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2020
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TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND FAMILIES - CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES ALONG PROCESSES OF SUSTAINED MIGRATION: A CASE OF TSHOLOTSHO IN MATABELELAND NORTH, ZIMBABWE

BY

GRACSIOUS MAVIZA



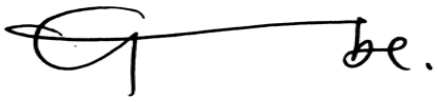
A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Development Studies) degree, Johannesburg, 2020

Prepared under the supervision of:

Prof Lorena Nunez Carrasco

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own unaided work submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand for the fulfilment of the Doctor of Philosophy degree **(Development Studies)**. It has not been submitted before for examination in any other university.

Signature.  Date: 02/11/2020

Johannesburg, 2020

ABSTRACT

Within Zimbabwe, Matabeleland has had the largest historical and contemporary intra-regional migration record, particularly migration to South Africa. Over and above the protracted multifaceted crises in Zimbabwe, two factors are the joint and strong drivers of the intra-regional migration from the Matabeleland provinces into South Africa. First, Matabeleland shares borders with South Africa and the people of Matabeleland often move to and from South Africa in search of better economic opportunities. Second, Matabeleland shares common cultures and languages with certain ethnic groups in South Africa. This migration and more recently, transnational migration emerge as an important factor inducing changes in the socio-economic and political domains in the contemporary African landscape with some of the social changes observed within families. Notwithstanding, most studies have tended to focus narrowly on the economic and financial dimensions of transnational migration, with a strong focus on remittances hence the paucity of studies examining historical continuities and contemporary changes in family arrangements. Thus, this study addresses the question of how this mass exodus affects the different dimensions of family systems in transnational settