants, the intervention was administered and facilitated by at least two counselors who were employed on a full time basis by SACST. The two- Michael and Norma- were tortured in Zimbabwe and being survivours, who had participated in the TOL

intervention, they were now empowered to assist other survivours heal from trauma. In extolling the virtues of the healing intervention, Tanya told me that:

> Basically it's an intervention aimed at healing and empowerment for torture survivours because when someone has been tortured they sort of disintegrate from society. The aim of the torturer is to break the individual down. So a broken individual cannot participate fully in society. So you find out that the moral fabric, the societal fibre is also broken down; families are broken down, communities are broken down. So basically the person is isolated because of the torture experience because of the trauma they would have experienced, they are not able to participate in society fully. So the Tree of life intervention is whereby [we] take people who have been tortured who have been broken down like that. We take them to an eco-village in the North West in Rustenburg and taking into consideration that most people in Zimbabwe are coming from a rural setting, it's a setting next to nature, rural setting, very quiet, the buildings- are those round huts as well. They take time to sit and share their experiences and in the process empower each other. [Interview with Tanya, 20 August 2009]

The organization did not accord me an opportunity to participate in the TOL therapy, even though they had earlier agreed to such an arrangement, citing confidentiality clauses with their participants/clients. I was allowed however, to participate in some of their activities and was also given minutes of proceedings at post counseling meetings. The record of proceedings from one of the follow up sessions highlighted that there were tensions and variances between what the organization's intervention offered and intended to achieve and what the participants anticipated. In line with objectives of the intervention, participants at the post workshop meeting felt 'uplifted', 'emotionally' and 'spiritually'. One of the participants highlighted that he benefitted from a relaxation exercise, the thumb therapy, which helped him fall asleep daily. Beyond this resonance, the deliberations at this meeting seemed to have, however, focused mainly on the problems that the participants encountered upon their return home after the workshop. There was consensus among the participants that they found the same problems they had left behind, prior to the workshop. The participants had written a letter as a group, in the week prior to the follow up meeting, requesting financial/humanitarian assistance. During the meeting one of the group members stated that he hoped to be 'assisted financially to deal with his day to day problems'. This participant's sentiments were shared by members of the group and this necessitated the intervention of one of the members of the SACST management team who explained to the participants, that the Tree of Life project was not 'able to offer humanitarian assistance and other related issues'. The participants were informed that the Tree of Life, as a project 'was responsible for the spiritual and emotional healing of participants' trauma and

torture and did not have a budget for humanitarian assistance'. Members of the group were, however, requested to write their requests for humanitarian assistance individually as their needs were likely to be different. Despite this explanation, participants deliberated on 'coming up with a project' but were again informed that the organization would not fund the project but could offer assistance and information about other organizations that could fund such projects. After these deliberations one of the participants, 'felt that he did not want to be part of the group anymore and was excused from future group activities'.

The post-TOL meeting discussions, indicated dissonance between the main aims of the SACST intervention and some of the participants' stated needs. While participants expressed appreciation for the rehabilitative mechanisms from the intervention there was an express need for financial support for projects that would perhaps deal with the 'day to day problems' they left behind when attending the workshop and encountered after returning from the workshop.

For some of my informants at the church, such as Willard Machipisa, the exigencies of daily survival were paramount and at times they often overrode considerations about the long-term benefits of interventions, such as the rehabilitative mechanisms of TOL. For Willard, entry into the intervention programme or association with a humanitarian NGO, such as SACST, was first and foremost, essential. Willard was attracted to the TOL because occassionally he anticipated being invited to workshops and receiving transport money afterwards and this was an essential part of a repertoire of survival strategies for many of the migrants at the church. The humanitarian assistance that was given by the organization for 3 months after attending the workshop was also something that attracted 'clients' from the church to the organization. Below I give Willard's account:

Willard arrived at the church in July 2008. The father of six had worked as a security guard at a computer company, IAT in Harare. The man held Mozambican citizenship. His parents departed Mozambique in 1957 when he was aged five. His Mozambican passport had however, expired forcing him to use an asylum seeker permit. His motivations for coming to Johannesburg were similar to the ones most of the migrants gave. For Willard, 'money was losing value; I could not sustain the family. Otherwise I didn't need to come here'. In Johannesburg the man worked at a construction site as a storesman having started off as a

volunteer security guard. Within the church he was also a security guard, 'I wake people up in the morning. I tell them about life, that they should not beg. They can even work *mudzing'nga* [for traditional healers] distributing pamphlets. I tell them 'don't follow *poshto'* [NGO donations]. When you get money, send goods home!' In the course of our conversation, Willard however, mentioned that he had received assistance from SACST and had undergone the Tree of Life group counseling. After realizing the irony implied in dissuading other inhabitants of the church from seeking assistance at NGOs while he did so, Willard said:

> Pano hapana anokutarisa, mungwe nemungwe anestress yekutsvaga mari. Hapana anokutarisa [It's just that here (at the church) no one looks after the other. Everyone is stressed, looking for money. No one can take care of you]
>
> Reason: But how did you qualify for Tree of Life?
>
> Willard: I told them I am a victim of Murambatsvina [that] my house in Hatcliff was burnt down and I was also beaten up. I told them I was a victim because I was beaten up. *Baba, South Africa inorwadza*. [Coll. Dude, this is a painful/tough country (to live in)]. I've never worked the way I have worked this year [Interview with Willard Machipisa 02 November 2009]

For Willard the SACST intervention was essential in that, when one qualified to attend the group therapy they could also write to the organization and request financial assistance. SACST offered limited welfare support that covered health care and food. In most instances, this was R500/month given for a total of three months after returning from the psychosocial support sessions. In the context of insecurity and hardship the amount was essential and was one of the ways that enabled individuals to get by- if only their stories were in sync with popular and acceptable narratives. In Willard's case the TOL's importance did not rest so much in the group therapy he attended, but instead it was one among a range of survival strategies such as distributing pamphlets, volunteering at the church or seeking food and clothing from numerous organizations. Willard's account shows that the SACST tree of life intervention articulated with the lived realities of the church's inhabitants but not in the manner that the organization intended it to. The organization offered a psychosocial intervention but many of the migrants were mired

in the complexities of seeking economic sustenance and the everyday exigencies at the church demanded that they received any benefits they could accrue from the organizations.

Willard's situation also epitomized the dilemma faced by most of the Zimbabwean migrants as well as by the organizations themselves. While there were indeed human rights violations such as killings, abductions, beatings, torture- Willard's victimization did not necessarily derive from these. The hardships he suffered emanated, instead from broader social, economic and political forces that were nevertheless constraining. Such suffering could be alluded to as a form of social suffering; 'devastating injuries that social forces inflict on human experience' (Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997; ix). Willard's suffering as well as that of many migrants could not adequately be dealt with through the rehabilitative mechanism SACST offered. The consequence was that despite the hardships and harshness of everyday life both in the inner city and at the church, individuals such as Willard had to shifts their narratives and subjectivities in order to access the benefits of humanitarianism.

In such a contested arena, what then were the processes through which individuals were admitted for therapy at SACST? How did these individuals enter into the realms of the intervention programme? In what follows, I look at the processes through which individuals attempted to enter intervention programs and the rationalities they attributed to their particpation.

Entering Intervention programmes

Reeler et.al (2009) detail the process through which particpants were selected into programmes. They state that particpants had to give a convincing history of the experience of organized violence and torture and often this was not a difficult process since particpants were often chosen from 'activists known to the facilitators….The facilitators used their local networks or networks known to persons who themselves were well known to the facilitators' (ibid; 185) Secondly participants had to complete a self-reporting questionnaire and attain a score above the cutting score of the questionnaire. Those who did not attain a score above the cut off level were excluded (see Reeler et.al 2009, 185).

In keeping with the set selection criteria, Gene stated that when her organization was

formed patients to the programme were admitted through referrals from a network of 30 organizations in Zimbabwe. A few of the patients heard of the programme through 'word of mouth' from clients who had undergone through the TOL therapy. In a situation of receding donor funding to SACST but at the same time an increase in the number of individuals seeking assistance, the organization changed its recruitment strategies. According to Gene:

> Many clients claim to have been tortured but most of these clients *shop around*- they go to CSVR, CMC to SAWIMA and so forth looking for assistance. We have introduced rigorous screening procedures. Once we notice discrepancies in narratives, we immediately realize that this person is taking us for a joyride. We try to verify the narratives using our contacts in the region. There is a huge need out there and clients try and get whatever they can. [own emphasis. Interview with Gene, 30 June 2009]

The rigorous screening procedures that Gene spoke about involved 'survivours' writing a letter outlining a traumatic experience they had suffered. The experience had to be re-written after a month and one had to be questioned by counselors within the organization. If the experience proved credible, one had to then write an affidavit telling of their ordeal and experiences and perhaps requesting some form of justice. Individuals could also request for medical assistance in the event that they had persistent physical problems as a result of torture. In essence the organization had to 'certify' the victims. The organization sought a special kind of client that needed their intervention. At the same time, the organization was confronting stiff pressures, in a context of receding donor funding and intense pressure for clients.

Insecure individuals at the church, did 'shop around' for assistance from numerous organizations but they did so following the broader narrative that a particular organization was deemed to require. For migrants such as Tatenda Moyo who were hopeful of selection for a forthcoming TOL session, the financial assistance from the organization was key although the selection process was cumbersome:

Tatenda arrived at the church in January of 2009. In Zimbabwe, she had been working for an NGO, which distributed food aid. The organization was forced to close after it was deemed to be operating outside the law. This was after its leadership refused to comply with new regulations that sought to have food aid distributed according to government dictates. Tatenda moved to Johannesburg soon after the closure of this NGO. Tatenda learnt of SACST through a

friend. On her first visit to the organization she was given a phone number and asked to call whereupon an appointment was set. On her first meeting a 'card appointment' was made and one had to state 'how you came- the reason. Some people were also asked to give their history right from childhood. If you pass that stage they open a file and you have to attend all the appointments set for you. *Ukaneta*…..[If you tire/lose patience…. (that's it)]. Most people fail to follow the appointments. Most people came to look for money, so they end up saying 'what will this benefit me?' You spend a lot of time going to their offices but since I'm pregnant, I might have a problem and they will help me out. We are always facing difficulties so you never know. Jobs are even harder to find without proper documents. [Interview with Tatenda 5 November 2009]

Even though she found the selection process for the TOL process cumbersome Tatenda persisted in going to the organization as she was unemployed and envisaged that the financial assistance from the organization would assist her during her pregnancy. Like Willard, Tatenda's choices were circumscribed by the exigencies of daily survival. She believed that since her chances of acquiring a job were slim owing to the pregnancy she could productively use the time to go through SACST processes and in the end benefit from the material assistance from the organization. For Tatenda the prospects of attending the tree of life intervention were a way through which she could cope with hardships. In a church building where most of the migrants lived in lack and encountered profound hardships the prospects of being a SACST 'beneficiary', no matter how cumbersome the process of being one- was worthwhile in that they could possibly assist her should she be in need. Paradoxically, what was attractive for Tatenda was not the pyscho-social therapy in TOL but the financial assistance that entry into the intervention would potentially bring her.

Tatenda's future hopes were to 'get things that will enable me to start a business- such as a sewing machine, [so that] I work on my own. If I get materials I can sew wedding gowns, seat covers and so forth.'

Tatenda's hopes were essentially centred on economic sustenance and her account did not classify her as a victim/survivour that SACST were essentially looking for. She met SACST's criteria in continuosly attending the screening procedures and in this ways the interests of the

organization and that of Tatenda converged. Contradictions and paradoxes in the SACST interventions were further highlighted in the meetings and workshops I attended at the organization. These tensions and paradoxes were not only centred on the ways the TOL interacted with the aspirations of individuals but were on the ways the organization had delineated which individuals to assist and the particular historical episodes of violations their intervention programme focused upon.

While I did not participate in the TOL intervention, I was invited to participate in two group discussions that were held at the SACST offices, which focused on a Transitional Justice programme the organization, intended to embark upon. These meetings highlighted some of the ambivalences and contradictions surrounding the SACST intervention. The aim of the proposed transitional justice programme was to explore ways through which groups and communities as well as the new Government of National Unity (GNU) in Harare could address past injustices including human rights violations that had happened in the immediate post election of 2008 and left communities 'broken' and 'divided'. The discussion drew twenty other invited participants mostly 'survivours' who had gone through TOL counseling. Gene facilitated the first discussion, with the other SACST staffers- Michael, Norma and Tanya- taking turns to make presentations. Part of Gene's presentation stirred intense debate and somewhat deviated from the set topic but nevertheless is of interest here:

Gene highlighted that at the formation of the organization in 2005 they had concentrated on [the year] 2000 victims. The question we asked ourselves was, 'why are victims not championing their cause, it's the violation you've undergone, surely you can champion your own cause?'

Her statement stirred intense debate and one of the men instantly stated: 'But there has been a conspiracy of silence. I was a victim of Gukurahundi but the NGOs did not care. Where were the NGOs? Acknowledgment is the start of healing'. A female participant instantly added her voice to the chorus of murmuring that was going on: 'He's right. I actually thank the people who formed the MDC. Terror has visited every part of the country. The wounds are now being shared equally on both legs'[62]. But right now if you go to the Methodist church people align

[62] The woman meant that while the post independence violence was concentrated mainly in the Southern and Western parts of the country (Matabeleland and the Midlands) with the advent of a strong and popular opposition in the form of the MDC violence was also being inflicted on communities within the other parts of the country.

themselves along ethnic lines. The other problem is that the same people who kept quiet [during *Gukurahundi*] are now sponsoring NGOs and they are talking about human rights'.

In what was turning out to be a lively and keenly debated matter, another participant weighed in: 'Actually lets focus on the funders of NGOs. The funding of the NGOs by the same donors who fund political parties creates a problem. They give a piece to him and a piece to her. Donors are shadow actors of the Zimbabwe crisis. If they fund you, they tell you what to do, 'change here, change there' and if you want money you'll change'. Gene, who appeared to me momentarily mortified, managed to step back into the discussion by admitting that, 'you want to go to bed and sleep with a clear conscious. As SACST we have made mistakes but we feel as an organization we have been open, we speak on behalf of a constituency. [Fieldnotes, 10 November 2009]

I was not aware of the mistakes that SACST had made nor the constituency it represented but the discussion offered an insight into the disgruntlement among some of the participants who had undergone the TOL therapy. The participants viewed the organization's interventions as having focused on 'recent' violations, which came about in the post 2000 period and this was at the expense of other violations that occurred in the past, most notably, the immediate post independence violence in Matabeleland [Gukurahundi]. Individuals who had suffered violence and traumatic experiences during the Gukurahundi period, for example, felt that their suffering was not, at the very least, 'acknowledged' let alone dealt with through specific interventions. The consternation among these participants was around the silence and invisibility around 'past' injustices they had suffered. SACST's concentration on the post 2000 violations was seen by the participants as privileging recent violation.

The participants also spoke to question around the politics and pressures organizations like SACST were mired in. The participants felt that the organization had to prioritize the issues that came with the requirements of the funders. In the words of one of the participants, 'if they fund you, they tell you what to do'. In such a context, organizations like SACST were caught up in a web or assemblage that determined the interventions the organization embarked upon as well as the victims that were assisted. Jensen (forthcoming) observes a similar dynamic in the rural context of Nkomazi, where he argues that:

> Victims are made real through a complicated web of entextualized discourses entering into programs, narratives, and prioritazatons of actors like donors, states and civil society groups and the everyday practices of survival by those interpellated as victims.

The perspectives expressed by the meeting participants spoke to the negotiations and manoeuvreing that potential beneficiaries instituted in order to influence programmes embarked upon and potentially their future entry into these programmes.

In the following section, I examine how the different organizations that frequented the church and attempted to assist the migrants interacted or articulated. I do this through looking at the activities of MSF-Belgium and their relationship with the church authorities, most notably, the Bishop Paul Verryn. My ambition is to reveal more about the nature and practices of organizations within a specific locality and how categories of victimhood emerge within such sites.

Medecins Sans Frontieres- Belgium (MSF)

One of the most prominent organizations that ran intervention programmes at the church was the global medical NGO, MSF- Belgium. Peter Redfield (2005:329) defined the MSF as 'an organization explicitly founded to mediate crisis in terms of basic human health'. MSF's core mandate is the provision of medical and mental health care. At the Central Methodist church, MSF occupied part of the church building from where the organization provided free medical and mental health care to the migrants. MSF also sponsored the sanitary maintenance of the church building through employing some of the migrants as cleaners of ablution facilities. The organization ran medical campaigns educating individuals about HIV and encouraging voluntary counseling and testing. The medical staff at MSF would also immunize the church's residents whenever a disease outbreak was feared such as when there was a measles outbreak in Johannesburg towards the end of 2009.

The assistance that MSF provided to the migrants could be said to have been concerned with ensuring 'basic survival'. However, MSF has, in recent years, been reflecting on the possibilities, limits and de-merits of its interventions as well as that of other humanitarian

organizations, which often pay attention to biological survival through the provision of 'basic needs' and the preservation of 'bare life' (see Robins 2009: 639; Redfield 2005). The organization has been exploring ways to provide assistance that transcends mere survival but also addresses 'systemic conditions and social and political needs' (see Robins 2009: 639). In 2009, perhaps in keeping with these reflections, MSF embarked on a project to identify and assist 'unaccompanied child migrants' both within the church and within dilapidated inner-city buildings. Such a shift was perhaps unsurprising but was consistent with Robins' observations (2009) that show how MSF in collaboration with social movements such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) cast aside its political neutrality and adopted strategies of AIDS activism to assist victims of xenophobic violence within South Africa. In doing so, the organization and the other movements attempted to provide assistance that went beyond the basic care and management of life (see Robins 2009: 638)

The MSF intervention targeted 'vulnerable', 'unaccompanied' children. Once identified the children were to be placed into community shelters such as the Usindiso Centre, Khayalethemba, Siyakhula and enrolled into schools. Within the church there was a large group of teenagers that numbered around 170 with the majority being male and their ages ranging from 15-20. As a result of the rules governing residence in the building and also due to their own aspirations most of these individuals attended the St. Albert Street school- and initiative of Rev. Paul Verryn and some of the Zimbabwean teachers' resident within the church. The donor funded church school employed Zimbabwean teachers, who were also resident in the church. Although the majority of the students were drawn form the church some of the students lived within the inner city.

The intention of the MSF intervention was ostensibly to protect the children from exploitation and sexual abuse[63]. The particular targets of this initiative were young girls who were perceived to be more vulnerable than their male counterparts. In a conversation with one of my informants, an MSF counselor who was part of the organization's initiative on unaccompanied child migrants, she complained bitterly about the situation children were facing within the building as well as what she perceived as the loss of moral values among the

[63] There were numerous allegations of sexual abuse of minors within the church. Most of these were often reported in the media. See for example, The Mail & Guardian online, 9 February 2010 *Central Methodist Church unsuitable for children*

inhabitants of the church. These perceptions formed part of the basis for the MSF intervention. Chiedza, the counselor, had a plethora of complaints:

> There's indignity in this building. There are so many things happening in the building. There's violence against children. Recently, a group of children were beaten up for stealing at a place near von Brandis street [kuChimhunu]. Women undress in front of children. Two boys from the church were sodomized. I asked 'Where?' They told me somewhere where they had gone to look for work. But nothing is done! The girls are losing value; it hurts Reason! I am also losing value as a Zimbabwean, as a mother. You hear the boys saying, *handina musikana wepaMethodist* [I don't date girls from the Methodist church]. When the girls come here, you can see they are innocent but after two to three months they are no longer sweet! The girls run away from you! And these young boys when they get here, they would often call me sister Chiedza or Mother, or Aunt but after a while they start calling you *chimoko* [colloq. chic/babe]. Imagine! At my age! But those children are silenced. I spoke to some of them and advised them to report these issues to the Bishop but they said, 'Sister Chiedza *kutiroverera pamuchinjikwa'* [you want us to be crucified]. Those were their exact words! We should look at the kind of behavior we are inculcating in those children. I wish we could monitor them and see the kind of people they'll become when we go back home. [Conversation with Chiedza, 12 June 2009]

The MSF intervention articulated in problematic ways with the church authorities and their initiative- the St. Albert Street School. The MSF intervention had the potential of removing children from the church (and other inner city areas) and depleting the number of students enrolled at the school. Such an eventuality threatened the very existence of the school in that students at the school could potentially be moved to shelters. In my conversation with the MSF counselor, the organization's intervention on 'unaccompanied' children was also justified on the grounds of suspicions of sexual abuse against children. Such a basis- if proved to be true- would have cast aspersions on the integrity of the teachers and the school principals who ran the school and whose livelihood was dependent on the continued existence and good (moral) standing of the teaching personnel. The MSF intervention indirectly threatened the teachers by impinging upon livelihood sensitivities. Chiedza, the MSF counselor, revealed that there were tensions, sparked off by the scaling up of her organization's intervention:

> You know the Bishop is behaving like a mini-Mugabe. They say the school is <u>our</u> project and Chiedza is taking <u>our</u> children to shelters [own emphasis]. Alpha and Victor [the school principal and deputy principal] say we started this project. Those two dislike me; I've even been warned not to go there [Albert Street school] because they are saying the school project is theirs. They started it! I mean that's the attitude that destroyed our country. Mugabe was saying 'Zimbabwe is

mine'[64]. What's different with saying 'the project is ours?' [Conversation with Chiedza, 12 June 2009]

The tensions between the organizations seemed to emanate from attempts that different organizations made to access categories of individuals upon whom appeals for funding could be predicated. Children, particularly girls were one such category as were women in general. Organizations positioned themselves to access such groups and this often ignited tensions and contestations between the different entities. In one of my conversations with Verryn, the clergyman highlighted the tensions that arose as different organizations sought to access such groups or categories of 'suffering' people at the church. My interview with Verryn focused on allegations that he had barred some NGOs from the church, among them, Save the Children (UK), from starting a project within the church and his sentiments spoke to the tensions that often characterized his relations with that of the NGOs:

Reason: There are reports that children's rights group are being stopped from coming into the church- Save the Children, the Children Protection Unit. Is there any truth to these reports and if so, why?

Paul Verryn: No! But I'll tell you what, there was a group of people working with children who took the decision to remove the children without consulting anybody, nobody! Not to tell me, not to tell MSF, just to take them. Now the seriousness of that is there are people who know more than these children who are staying here and our understanding was that the children were still here yet they had been removed. So there is a group of people from Sophiatown Counseling whom we said to, 'Thank you! but no thanks'. But the Child Protection People have been in. We are working with UNICEF, the National Association of Child Care. In fact, we are about to enter into partnership with them to train child and youth care workers in the building to be able to provide better assistance for children.

Reason: What about POWA [People Opposing Women Abuse]?

Verryn: Yes…

[64] The MSF counselor was making reference to a speech delivered by Robert Mugabe at the Johannesburg Earth Summit on the 2nd of September 2002. In defending the Zimbabwean land reform and the seizures of white owned farms and in a speech directed primarily to the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair; Mugabe declared, 'So Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe'

Reason: They claim they were also stopped from coming in

Verryn: I don't know anything about that.

Reason: But why are so many organizations interested in this place?

Verryn: It's easy. They've got a sitting audience, you know so it'll give them huge credibility if they got themselves engaged and from huge credibility to huge funding, if they are clever enough, you know. And I think that's one of the central reasons. I'm not so sure if they are really keen on working with women and children as much as they are in terms of raising funding.

Reason: But the same arguments are being raised by the organizations- that maybe you don't want them into the building because you want to benefit from donor funding alone?

Verryn: Well, you know, we haven't tried to raise funding for special interests groups. What we've tried to raise funding for is the running of the school. MSF really out sourced. Really, let me tell you that, even religious organizations we've allowed into the building. We haven't stopped anybody really. So I'm not sure who in power has felt that they have been excluded from here. We've actually welcomed…. It certainly cannot be myself. But I must say to you, people who come into this place and do what they like without consulting with any of the people who work here just because this happens to be the place where people live, we don't countenance that kind of, well disrespect.

Verryn's sentiments spoke not only to the tensions that characterized his relations with some of the NGOs but it highlighted the mutual distrust and suspicion that these different entities had for each other. There were perceptions among these actors and entities that each of them was benefiting from donor funding and the struggle was that of accessing the 'suffering' people or categories of these 'suffering' people. In this struggle among the organizations, categories of 'children' and 'women' became pre-eminent and they were battlefields of intense exchange for the different organizations. Implicit in Verryn and Chiedza's sentiments is that within this locality there was the *territorialization* of suffering and the appropriation of categories that were deemed to be worthy of intervention. There was inter-organizational positioning with many of the entities seeing themselves as providing 'better care' to specific categories of children or inhabitants.

Verryn's reference to 'special interest groups' as well as the very presence of numerous organizations looking to assist 'children' also highlights the imperatives that informed humanitarian organizations and the lives that were deemed worthy of assistance and survival. Categories of 'women and children', 'unaccompanied children' have over the years become something of a popular refrain in 'sites of emergency' such as refugee camps. Such categories elicit sympathy and compassion. Johnson (2011: 1017) illustrates, for example, that images of women and children have for many years constituted imagined refugees and they highlight the ways in which the politics of humanitarianism are mobilized and deployed within specific contexts:

> Within the humanitarian arena pictures convey messages of conflict, of poverty and of suffering; they are the images of the starving, fly-ridden child accompanied by a request for 'a dollar a day to save this child's life' that for many who live in the industrialized world, constitute how they imagine and understand Africa.

Although relations among the organizations within the church were at times fraught with tensions there were also negotiations and at some moments there was cooperation that took place between the same organizations. In this sense the church may also be viewed as a fluid space characterized by conflict, mistrust and suspicion as well as constant negotiations and interdependences. While MSF initially worked with the church in looking after children staying at the church, in due course the organization was barred from taking any of the children from the church to the shelters at which point an agreement was reached whereby the organization seconded staff to the church that monitored the children. Months after her impassioned complaints, I also had another conversation with Chiedza together with a nurse[65] from the MSF clinic. Inquisitive, I asked her about her relationship with Verryn and the school authorities.

Reason: How is your relationship with Bishop these days?

[65] Fieldnotes, 5 November 2009

> Chiedza: What people have to understand is that this church is someone else's place and you can't do as you please. Would you let someone do as they please at your homestead, she asked.

I didn't agree with her analogy so I pointed out that a place such as the church- made up of so many individuals and households- could not be considered 'someone's homestead'. Yvonne, the nurse, joined the conversation by posing a question, 'Where were these organizations all this time? They would just come, see and go and do nothing. They didn't want to do anything all this time. They only became interested when there were about 500 people in the building. People have been here for five years. Why are these organizations coming now? Where were they all this time?

Yvonne's questions were posed rhetorically but they inquired into the processes through which a locality became a site of 'crisis' and the actors who publicized and gave the 'crisis' legitimacy. The hyper visibility of the church through media attention, which at times was intense, as well as the very presence of numerous organizations, seemed, to me, to hold answers to the woman's inquiries. My immediate concerns were however, focused on the turnaround in Chiedza's views. Chiedza remarked that:

> You know all this time I realized that unaccompanied and undocumented children are not our job [as MSF]. Our mandate is the provision of medical and mental health. That is what we are supposed to do. Paul [Verryn] can come and consult me. Right now I realize I was wrong. At times your approach matters! If you want to force your way through you'll encounter resistance. We had a discussion with Paul and we agreed to separate the groups- there were too many unpleasant stories.

The turnaround in Chiedza's views was obviously surprising but it was reflective of the fluid nature of the site where relations between the church authorities, mainly the Bishop and the staff within the different organizations was fraught with tensions, suspicions but was also characterized by constant negotiations and mutual interdependences as well. Chiedza's pronouncements in equating the church to someone's homestead also spoke about the management of the place and the deployment of humanitarian assistance. In her view, the church was the Bishop's 'territory' and the people were 'the Bishop's people'. At the heart of the confrontations was therefore a question of who was entitled to access and assist the people living

within the Bishop's 'territory'. Other organizations that intended to assist the church's inhabitants had to acquiesce to this governing regime.

A pertinent question that arose from the decision to 'separate the groups' is what then happened to the young men who were left out of the intervention programmes? Scholars such as Shepler (2005) and Rosen (2007) who write about child soldiers point out that there is a construction of childhood and youth whereby such groups are perceived as apolitical and innocent. Rosen (2007; 296) who alludes to an emerging childhood 'politics of age' within humanitarian narratives and logics argues, for instance, that, childhood as well as age categories are political constructs that are used by different international, regional and local actors to support legal and political agendas; but such understandings often 'discount the more varied and complex local understandings of children and childhood'. For Rosen (ibid: 297) concepts and categories such as 'child labour', 'child bride', 'child prostitute' and 'child soldier' are often conceived of as deviant products of adult abuse, as such conceptions, 'presuppose that children are dependent, exploited and powerless'. The conceptualizations also perceive children as devoid of agency (ibid). One of the major consequences that emerged from interventions, such as the MSF intervention and the focus on the 'girl child' or younger children who were perceived to be more prone to sexual abuse and exploitation was that young men or those that did not qualify into the 'unaccompanied children' category, were rendered invisible and this contributed to the violence and crime that occurred within the church building. Excluded from the interventions and not involved in the running of the church or refugee ministry in any way, a group of young men numbering about twelve members became part of a gang and lived within the church basement. In a conversation with Verryn he revealed that:

> I'm not surprised that there's formation of a gang. I see them as a sort of power bloc, so I've said 'I don't want you in the building. I don't want children to be exposed to your shenanigans. I don't want this building to have a reputation that it is a hiding place for criminals. For instance, the police come and arrest and then they are back in the building after half an hour. So it's actually very difficult. I've spoken to them; I've tried to reason with them but they are unpleasant people. The other day when I wasn't here, they were playing music so loud that our crèche couldn't operate. [Interview 6 April 2009]

Residing in the church basement, the group members who ethnically identified as Ndebele often fought with groups of Shona speakers and frequently clashed, violently, with the church security personnel. The other 'shenanigans' that gang was involved, included stealing and

robbing from other inhabitants particularly women. Often drunk the gang was also implicated in many of the violent episodes within the church building and their 'space' at the basement of the building was a repository for an assortment of weapons- knobkerries and iron bars. The emergence of this group and its involvement in crime within the church building highlights the multiplicity of 'child victims' and how such 'victims' emerged not from the selection or categorizations that were made within interventions, based on considerations of age and gender but also ethnicity as well as history. The accounts of two of the group members highlighted that the members of the Soweto group felt excluded from the church and the legitimacy of the gang was predicated on ethnic exclusion and historical violation. Below I give the accounts of Nqobile Mloyi and Mike Nxumalo. Nqobile's account is indicative of the forms of violence, and the varied nature of 'victims', that were made invisible in interventions that sought to protect 'children' from different forms of abuse.

Nqobile Mloyi

Nqobile was a man aged twenty-one. My conversation with him took place after violent clashes between the Soweto 'boys' and the church security personnel. Nqobile had stayed at the church for two years, having migrated to South Africa when he was eighteen. He had left Bulawayo, because 'there was no life' and he wanted to seek opportunities in Johannesburg, like 'his brothers and sisters had done for years before'. Frustrated by the lack of job opportunities and the bit-part nature of the odd jobs he got within Johannesburg, Nqobile had moved into the church, as he could not afford to pay rentals on a constant basis. He lived within the 'Soweto basement' where he felt he and members of his ethnic group 'belonged'. In the church basement, he stayed with a group of friends, who together with him 'resisted 'Shona dominance' within the church building'. Clutching an iron bar, Nqobile revealed that he had to arm himself as there was fighting between his group [the Soweto gang] and groups of Shona people. Some of his colleagues had run away, two of them had been seriously injured and property had been destroyed. 'Why?' I asked, inquiring into the causes of this violence:

> It's an on-going thing *bra*; you know how it's like. These people *bayasibusa from iGukurahundi* [These (Shona) people rule us, since the Gukurahundi period]. What pains me is that this is our place. We can speak Zulu, we speak Xhosa; this place is ours. IsiSuthu siyabua. We feel we have to rule this place. I am only talking to you because I feel you're uplifting us, most of the people

> who come here don't even talk to us. *Badinga amaShona. Bathanda amaShona.* [They look for Shona people. They like Shona people]

Nqobile's response to the causes of the infighting within the church was varied and multifaceted. His notion of 'belonging' derived from many levels. In the first instance, the man believed that as Ndebeles they were entitled to reside and 'govern' the building due to their social and linguistic affinity to South African ethnic groups. Nqobile also felt that he and other Ndebele speakers had suffered systemic forms of violation dating back to the immediate post independence years. The tensions and conflicts which pitted his group against the groups of Shona speakers was not only contemporaneous and situated but was persistent and continuous, deriving from historical struggles. The man believed that many of the researchers and NGOs that came into the building did not engage with them but preferred to talk to people of a Shona ethnicity and this perpetuated forms of ethnic exclusion.

While Nqobile's response might also have been meant to seek legitimacy for the group especially in the aftermath of violence, Mike's account shows the agency that the Soweto group members exercised but because he and his colleagues did not fall under the appropriate category they were left out of interventions and there were instituted by the different NGOs.

Mike Nxumalo

Mike was one of the key members of the Soweto group. Aged twenty-four, Mike had been at the church for two years. He had dropped out of High school in Zimbabwe after his first year when he was aged fourteen. His ambition had been to live and work in South Africa. When he moved into Johannesburg, he was sixteen and he stayed with his brother in Hillbrow. After the death of the brother he initially moved to stay with his mother in Yeoville, for a few months before moving in with friends. He eventually moved to the church with some of his friends. Without any recognized educational qualifications, opportunities were restricted for Mike who spent most of his days at the church:

> I get rental money from my mother; I told her I stay in China Square. She doesn't know I stay here. I spend the rental money on booze. I don't see where my life is going. I have no future. I wake up to drink, this is what I do everyday- wake up and drink. People know us [Soweto group] for fighting, after we get drunk, we start a fight, that's Soweto, it's for Ndebeles. Whenever, I get say R150, I go spend it all. I see no future, no hope.

Mike and Nqobile's accounts highlight the consequences that the NGO focus on younger children meant for the group of young men. The NGOs sought to protect categories of younger children who were assumed to be vulnerable to sexual abuse. There was at the same time, inattention to the activities of young men who could not enter into programs and were not the target of humanitarian assistance.

Conclusion

This chapter shows the Central Methodist Church to be a site of intense humanitarian activity. The church attracted a number of organizations that attempted to assist the inhabitants of this place. However, the hyper-visibility of the church had ambivalent and paradoxical outcomes in that the inhabitants were perceived and defined in different ways at one and the same time.

A key point that the chapter makes about the presence of organizations at this site is that such localities as the church, which are hubs of humanitarian activitiy, may be read as political resources that individuals and NGOs creatively deploy in broader struggles. The organizations contest for 'space' to institute interventions and in this sense the church becomes a contested institutional space symbolizing the presence of 'victims' upon whom pleas for assistance are made.

The interventions that some of the organizations instituted articulated with the survival strategies of individuals, albeit not in the ways that the interventions were origionally intended. The organizations were operating in a fiercely contested field, were donor support was receding but the demands of beneficiaries were increasing. There was also a proliferation of organizations such that the organizations often acted in competition and contestation.

The chapter shows that victimhood is contested and continously negotiated between the organizations and between the organizations and their intended beneficiaries. The interface where the different organizations meet and were they meet with their beneficiaries is fraught

with tensions, differing perspectives and different expectations. As a result categories of victims are often negotiated and continously reconfigured. This chapter illustrates the (re)emergence and prominence of the category of unaccompanied children and how such a category is contested among the organisations.

The following chapter examines particular forms of suffering and hardship among the inhabitants of the church that the different NGOs and entities were not involved in alleviating. The Chapter looks at issues of chronic illness, dying and death and how the inhabitants dealt with the spiritual insecurities that these issues raised in a context of severe material lack.

Chapter 6

'If you're sick, go home!': Chronic illness, dying and death in a place of temporality

Introduction

The previous chapters show the Central Methodist Church to be a place of immense hardship both in the ways in which people inhabit the place and in the different ways the church is governed. The different chapters show that there were numerous practical predicaments that bedeviled those who lived within the confines of the church. These included violent infighting, overcrowding, deprivation, limited possibilities and the general indigent status of many inhabitants that lived within this locality. In addition to the practical difficulties and hardships that many of my informants spoke about some of them were also troubled by moral concerns arising out of modes of living within the church as well as fears of dying away from 'home'. Moral judgments and complaints were passed about prostitution and the practice of multiple sexual partners. Such grave concerns were expressed within the everyday through dominant discussions about the perceived consequences arising from these practices- such as chronic illnesses, death and dying. Death was spoken of, in some instances, through idioms, where individuals whose behaviour was perceived to be sexually indiscreet and morally reprehensible were ominously reprimanded about the possibility of going back to Zimbabwe dead:

> Mungwarire, musadzokere kuZimbabwe makatarisa kudenga [Be careful, you'll end up going back to Zimbabwe facing upwards]

Understandings of death and its likely consequences in the form of avenging spirits, at times, acted as a form of restraint against the excesses of violence in the church building. Reflecting on the consequences of causing a violent death in the church, one of the women I often spoke to, Rumbi remarked that, 'At times you feel like stabbing someone but you don't want *ngozi* following you'. In many African societies, such as among the Shona, understandings of death are

immersed within ancestral worship and it is believed that an individual who murders another person maybe haunted by avenging spirits of the deceased, in the form of *ngozi*.

Beyond these everyday conversations, there were two issues that presented the church as a physical site of death to me. In the Friday refugee weekly meetings, clinic personnel, often Mrs. Muzenda, gave reports that detailed the number of people that would have died within the church on a particular week as well as common ailments that were afflicting many of the inhabitants. These ranged from TB, pneumonia as well as *chirwere chemazuva ano* [lit. 'today's disease'- a euphemism for HIV/AIDS]. Closely related to these weekly reports was the existence of an infirmary on the fourth floor of the church building. The infirmary termed the 'Home Based Care' ward typically had terminally sick people. This ward epitomized less of the 'care' but rather the room seemed to me, to be a site of abandonment where suffering and afflicted bodies kept themselves company with the help of a few visitors that trudged in at very irregular intervals. This small infirmary set up along the lines of Home Based Care initiatives in South Africa, which are seen as a response to the perceived failures of public health care systems to cope with the prolonged illnesses associated with the HIV and AIDS epidemic resonated with the vivid descriptions Biehl (2005) provides of *Vita*, a place in Brazil, which is a place of social abandonment, despair and death. In the church's HBC ward one found terminally ill patients whose frames were wasted and who were evidently in pain and spent the day sleeping on the mattresses or warming themselves close to the two heaters provided. Talking to some of them was a laboured affair as in some cases their hearing was severely impaired. Biehl (2005: 2) whose rich ethnography brings to life the desolation of *Vita* describes the place as such:

> Vita is the end station on the road of poverty; it is the place where living beings go when they are no longer considered people. Excluded from family life and medical care, most of the two hundred people in Vita's infirmary at that time had no formal identification and lived in a state of abject abandonment.

This chapter inquires into some of these concerns and observations and tries to address a broad question posed in the thesis- how is suffering lived with? Specifically, the chapter examines the management of chronic illness and death in the specific locality of the church. Some of the questions the chapter tries to address are: at a locality where poverty and labour mobility intersect in profound ways, how do individuals attempt to manage the emotional and material burdens of death? How do the inhabitants respond to the challenge of providing decent

and dignified funerals and burials in a context where they are living away from the familiarities of 'home'? A related question that the chapter poses is, how do individuals emplaced in a locality characterized by deprivation and desperation, manage chronic illnesses?

The purpose of this chapter within the thesis is to illustrate the emotional and spiritual insecurities that in addition to practical predicaments structure the lives of the inhabitants at the church. The ambitions of this chapter also arise out of an endervour to highlight how in a space of indigence individuals cope with and manage instances of profound hardship such as those arising out of chronic illness and death. The chapter is thus an attempt to highlight and illustrate the interdependences, relationships and solidarities between the inhabitants in a site beset by numerous uncertainties and temporalities. The material that this analysis relies upon is drawn from a funeral of a deceased woman whose remains were buried at a Johannesburg cemetery, a decision materialized by severe financial lack but which triggers deep emotional anguish upon the deceased's grandmother. The chapter then uses a brief account of an encounter I had with a severely sick man as well as the illness narratives of two individuals to illuminate the ways in which the inhabitants assist each other as well as the precise moments and circumstances under which assistance is rendered or not rendered. These accounts also attempt to show the ways that individuals as well as their social milieu, attempt to manage death and dying and the rationalities underlying their decisions. A common argument that ties the different cases and accounts together is that there are emotional anxieties and spiritual insecurities of dying and death that the indigent and mobile individuals bear and the manner in which individuals deal with these insecurities occasion particular exclusions and exacerbate hardships. In the specific context of the church and particularly, in instances of severe illness, such insecurities coupled with material constraints, compel the sick as well as their social milieu to attempt to exercise control over the proper disposal of their bodies. Such considerations as well as the management of illnesses and deaths are however not straight forward matters but are complex processes, mediated by material resources, spiritual concerns as well as by the very expectations, burdens and obligations of migration.

The chapter initially discusses how issues of death and illness, particularly among indigent individuals and labour migrants have been written about in the available literature. The chapter will then present the funeral of the deceased woman Susan as well as the illness narratives of Damon, Lillian and Mazvita.

Illness, death and dying in southern Africa

Anthropologists have for many years examined issues of illness and the subject of death. Death and funerary rites as well as instances of prolonged illness reveal individual and collective coping strategies on account of the social, material, emotional and political aspects they invoke among communities. Among migrants and precisely within the context of southern Africa's complex labour system, the subject of death has been explored in relation to 'accidental' and 'bad' deaths with many scholars examining the emotional turmoil miners, their families and even communities had to contend with, when men working in mines died within mine shafts or from deaths arising from the attendant mining operations and their effects (see Maloka 1998; Marks 2006; Lee and Vaughan 2008). Maloka (1998) highlights that the establishment of cemeteries within mining compounds became a source of grave concern for miners and their families as the burial of an individual 'away' from home denied the deceased's family 'spiritual closure' (see also Lee and Vaughan 2008: 356). Such a prospect raised poignant questions such as the failure to ensure that the deceased had a 'safe passage into the afterlife' through the performance of requisite traditional burial rituals. The bodily integrity of the deceased was compromised as burial away from one's community meant that families could not safeguard corpses from witches who could mutilate 'the corpse for their evil purposes' (see Maloka 1998: 20; Lee and Vaughan ibid).

Maloka (1998: 23) points to a further dynamic within the financial management of death. She points out that, mining companies, often influenced by the exigencies of profit, 'repatriated sick African miners in order to transfer the cost of caring for the sick from themselves to families in rural areas'. The miners also preferred to be repatriated to ensure their transition into the

spiritual realm and the safety of their (dead) bodies. Fellow miners and families actively sought the repatriation of the sick and Basotho chiefs would apply for the return of their 'boys' (ibid).

While migrant livelihoods, especially the mining labour system, have undergone significant transformation, some of the rationalities and understandings surrounding sickness, death and burials among migrants have persisted albeit in a varied range of ways. I argue that, among indigent, insecure migrants such as the majority of those at the church, there is a paradoxical, contradictory and ambiguous dynamic at play. Such a stance is supported by recent writings on the subject of death. Lee and Vaughan in their historiography of death in Africa (2008: 357) posit that within contemporary African metropolises characterized by mobility, escalating violence and political instability there operates 'dynamics of disconnection- from socioeconomic, legal and moral structures'. Nunez and Wheeler (2012), who look at the management of migrant deaths through faith based organizations, burial societies and funeral parlours illustrate the attempts made by terminally sick individuals to manage death before it actually occurs by travelling back 'home' through the help of these, mainly, self-help organizations. The contestations on who takes care of the migrant's body remain persistent. While mining companies transferred the costs of burying a dead miner to the family and this was in, many instances, in harmony with the desires of the dead miner and their family and community, within the context of the church and the crisis in Zimbabwe the rationalities and decisions of the dying person and the family at times differ; at times they converge such that the outcomes are varied and not clear-cut.

Bähre's (2007) ethnography on death, urban poverty and assistance captures the conundrums that confront indigent people when faced with circumstances of death. Using the concept of 'reluctant solidarity', Bähre's reveals the dynamics that characterize solidarity or assistance among the poor. Such solidarity is beset by tensions, disputes and conflicts. The point that the chapter draws from Bähre's work is that rather than making a simple dichotomy between indigent individuals and particularly migrants being either 'victims' or heroic 'survivours' who can beat the system or survive the everyday through cooperation and interdependence the lives of the urban indigent individuals are characterized by tensions, disputes, conflicts, expectations and severe constraints such that at times they fail to 'cope' or manage.

Bähre (2007: 36) argues that:

> Studies on the social dynamics of poverty in the US, as well as the developing world, tend to glorify social relations and creativity as well as the ability to make the most of a horrible situation.

In this chapter I attempt to bring out a nuanced everyday drawn from instances of hardship and suffering occasioned by illness and death and by so doing I show the inhabitants of the church as embodied beings who are neither passive victims nor heroic survivours. My analysis differs slightly from Bähre who emphasizes the 'material economies' associated with death, dying and burials by highlighting the transcendental aspects of death, such as the spiritual beliefs and meanings attached to dying away from home, which underpin some of the rationalities and decisions made by the church's inhabitants.

In what follows I detail Susan's funeral. The pathos and catastrophe in Susan's case is not only the classification of her death as a 'bad' death arising out of perceived immoral conduct but it is also her interment at a funeral in Soweto; away from 'home' that is a source of anguish and emotional distress. Susan's refusal to travel back to Zimbabwe during the time of her prolonged and severe illness however highlights how the very expectations of migrations inform her decision-making.

Death away from 'home'

Susan's funeral

On the afternoon of 18th August 2009, I went to the church building. A crowd, of about fifty, mainly women, was singing and dancing in the church foyer just close to the chapel. Upon making a few inquiries, I learnt that the women were singing and dancing waiting for the arrival of the body of one of the church's inhabitants who had died and was set to be buried at a cemetery in Johannesburg. A memorial service was to be held for the woman before her body was taken for burial at a cemetery in Soweto. The atmosphere in the foyer was however, overly carnivalesque especially, for a funeral. Some of the women were raising condoms, yet others, were raising either beer bottles or clandestinely drinking the beer, cognizant that such an action was strictly forbidden within these premises. The songs the women sang seemed to me to be coarse and offensive, more so as they were being sung in the church chapel. One of the songs sung and accompanied by spirited dancing and gyrating said:

Jambanja mahure, [Commotion among prostitutes]
Vana yahwe vauya [The men/clients have arrived]
Jambanja mahure
Vana yahwe vauya

Yet another, vulgar, sarcastic song calling Susan, a hero, derided the deceased for being a failure, who during her stay in South Africa failed to buy her mother anything basic, let alone that of value. The burial of Susan at a cemetery in Soweto also seemed to be another source of amusement among the mourners, who sing, to much laughter that, 'We will leave you mourning here, while we go to Soweto':

Tichakusiyayi muchichema taenda kuSoweto
KuSoweto
Sarai muchichema/isu toende kuSoweto
KuSoweto

The deceased woman, Susan Mawere, was aged twenty-eight and had died the previous week. A substantial amount of money[66] was needed to repatriate her body for burial in Zimbabwe. Paul Verryn could only raise part of the required amount. A decision was then taken for her remains to be buried at a cemetery in Johannesburg and a few of her relatives were asked to travel from Zimbabwe to oversee her burial. The singing and dancing that characterize Susan's funeral are part of Shona traditional funerary rituals where close friends [*sahwiras*] enact the behaviour, mannerisms, dressing etc. of a deceased person as a way to lighten the mood among the gathered mourners. This often also includes the role-play of the deceased's occupation or profession. The enactments at Susan's funeral highlighted that the woman had a poor reputation. The singing and dancing at her funeral resurrected her much maligned reputation and (im)moral conduct and spoke to the classification of her death as a 'bad' death. Susan was known to frequent the Virgin café (a night club close to the church) hence the crude and coarse enactments, song and dance. The woman used to work as a domestic worker, an occupation that most of the women at the church were engaged in, which probably accounts for

[66] Susan's friends believed R15000 was required for the purchase of a coffin, vehicle hire, repatriation fee, cost of embalming, and documentation and repatriation expenses among other attendant costs. Paul Verryn had offered the family R3000.

the omission of this aspect of her life from the performances. Bourdillon (1978) asserts that among the traditional Shona, people sing and dance in honour of the deceased and the songs express the merits of the deceased and the grief of the community. In this case, however, the songs and the actions of the women disparaged the dead woman and revealed what the mourners saw as her immoral sexual conduct. Lee and Vaughan (2008; 345) remind us, however, that distinctions are often made between 'good' and 'bad' deaths. 'Bad' deaths are those arising from the moral conduct of the deceased and may also include suicides. In the event of such a death, 'a shameful burial in part served as a warning to future generations'. The enactments at Susan's funeral were as much an indictment on her life as well as a warning about the moral conduct of those still emplaced within the locality of the church.

Upon the arrival of the deceased's body, the church minister evidently annoyed by the singing and dancing hitherto going on, insists that the gathered women accord the deceased respect and sing Christian hymns instead. After a measure of calm was restored the memorial service got under way, with much more sombre religious hymns being sung intermittently- in between the minister's prayers and bible readings. Towards the end of the service the deceased's relatives were accorded an opportunity to speak about Susan's life. There were only a few of them. The first was Susan's niece who was of exactly the same age as the deceased and spent her childhood years with Susan. In her speech, she revealed that Susan had been sick for a long time. She had fallen severely sick in the days before she died. Some of the women Susan stayed with at the church had tried, unsuccessfully, to contact her as Susan's health deteriorated and by the time they managed to talk to her, Susan had already died. Susan's cousin told the gathering of the deceased's ambition to buy an SUV upon a successful working stint in South Africa. She revealed also that even though Susan's health was failing she was determined to achieve this ambition. Despite her evidently deteriorating health, she had steadfastly, resisted the frequent persuasion and most often, the intense pressure to go back to Zimbabwe. She wanted to achieve her ambitions first.

> She was always telling me that she would not return to Zimbabwe, without a Land Rover SUV. Ipapo anga akashinga [She was very determined on this issue]

The woman's eulogy, while emphasizing Susan's prolonged illness sought to present Susan as a determined and focused individual who was relentless in the pursuit of her ambitions

even in the face of a debilitating illness. While she did not seek to expressly challenge the depiction of her cousin made by the mourners, her narration of Susan differed from that of the mourners whose enactments characterized Susan as a drunkard who engaged in prostitution and was perhaps unlikely to achieve her aspirations. The songs that had been sung earlier had denigrated Susan for failing to support her family.

While Susan had been seriously sick, she had apparently opted to endure the hardships at the church and could not travel to 'home'. Her adamancy seemed to have been related to the meanings attached to migrating to Johannesburg and these are meanings that have been built and developed over the long period of migration. Susan's ambition, which went unfulfilled, was to buy a car- an object of desire much like the miners of old who were motivated to work in the mines to raise bridewealth and purchase capital goods of the time.

Susan's grieving grandmother, who had taken care of her since her teenage years following the death of her parents, is the second person to eulogize. She expressed her gratitude to the mourners for attending the funeral and extended her appreciation to Paul Verryn for having granted the migrants accommodation at the church. Her grief, pain and anger were almost palpable throughout her brief speech. As the grief stricken grandmother spoke her sombre demeanour was in stark contrast to the earlier 'celebration' of the deceased's life. I was not sure who she was more angry with- her granddaughter for failing to travel back home to Zimbabwe when she fell sick and being buried away from home where she or other kin relations could not ensure the integrity of her body from witches and her safe and smooth transition into the 'afterlife' as an ancestor. Maybe she was also expressing her anger towards the mourners for delivering a damning indictment on her granddaughter's life. Whatever the source of her anger, her message was directed, not to Susan, but to the living mourners in the chapel and it's an unambiguous message:

> I am speaking as a Zimbabwean mother. All of you are my children. You need to lead a decent life [*zvibatei*]. If you're sick, go home! *Ndapota hangu*, go home (I implore you, please!!). Don't die here!

After the service the mourners who did not seem to take heed of the old woman's plea to behave in a decent and dignified manner continued to sing, dance and even *toyi toyi* out of the building as Susan's coffin was carried by other inhabitants to the waiting hearse. As two

vehicles; the hearse and a mini-van carrying the a few mourners made their way through the arcade and joined the long, late afternoon traffic on the way to the cemetery, I found myself puzzling over the events at the funeral. The enactments at Susan's funeral indicated the explicit categorization of her death as a 'bad' death, one emanating from the deceased's sexual indiscretions (see Niehaus 2007; Lee and Vaughan 2008).

Beyond the self-evident and shamelessly delivered warning about the inhabitants' deportments was the bereaved family's grief about the death and burial of their relative far away from 'home' as expressed by the distress of the bereaved grandmother. Susan's grandmother seemed concerned about the shame and indignity of her granddaughter and other migrants dying and being buried among strangers in a foreign land. Bähre (2007: 42) illustrates that among the urban poor in Cape Town, individuals considered a burial in Cape Town a 'disgrace that everyone wants to avoid'. Equally, Nunez and Wheeler (2012: 212) state that there is a common belief among African migrants, that a body should be buried 'at home'. The two authors assert that:

> The importance of returning a body to its place of origin may lie in having a tangible and local resting place for loved ones that the community can also bear witness to.

Susan's grieving grandmother's plea to the migrants to go home once they fell sick, underscored the challenge of maintaining burial rites in a context were the migrants where in certain ways disengaged from their social milieu. The grandmother regarded burial away from home as an indignity that sick individuals could respond to and avert by travelling home. Her concerns might also have emanated from the possibilities of future 'spiritual' problems and repercussions that she and her family could encounter as a result of the absence of Susan's grave at home. Fontein (2011: 714), in his ethnographic study of southern Zimbabwe about the affective presence of graves and ruins and how they materialize situated struggles and contestations over autochthony and belonging, reminds us that burials and graves are imperative yet problematic within Shona communities. In his study, graves and burials at particular locations provide for claims to territories but they can also 'create future obligations' for the deceased's family. Offended ancestors and dangerous *ngozi* spirits could demand, in due course, to be returned home (ibid). Within this cosmology and understanding, misfortune such as crop failure, drought and sickness and other strange occurrences such as frequent encounters with

snakes, may be understood and attributed to ancestral anger. During the course of my fieldwork, individuals at the church who, despite holding precarious and insecure jobs such as being security guards, nannies and the like, lost their jobs or encountered other situations they found inexplicable, often attributed such misfortunes to the spiritual realm, *mhepo dzasimuka*, they would conclude after discussing their story [The spirits are angry; or this has been caused by bad spirits]

The grandmother's statement implored the impoverished migrants at the church to exercise their agency in circumstances were they are sick by travelling back 'home'. I argue that such a stance was motivated both by spiritual considerations of ensuring the dead's transition into the afterlife as ancestors through maintaining traditional burial rituals and rites as much as by the exigencies of everyday life at the church. In a context of desperation and hardship both at the church as well as in Zimbabwe, the sick were expected to travel on their own to Zimbabwe to reduce the material burdens associated with ferrying a dead body across the border. At the church the failure of the sick to travel on their own meant that they faced the grim prospect of dying at the church like Susan or being placed in the desolate infirmary on the fourth floor. Others like Damon, whose account I detail below, made a concerted effort to return home. His account however, shows the dilemmas as well as the difficulties that indigent inhabitants at the church faced in trying to return 'home'.

Indigence and pauper burials

Damon

Whilst hanging out at the Bishop's office one night, a man plodded towards me as if in a drunken stupor. He was not drunk at all but his health was failing him. My mobile phone, which I had taken out briefly, had attracted him. He had come to the Bishop's office with the intention of requesting the clergyman to contact his aunt in Zimbabwe so that she and the rest of this man's family could make arrangements to assist him return home. There were a number of people by the Bishop's office and the man called Damon, sensibly, realized it would be difficult for him to enter Verryn's office. He was feeling drowsy because of the medication he was taking and wanted to sleep early. He requested that I call his aunt in Zimbabwe, on his behalf and tell

her of his predicament. His belongings, which included a passport, had been stolen. He was left with a wallet that contained a few valuables- a driver's license and business cards. Without any money on him, he did not have the means to contact his relatives. Even if he had managed a call, having a phone conversation was going to be difficult on account of his impaired hearing. I obliged to his request[67]. The call went through but Damon's aunt was not at home and had traveled to Zambia. I left a message and with Damon emphasizing the urgency and dire situation, I repeated the same and requested his aunt to return the call. I also made an undertaking to Damon that I would make another call to her aunt. In the days that followed, I made a few calls but I never managed to talk to Damon's aunt. Even though the aunt's daughter made an undertaking to inform her mother to call and find out about Damon's condition and how she could assist him, such a call never came forth in the following days and weeks. After my initial meeting with Damon, I never managed to see him again. No one else at the church knew Damon or his whereabouts. He was one of the inhabitants who typically slept in the church's 'public spaces' and was obliged to leave the church in the mornings and then re-enter in the evenings.

My brief encounter with Damon highlighted the desire that some of the migrants had in returning home whenever their health deteriorated but this was compounded by other difficulties and hardships of living within the church. In Damon's case it was not possible to ascertain why his aunt could not assist him return to home. There were however, various hardships related to dying and death that inhabitants like Damon faced, which they sought to manage by returning home. A conversation I had with Mandla, a male nurse working at the MSF clinic provided an insight into some of these conundrums, which Damon might have been trying to escape.

Whilst seated outside Verryn's office, Mandla and I entered into a conversation with a family that was seeking Verryn's assistance in repatriating a deceased relative's remains to Zimbabwe. Neither the family members nor their dead relative stayed at the church. They however, had been told about the assistance the Bishop of the church usually rendered to Zimbabweans and they were desperate for his help. They had initially sought assistance at the offices of Lawyers for Human Rights, a legal welfare organization. The organization had told

[67] One of the most difficult conundrums for ethnographers has often been the compulsion to assist research participants or to remain 'detached observers'. This incident raised such a dilemma. In this case, while I was cognizant of my responsibility not to unduly influence the research process in any way I felt the need to intervene given the state of the man's health

them that they did not provide assistance with funeral costs and they only ran a Migrants and Refugee Rights programme which catered for the legal needs of indigent asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. A receptionist at the organization had advised them to approach the Zimbabwean embassy and seek assistance with repatriation papers for the deceased and also to 'try' Bishop Verryn who assisted Zimbabweans. Distressed and obviously anxious; but now seemingly quite cautiously optimistic, they asked Mandla and I, if the Bishop could perhaps assist. We were not sure, we told them, but we hoped he could be of some assistance to them. We were cautious to avoid either raising their hopes or dampening them, in case we ended up compounding their grief. However, did not know of any other organization among the many that worked with Zimbabweans that could render assistance in such a case. As they entered the Bishop's office, Mandla, immediately remarked that:

> Aah these people are in trouble! You know they say if [dead] bodies stay for two weeks they are given a pauper's burial. Of course it's partly that these people [migrants] say, 'I don't have relatives' so that they avoid paying [when they go to hospitals]. So when you die, two weeks they go and bury! But the law says, one month. They (authorities) say 'Nxxa these makwerekwere!' and they go and bury! [Conversation with Mandla 14 October 2009]

In his manner of speaking, Mandla was typically dramatic but his observations in this case resonated with what some of my informants, like Nyarai often told me. In a diary entry Nyarai noted that:

> A certain South African woman, in her early fifties, fell ill during the past weeks. But on this particular day because people had raised alarm that she has some pimples on her right hand and they were afraid it was going to spread [to others in the building] since she was refusing to get treatment. A certain man from MSF came to take her to the clinic to get treatment. She has a dermatological condition- name unknown. This woman is always quiet, hardly talks to anyone. Her health has gradually deteriorated over the weeks and now you can tell she is ailing.
>
> In a nutshell, there are a lot of cases of different ailments in the building. A number of people refuse to go for treatment, others seek treatment late hence the rapid spread of diseases. There are a lot of sick people who do not know what they are suffering from and in the process they die of illnesses that can be controlled. When they die there are no relatives to bury them decently. Some spend a lot of months in morgues because there is no one to bury them. Maybe their relatives in Zimbabwe do not know about their deaths. [At times] because of financial constraints, the relatives back home cannot raise money to transport the corpse from South Africa to Zimbabwe. Some end up being buried here in the absence of their families. [Nyarai diary entry 6 October 2009]

Damon's attempt to travel home might have been an attempt to escape the conundrums of dying and being buried away from home. These included the financial costs involved, acquiring the proper documentation and the possibilities of a pauper's burial. In attempting to travel back home Damon and perhaps Susan's grandmother as well, sought to avoid the 'disgrace' of a pauper's burial but rather to 're-claim' the 'sanctity of the dead body' (Dennie 2009: 312). Dennie (2009) whose study examined the intersection of race, indigence and the disposal of dead bodies in Johannesburg between 1886-1960, notes that African urban migrants responded to the challenge of maintaining traditional burial rituals and the 'disgrace' of pauper burials by setting up burial societies and in the process they re-claimed the control over the disposal of dead bodies from white municipal authorities. Dennie (ibid: 312) asserts that:

> Confronted with the spectacle of putrefying corpses of indigent Africans being hauled through the streets of Johannesburg for disposal in a racially segregated cemetery, Africans responded by creating new institutions, aka burial societies, which offered them the capacity to re-claim control of their dead and manage the processes of the purification, preservation, and the disposal of the dead body.

Within the context of hardship in the church Damon found it prudent to manage the possibilities of death as well as its possible indignities such as a pauper burial or a shameful funeral wake like Susan's by attempting to travel back home even though he was evidently ailing. While Susan's grandmother saw the journey back home, essentially to die, as unproblematic given the spiritual sensibilities that a burial away from home invoked, below I present the illness narratives of two of the church inhabitants as a way to illuminate the dynamics, tensions and conflicts that arise in the 'space of death'. By 'space of death' I draw from Niehaus (2007: 848) who argues that in the context of HIV and AIDS as well as the fatalism and stigma the epidemic has engendered in South Africa, very often AIDS patients are located in an 'anomalous domain between life and death, and are literally seen as 'corpses that live' or as persons who are 'dead before dying'. By examining this particular domain, I open up the analysis to an exploration of the interdependences and solidarities among indigent individuals in the specific context of hardship that is the church. The argument I present here is that among the indigent migrants, processes of assistance are problematic in the event of perceived impeding or imminent death there are conflicts, tensions, and reluctance attached to forms of assistance.

Such reluctances are not only underpinned by severe deprivation and lack but emerge out of spiritual and emotional insecurities and sensibilities associated with death and dying. Below I detail the case of Lillian who despite staying at the church had relatives who lived in the affluent Johannesburg neighbourhood of Sandton. In Lillian's case her friends are reluctant to assist her, as are some of her relatives. She contemplates going back home but the expectations of migrating to Johannesburg dissuade her.

Chronic illnesses and the dynamics of returning home
Lillian Mberi

I had not seen Lillian for close to two weeks. I decided to inquire her whereabouts from her friends in the Roberts room kitchen where she slept. I found Rudo, her sister Marita, Mildred and Kudzi seemingly engaged in a serious discussion. The women, who were usually in jovial spirits, were seemingly downcast. As I approach them, they greet me and I quickly take the opportunity to ask about Lillian. My inquiry is answered, initially, by a couple of shaken heads. Mildred then explains that Lillian had been in hospital for the past couple of weeks and they have been visiting her regularly during that period. They had just returned from the hospital and were, in fact, briefing Kudzi about Lillian's condition that had rapidly deteriorated:

> You won't even recognize that an adult is sleeping on a bed. *Apera zvisingaite. Paya paya zvinhu hazvina kumira mushe. Hamheno.* [She is severely wasted. Things are not looking good at all. We really don't know….

The women fear the worst. During their visit Lillian had requested them to sing her a Christian hymn and to say some prayers for her. That request, her friends told me, spelt the end and it was probably the last time they were going to see their friend alive again. The mood is solemn and the four women are bracing- even preparing, for the worst.

Despite their fears, Lillian was discharged unexpectedly from the hospital four days later. Her condition, as was described by her friends, seemed not to have improved at all. She could not walk and was placed on a wheelchair. Lillian was emaciated and was, now and again, coughing severely. The black woolen hat she was wearing appeared oversized and because of the manner she was wearing it- just cast over her head- thin strands of hair were peeping outside the

hat. Her two friends, Rudo and Kudzi have brought her from the hospital and were now talking to Evans in the church lobby. Rudo argues that Lillian cannot stay in the Roberts room kitchen because there are many women and children who sleep in this place and much of the cooking is also done within this room and since she was diagnosed with Tuberculosis (TB) there is a risk she could spread the disease to many other people. She said it was better for Lillian to stay with Kudzi in one of the storerooms under Evans' control. Kudzi on the other hand is also adamant that even though there are fewer people in the storeroom there is an equal risk of the TB bug being spread and the only logical solution is to have Lillian placed in the Home Based Care ward up in the fourth floor. Besides, since Lillian was now on TB medication, she would get the best care in the infirmary; with the nurse monitoring her drug intake and ensuring that she would be receiving regular healthy meals. As they put forward their case, the two women, constantly, solicit my view, 'isn't that so?' they keep asking. I am reluctant, rather unwilling to enter the debate at all and I keep muttering, the neutral and non-committal, 'I'm not too sure', for Lillian is within earshot and I do not want to be seen taking sides. Given the tense discussion I sensed that Lillian was unwilling to go and live in the infirmary.

While the two women were sombre a few days prior to Lillian's surprise discharge from hospital, their stance on this particular day was uncompromising, despite the presence of their ailing friend. The women eventually prevail on Evans who orders that Lillian, be taken up to the Home based care ward. Evans explained to a reluctant Lillian that the decision was in her best interest. Lillian is unwilling to be taken to the ward but she is devoid of the strength- physical or mental- to contest the decision.

While Kudzi and Rudo had, perhaps, a compelling case, that of preventing the spread of the communicable TB bug, I still felt inclined to ask them why they did not want their friend to stay with them anymore. Despite their reasonable argument, what intrigued me was the clinical manner they put across their points. It was devoid of the compassion and sympathy they displayed just a few days prior. Their delight at the sight of Lillian being carried up the stairs betrayed much more than they were perhaps expressing. Rudo then answered:

> Takauya kuJoni kuzotsvaga mari [We came to Johannesburg to make money] no one has time to be looking after a sick person. We were not around when she was prostituting. Kuhospital vatomupinza muchirongwa [The hospital has drafted her into the programme[68]]'.

Lillian had been ill for some time. She was frequently coughing and she attributed this to the harsh living conditions within the church. Usually, she put down the coughing to a mere 'flu' or 'just a cold'. In July 2009 she fell seriously ill:

> I started coughing and had continuous menses. I delayed going to the hospital but Evans eventually forced me when my condition continued to worsen. I went to Helen Joseph Hospital and was tested for everything and diagnosed with TB. I was transferred to Selby Hospital for treatment of the continuous menses and then admitted at Helen Joseph for treatment of the TB.

The incidents with Lillian's friends, outlined above happen just before as well as soon after her discharge from the hospital. Lillian stayed in the home based care ward at the church for close to two months during which time I visited her constantly and we would talk quite briefly about her health. Her condition continued to gradually improve to such an extent that she could walk unassisted although she told me she felt weak most of the times. Upon her discharge from the ward she went to stay with Kudzi in the storeroom. In my conversations with Lillian she revealed her detest for the medical ward at the church because there was stigma attached to it. When one was admitted into the ward their HIV status was assumed. Lillian had many more concerns about the Home Based Care:

> There is clean water and good bedding and less noise but there is very little food for someone on medication. We are given black tea, tuchingwa [small pieces of bread], mgqutshu [traditional mealie-rice], and dried cabbage [mufushwa wecabbage]. If you want meat you contribute some money and if you don't contribute, you don't eat the meat others have bought.
>
> Reason: Is there someone- friends or family- that brought you food, to supplement the food you were receiving in the home-based care?

[68] In popular Zimbabwean parlance 'being drafted into the programme' essentially means that an HIV or AIDS patient is now on free anti-retroviral treatment through an NGO or Government sponsored programme. While medical anthropologists talk about the emergence of biological citizenship where HIV patients find inclusion within communities through their medical status in Lillian's case its not a form of 'biological citizenship' that typically ensured her inclusion but rather stigmatization and exclusion as she is taken to the desolate Home Based Care ward.

> Lillian: My younger cousin [the unemployed one] and Evans and a few friends would sometimes bring me food. People from Christ Embassy as well. My [elder] cousin who stays here [in Johannesburg] didn't come to see me. She together with other family members [in Zimbabwe] suggested that I go back to Zimbabwe and get treatment there.

I wondered how Lillian was expected to get treatment in Zimbabwe at a time the country was not only facing an economic crisis but was coming out of the throes of a serious cholera outbreak, the country's health care system had failed to properly contain[69]. Lillian[70] had close relatives in Johannesburg, in the form of her wealthy cousin. The cousin never visited her since her arrival at the church and even during the time she was sick. This cousin had been opposed to Lillian's migration to Johannesburg, since she felt that she did have bright prospects of getting a job on account of her modest education. Even though she was discharged from the Home Based Care ward in the church, Lillian spent most of her time sleeping in the storeroom. She still had to take the TB medication as well as the antiretroviral drugs. Given the state of her health, she could not leave the church to look for a job and she relied on the food that people within the storeroom cooked. Lillian's circle of friends, who welcomed her back after her discharge from the HBC ward, derived consolation from the fact that she was not more of a burden beyond the food they gave her. Unlike the period after her discharge from the hospital, she could carry out some simple chores. Although her friends tried their best to assist her with food, the period during Lillian's illness was marked by a general absence of her blood relations who perhaps were uncomfortable associating with the 'disgraceful' conditions at the church or the arduous responsibility of looking after a sick person. Lillian's elder cousin constantly encouraged her to travel back to Zimbabwe.

During the time when Lillian was severely sick, her friends within the confines of the church were also quick to escape the obligation and responsibility of looking after Lillian due perhaps to the financial resources this entailed and the impossibility of looking after a sick individual as they pursued their livelihoods. There may also have had a lingering- and perhaps well-founded fear- that Lillian might die in their care.

[69] See Chapter 2
[70] I detail the story of Lillian's arrival at the church in Chapter 3

Although her health gradually improved, the woman was often desolate and her mood forlorn. I wondered though why she did not consider going back to Zimbabwe as her family had suggested, in case this could aid her recovery and be a panacea to the misery that seemed to engulf her within the church. Lillian's response was typically one of hope and unbridled optimism and she displayed a strength and determination that her body seemed to be devoid of:

> Kuenda kumba ndisina chandinacho azviite [I can't go back home empty handed] When I get better I want to look for a job first. If I get a job maybe in January, I will work and then go. If I go back like this, even people in the neighbourhood will say, 'she went to South Africa and came back sick and empty handed'. They will be a lot of whispering and gossiping about me in the neighbourhood.

In the months that followed Lillian recovered and first worked on some of the bit-part jobs at the church, such as in the soup kitchen. She eventually secured a job in a small supermarket in inner city Johannesburg. Lillian's situation seemed to mirror that of Susan's last days. Lillian had to contend with intense pressure from her relatives as well as some of her friends at the church, to go back home. Such pressure seemed to me to emanate from the spiritual insecurities and material obligations that a death away from home would typically burden the woman's rich relatives. Lillian's friends respond through what Bähre's (2007: 38) terms 'reluctant solidarity'. The friends vacillate between compassion, outright indifference and then compassion by staying with Lillian when she recovered enough to be able to fend for herself reasonably. The contours of their assistance changed constantly, in ways that mirrored the woman's health condition. The assistance echoes Bähre's (ibid: 52) observation that:

> Reluctant solidarity encapsulates that help, particularly under conditions of destitution and hardship, does not result in extensive unifying bonds of comradeship, but in small bonds fraught with social tensions.

deGelder (2011) points to a similar dynamic amongst HIV and AIDS patients at a project in Pretoria. At this centre, caregivers evoked the figure of an ideal agent or patient as being that on an individual who exercises choice and 'goes home to one's relatives' when death appears imminent. For deGelder (ibid) such an expectation spoke to the project's material constraints as much as local knowledge regarding proper burial and ancestorship.

There is an additional dynamic to Lillian's case. Lillian like the late Susan was reluctant to go home. Lillian's reluctance and refusal to go home stems from the expectations and obligations of migration where the woman believes that even her neighbours would perceive her situation as perhaps a disgrace since she would have gone to South Africa and 'come back sick and empty handed'. In Lillian's case it is not just the stigma of illness but it is also about the fulfillment of her aspirations that dissuades her from going back home.

I what follows, I discuss the case of Mazvita Mlambo, who was chronically sick but whose relatives stayed at the church. Her case provides additional insights into the difficulties inhabitants who were being asked to go home when they were sick encountered even when they were willing to do so. The case speaks also to the moralities of the sick individuals as well as the material constraints engendered by illness and the tensions this occasion within households at the church.

Mazvita Mlambo

One of my informants, Nyarai kept a diary I had given her as I had a few other inhabitants. She often made quite detailed and well-written entries and was always on hand to elaborate some of the issues she would have written about. On the 1st of October 2009, she alerted me to the plight of her cousin. The diary entry was however; atypically shorter than what I had gotten accustomed to reading from her:

> Mazvita has been discharged from hospital; she's been admitted to the home-based care and she doesn't like the place.

Part of Nyarai's family stayed within the church. This was her brother Tonderai and his wife as well as their cousin, Mazvita Mlambo. While Tonderai and his wife stayed in the couples' room, Nyarai stayed in the notorious Minor Hall, initially with Mazvita, before the latter was moved to stay in the Home based care ward after being discharged from hospital. Mazvita, as I later learnt, was HIV positive and Nyarai attributed her cousin's infection to the

lifestyle she led in the years gone by. '*Mazvita ayimanya. Anga arimufast*[71]' According to Nyarai, her cousin had left their home in Charter, a farming town close to Harare for Botswana where she did not stay for many months before she headed to Johannesburg. She went to stay with Nyarai in the Minor Hall and it was at that time that her health problems surfaced. Mazvita was severely affected by the poor ventilation and the extreme noise levels in the hall. These problems had much to do with the physical conditions in the large room as with Mazvita's state of health. The 23- year old Mazvita contracted meningitis whilst in the hall and this became apparent when she suddenly displayed one of the symptoms of this infection, being photophobic. Nyarai and her brother saw to it that their cousin was taken to hospital for treatment. She was admitted into hospital for a few days and upon being discharged, Nyarai and Tonderai ensured that she was moved into the Home Based care ward in the church. In my conversation with Nyarai, she reckoned the decision was in everyone's best interests, although it seemed to me that some of her sentiments sounded more like she wanted to convince herself more than I or anyone else. There were tensions among Nyarai's family which centred on the finances to cater for Mazvita and her health requirements, particularly her increased dietary needs:

> People talk a lot and Mazvita is sensitive. Sick people are a sensitive lot, you know. She didn't want to go into the home-based care because she felt like she was going back into a hospital ward. But she now appreciates the fourth floor (Home Based Care). That was the best for her even though she sometimes complains. She's also recovering.
>
> Financially [staying with Mazvita] was going to be a strain for us. You know muroora wangu [my sister-in-law; Tonderai's wife] is my brother's wallet. She keeps all the money. *Muroora wangu hazvisi maari.* [Caring for the sick is just not something my sister-in-law is capable of doing]. She's someone who can cry over R2 and say, *'Tonderai washortesa mari'* [Tonderai you've taken some money]. So to her Mazvita is not really close family, she's my aunt's daughter and my sister-in-law cannot sacrifice whatever she wants to do because of Mazvita. In her thinking our relation with Mazvita is just not close enough [Interview with Nyarai 24 October 2009]

While Nyarai and her brother tried to assist Mazvita even with the limited resources they had, there was tension between Tonderai's wife and the two other family members. Tonderai's wife did not regard Mazvita as a 'close relative' hence she was not inclined to assist her.

[71] Nyarai projected her cousin in very unflattering terms. Literally translated, her statement said 'Mazvita was a runner, she was very fast/too forward'. This meant that she was promiscuous and sexually indiscriminate and her behaviour was presumptuous.

Apart from the additional materialities of taking care of Mazvita, the woman's illness was regarded as emanating from her moral or sexual misconduct. Such perceptions engendered Mazvita's exclusion from the Minor Hall to the HBC ward. Nyarai's diary revealed the inherent prejudices and discrimination that characterized Mazvita's life as well as that of other sick people within the church:

> My cousin Mazvita came down from the Home Based Care on the fourth floor. She came down the stairs on her own wanting to go to the hospital for a check up. When she got into Minor Hall, a certain lady who saw her started crying. Tears were streaming down her cheeks. Mazvita was affected and she ended up spending the entire afternoon sleeping on my space. (Nyarai's diary 06 October 2009)

Nyarai and her brother Tonderai tried as much as they could to assist Mazvita with food and they also provided her social and emotional support. For Nyarai this included talking constantly to Mazvita whom she believed was also under immense stress. In an interview with her, Nyarai opined:

> Mazvita is under a lot of mental stress. She's constantly thinking that she could have done better. She could have been working- she used to work. She tells me stories of what happened. At home however, no one has been really responding to her illness. They just tell us to arrange for her to come back home. I just tell them, 'she'll come when she's a lot better'. I understand the nature of what she's going through. So I cannot leave her here or send her home to her mother. That's part of me. I cannot leave anyone, even a neighbor, stranded like that. What more my cousin?

I was not sure what Nyarai precisely understood about Mazvita's thought processes. I could only assume that it was perhaps the weight of responsibilities and expectations to her family that overburdened her even at a time she could not mentally or physically carry such a burden. Smith (2004; 570) whose study looks at Igbo immigrants', notes that the expectations that immigrants will uplift their communities remains a powerful and enduring ideal. Within the church this expectation dissuaded Mazvita from traveling home to probably face the shame of having failed to exploit the land of opportunities- real or imagined- that is South Africa. Her family in Zimbabwe seemed to have had an apparent indifference to her circumstances perhaps due to the nature of her illness. This may have been because of her past lifestyle as much as it

had to do with a failure to fulfill the expectations of those at home during the time she was working.

Although her health was failing and she was evidently ailing Mazvita was among some of the fortunate individuals inside the church building in that, despite some tensions among her relatives, they tried their best to take care of her and assist her. They also kept regular contact with their family back home about their cousin's health. This was not always the norm. Mazvita's case however highlights how assistance to the sick migrants was neither clear-cut nor straight- forward. It was mediated by material constraints as much as by the morality of the sick individual.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that among indigent migrants living in a place of indigence, chronic illness and death are managed in complex and unpredictable ways chronic illness. Often, such decisions are mediated by spiritual and emotional considerations, which are deeply immersed in ancestral beliefs. There is intense pressure for inhabitants who are chronically ill to travel and 'die at home'. Such pressure is underpinned by beliefs in the proper preservation and interment of the dead. There is deep emotional anguish and distress when migrants die and are buried away from 'home'. The pathos lies in fears that burials away from home may in future arouse the anger of ancestors and result in the living facing misfortunes.

For the dying individuals the dynamics of returning home are often shaped and informed by material considerations. These include not only the actual costs of traveling back home but there is often a desire to fulfill the expectations and in some cases the obligations of migration to kin and community. Paradoxically, such considerations result in exclusions whereby the sick are at times left abandoned within the locality of the church. Apart from the material concerns, the morality of the sick individual is often central to the ways in which a community- both at the church and in Zimbabwe embrace an individual. Illness arising from sexual indiscretion and immoral conduct are treated with indifference both during illness and even in death.

Within the locality of the church, the contours of care and assistance among the indigent migrants are often fraught with tensions, disputes, reluctance, and are underpinned not only by material constraints but, also by moral concerns over the conduct of sick individuals. Beyond these observations, the chapter suggests that while many studies romanticize the coping capabilities and interdependences of poor individuals, in the contexts of desperation and hardship there are tensions among the poor and at best solidarity and assistance are rendered in ways that are ambivalent and ambiguous.

The following chapter provides a conclusion to the thesis. It proposes a final discussion and analysis of the issues raised in the thesis.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Between compassion and domination?

This thesis is an analysis of the lives and experiences of a large group of individuals that lived within a specific locality- the Central Methodist Church- in Johannesburg. It provides a discussion and illumination of the ways these individuals lived through conditions of immense hardship and profound insecurities. Also, it examines the practices, technologies and rationalities, through which these individuals are acted upon by a large array of humanitarian and welfare organizations. The thesis makes a contribution to the anthropology of humanitarianism. In addition, the thesis contributes to broader debates on the intersections between migration, indigence, victimhood and the practices of humanitarian institutions and agencies. The key questions this thesis sought to address was, how and in what ways is experiential suffering dealt with and how do the different means and technologies of managing suffering impinge upon individual and collective subjectivities in the specific locality of the church?

The thesis has shown that the lives of mobile individuals living within the church have to be analysed and understood within a historical context, as well as, through historically embedded processes. In this regard, the thesis illuminates that, notwithstanding the large-scale contemporary movement and migration of individuals from Zimbabwe to South Africa, people have always moved and migrated within the southern African region, in pursuit of livelihood possibilities. At different historical moments such migration has been acted upon and spoken about in different ways. In Chapter 2, I show how, during the colonial era the migration of black migrant labourers was tacitly encouraged and such mobility supported the industrial growth and development of South Africa. At the same time, mobile livelihoods such as in mine labour gradually became forms of livelihoods within the colonial era, and such livelihoods supported families and communities. Contemporary migration, in both its rationale and in some instances, its meanings, mimics these long standing historical processes. A key point to make about contemporary movements is, however, that they have been given immense impetus by processes of social, economic and political fragmentation and instability within present day Zimbabwe and

they have been mediated in innumerable ways by the socio-political realities of present day South Africa. These processes have to a large extent, impoverished a large number of the country's citizens who have responded by migrating out of the country's borders. In this way, the thesis illustrates how broader political, economic and social structures penetrate everyday life and constrain individuals and it further shows the responses of the affected individuals.

The historical approach adopted within the thesis challenges the way places, localities and 'zones' of suffering have been conceptualized theoretically within the social sciences. Places and localities such as asylum holding camps, detention centres, refugee camps and the like have very often been analysed as 'exceptional' spaces where persons emplaced within these places are included within polities, paradoxically through their exclusion. These places are also seen in some ways as 'liminal', existing neither here nor there within the law (see for example Murray 2011). Informed by Agamben's (1998) concept of 'bare life', most studies perceive individuals living in such places as bereft of their rights and living simply in pursuit of biological survival. In this thesis, I show that such sites, as illustrated by the Central Methodist Church, are indeed places of hardships but they are also in many ways productive political, economic and social material resources that are utilized by both the people who stay within these places and the organizations that act upon the people emplaced in such spaces. In Chapter 3, I show that whilst migrants experienced hardships at the church they enacted particular forms of livelihoods and for some of them residing within the church became a way to escape financial obligations associated with staying in rented places. Indigent migrants also stayed within the vicinity of the inner city places where they could gain a foothold on job opportunities, even though the majority of these were precarious and temporary.

The thesis has also shown that the church building is strategically used by individuals and institutions as a site where struggles over political inclusion and victimhood are fought. In Chapter 4, I show how the Bishop of the church employed varied strategies to both manage the church and to engage in broader political struggles over inequality, poverty and the politics of migration. In Chapter 5, I illustrate how the church is transformed into a place of humanitarian activity by the sheer presence of a number of humanitarian organizations that attempt to manage the lives of the people living within the church. The organizations also use the presence of

people at the church as a platform to institute new interventions in highly contested and creative ways. The point that the study makes is that places and localities of 'crisis' ought to be seen through the meanings that individuals attach to inhabiting them and the political, material and social sensibilities that constitute them. At the Methodist church, the lives and aspirations of mobile individuals interact and intersect with political and humanitarian practices in creative, complex and contested ways.

A further point to make is that the specific locality of the church and indeed many other such localities also ought to be analyzed through a historical prism. Such a historical reading and analysis of the Central Methodist Church illustrates that, apart from looking at the meanings and the sensibilities that constitute the church, the specific historical materiality of the church shows the place to share similarities with other places, and mobile individuals have often lived in and settled at. The modes and forms of living within the church, albeit on a bigger scale, also reflect the forms of lives indigent migrants' who occupied mining compounds and hostels, dilapidated inner-city flats, informal settlements practiced. These places have very often been referred to as 'abject spaces' and are often overcrowded due to various subdivisions and individuals enact livelihoods within these places. In a broader perceptive the study therefore illuminates the historical, political and material sensibilities that constitute camps as well as the meanings attached to them and therefore argues that such localities ought to be perceived as comprised of complex power relations, authority structures and are therefore inherently contested.

The politics, practices and ethics humanitarianism organizations

The thesis explores the practices of humanitarian organizations within the church. In this study I have shown how the organizations coalesce around the specific site of the church, wherein they attempt to institute different interventions. Consequently, the intended beneficiaries are classified and categorized in different ways. In Chapter 5, I highlight how the different classifications determine, which individuals are assisted and the consequent exclusion of other categories of people. The major argument I present is that humanitarian organizations work within a complex field comprised of donors, beneficiaries and other civil society organizations.

Such a field is immensely contested and the issues that are times attended to arise out of negotiations and contestations between the various actors.

In Chapter 5, the thesis also highlights the intersections between the aspirations of the migrants and the interventions instituted by the organizations. The chapter shows that in the context of hardship materialized by deprivations, the aspirations of individuals intersect with some of the interventions but perhaps not in the ways that the interventions were intended. Individuals enter into the realms of intervention programmes as a way to deal with the exigencies of daily life.

One of the key conclusions the thesis makes is that sites and localities such as the Methodist church, are illustrations of costellations of power relations and different authority structures. Such places also materialize a political and economic field of victiomhood. Different organization contest to alleviate suffering but often in ways that do not capture how people understand their violations and the rehabilitative mechanisms they require. The organizations themselves are mired in the exigencies of survival hence humanitarian fields become *territorialized* spaces, where the suffering of people is often categorized and in some instances seemingly commoditized. These territories and indeed victimhood is therefore shaped by the negotiations, contestations and differing perspectives between beneficiaries, donors and organizations.

The everyday life of migrants

The thesis examined the every day lives of Zimbabwean migrants at the church. The thesis highlights in chapter 3 that the lives of the most of the migrants were materialized by lack and deprivation. Inhabiting the church constituted a form of hardship in that there were particular constraints to staying within the building. These included the overcrowded nature of the building, lack of adequate amenities and constraints such as theft. In Chapter 3 as well as chapter 4 I show the resourcefulness of some of the migrants through the ways in which they survive in the building and manage to carve their spheres of influences in the midst of constrained possibilities. The main point the chapter makes is that far from romanticizing the lives of indigent people, the everyday life of many of the migrants was fraught with hardship, tensions

and despair. Chapter 6 brings to light the despair that migrants faced either when sick or when confronted by death of friends or close relatives. I show that the resilience of poor people, which is often portrayed in much of the literature, is itself ambiguous and rendered in complex and unpredictable ways.

Migrants live under fears and anxieties not only emanating from their precarious and insecure positions but also from the spiritual realm. Death and and dying as well as chronic illness are a source of insecurity as they materialize questions of the afterlife and ancerstorship. These insecurities are mediated and often compounded by the expectations of migration both of the migrants' kin and community and that of the individual migrant. These insecurities and expectations in the midst of precarity lead to the exclusion of the sick and a cause of anguish among kin.

Victims and Victimhood

The thesis shows that, there are, a multiplicity of 'victims'. Victims are produced through political, economic and social structures and transformations. These include political conflicts and economic disruptions. With regards to the Zimbabwean migrants, the thesis illustrates that victims emerge out of inequalities, invisibilities and silences as much as from political and economic processes. In Chapter 2, I illustrate, for example the different categories that emerged out of the Zimbabwe context such as the immediate post independence victims of the Matabeleland atrocities, and the general victims of political repression and the economic collapse of recent years. While the presence of victims is undeniable the point that the thesis makes is that the recognition and acknowledgment of victims are highly political, contested and complex processes mediated by a number of different actors. Such recognition are mediated by the activities of donors who through funding NGOs may determine the issues a particular organization focuses upon and the manner it is dealt with. Humanitarian organizations also negotiate on the forms of violations focused upon; as do the beneficiaries who also try and have programmes that intersect with their survival strategies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet
Hello,

My name is Reason Beremauro and I am a PhD student at WITS University. As part of my studies I am doing a research project entitled *Living between compassion and domination? An ethnographic study of institutions, interventions and the everyday practices of poor black Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa*. The study is focusing on the engagements between humanitarian organisations and black Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. The study examines how the state and humanitarian organisations represent, classify and categorize Zimbabwean migrant and the consequences of these classifications. Further, it looks at how migrants represent themselves in seeking humanitarian assistance, legal recognition and in pursuing livelihoods in South Africa.

My target participants include black Zimbabwean migrants who have been in South Africa for a period of six months or more. I am also interested in talking to those migrants who depend or receive assistance from organisations. If you fall into this category I would like to kindly invite you to participate in this study.

Your participation will entail that you will be interviewed by me. The interview will be conducted at a place you deem private and where you feel comfortable sharing the story of your life with me. The interview will take between 1 and 2 hours at a time. I would like to interview you on numerous occasions, which is more than once. I would also like to attend some of the meetings and events that you attend or places of interest that you visit.

I am interested in talking to you about your experiences such as how and why you came to South Africa, the constraints you have faced since your arrival; how you sustain yourself in this country; the organisation/s that assists or has assisted you and your plans for the future. Other

issues may come out of these conversations and you may share any other additional information you so wish to share.

There may not be personal benefits arising from your participation in the study but the information you share with me will help us better understand the experiences of migrants, their livelihood strategies, the constraints they face and their engagements with organisations. This information can be used to better understand the experiences and needs of migrants and potentially, have long term benefits for individuals and communities.

They may be risks from participating in this study. Some people may be reminded of sensitive or emotive issues or events that may have occurred in the past. In case this happens I will provide the best support I can. I will advise you of a trained counsellor who can help you deal with these issues. I have a list of some of the organisations who can provide you with professional support. The same also applies in instances where you feel you need legal advice or assistance; I can refer you to an organisation that offers legal advice and assistance.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decide whether you want to take part or not. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time you feel like doing so. In the event that we are recording an interview, you are also free to stop the recording at any time.

The information you share with me will remain confidential. In the event that you agree to the recording of the interviews the contents of these recordings will be locked in a cabin where I only have access. The information you provide will also be grouped with information from other participants such that it can never be traced to you. While I will know your name and possibly the names of other participants in this study, I will not document your name in interview reports (transcripts) and in the study report. In the research report I will also use pseudonyms (not your real name) to conceal and protect your identity and that of other participants.

For any further information regarding this project please feel free to contact me on 073 357 8463. The number is available for 24 hours. You may also contact me on email at Reason.Beremauro@wits.ac.za Thank you for taking time to consider participation in the study.

Sincerely

Reason Beremauro

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet (for staff in organisations)

Hello,

My name is Reason Beremauro and I am a PhD student at WITS University. As part of my studies I am doing a research project entitled *Living between compassion and domination? An ethnographic study of institutions, interventions and the everyday practices of poor black Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa*. The study is focusing on the engagements between humanitarian organisations and black Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. The study examines how the state and humanitarian organisations represent, classify and categorize Zimbabwean migrant and the consequences of these classifications. Further, it looks at how migrants represent themselves in seeking humanitarian assistance, legal recognition and in pursuing livelihoods in South Africa.

My target participants include black Zimbabwean migrants who have been in South Africa for a period of six months or more. I am also interested in talking to staff working in humanitarian organisations. If you fall into this category I would like to kindly invite you to participate in this study.

Your participation will entail that you will be interviewed by me. The interview will be conducted at a place you deem private and where you feel comfortable talking to me. The interview will take between 1 and 2 hours at a time. I would like to interview you on numerous occasions, which is more than once. I would also like to attend some of the meetings and events that you attend or places of interest that you visit.

I am interested in talking to you about your educational and work background, your experiences in the area where you are working, the difficulties you have faced in your work; your organisations' donors and you organisation's priority activities and interventions. Other issues may come out of these conversations and you may share any other additional information you so wish to share.

There may not be personal benefits arising from your participation in the study but the information you share with me will help us better understand the experiences of migrants, their livelihood strategies, the constraints they face and their engagements with organisations. This information can be used to better understand the experiences and needs of migrants and potentially, have long term benefits for individuals and communities.

They may be risks from participating in this study. Some people may be reminded of sensitive or emotive issues or events that may have occurred in the past. In case this happens I will provide the best support I can. I will advise you of a trained counsellor who can help you deal with these issues. I have a list of some of the organisations who can provide you with professional support. The same also applies in instances where you feel you need legal advice or assistance; I can refer you to an organisation that offers legal advice and assistance.

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For any further information regarding this project please feel free to contact me on 073 357 8463. The number is available for 24 hours. You may also contact me on email at Reason.Beremauro@wits.ac.za Thank you for taking time to consider participation in the study.

Sincerely,

Reason Beremauro

APPENDIX C: Tree of Life Group follow up meeting

Report for the Tree Of Life workshop No 8 group follow-up meeting

Date: 18th September 2008

Time: 12:30- 14:00

Facilitators: Godfrey Phiri,Sehlule Ngwenya and Patricia Kariaga

Participants: Edmore M..., Chrispen..., Welcome..., Willard... and Ernest...

1) The meeting began with welcoming the participants and serving them with lunch. After lunch, members introduced themselves and Godfrey introduced Patricia as a new team member.
2) Members were then requested to give feedback on the four day Tree of Life workshop they attended.
3) Ernest shared that he had enjoyed the workshop and was very spiritually uplifted. Nevertheless, he said that when he came back to his place of abode after the workshop, he found the same problems he had left behind. He was hoping that he could be assisted financially to deal with his day to day problems.
4) Each of the other members shared similar sentiments sharing how they benefited greatly from the "Tree of Life" spiritually and emotionally but came back to find the same problems they left when left for the workshop. Willard shared how beneficial the Thumb therapy has been in helping him fall asleep daily.
5) Godfrey explained to all the members that the Tree of Life as a project did not have funding for Humanitarian Assistance and that someone from the management would come to address them about the issue. The participants had written a letter as a group requesting for financial/humanitarian assistance to the management the previous week.
6) Tobias..., from the management was called in to explain the issue of Tree of Life not being able to offer humanitarian assistance and other related issues. He greeted the members and welcomed them. He requested the members to write their requests for humanitarian assistance individually explaining that not all members in a group may need the same kind of assistance. He went on further to explain that the Tree of Life as a project was responsible for the spiritual and emotional healing of participants' trauma and torture, as Godfrey and Sehlule had explained previously, and that it did not have a budget for humanitarian assistance.
7) Participants were then given an opportunity to respond to Tobias.
8) After this understanding, participants went on to discuss a way forward through coming up with a project. Having realized that the project would not be funded by SACST, they agreed to hold future meetings to organize themselves and come up with a project and seek for funding. They were reassured that they could access information and advise from SACST when they needed this. They were reminded to use previous resources they had been supplied with such as the Refugee Directory.
9) Ernest felt that he did not want to be part of the group anymore and was excused from future group activities
10) Several Tai Chi activities for relaxation and group cohesion were carried out with Godfrey's guidance.
11) Participants received and signed for transportation money, and the meeting ended at 14:00HRS.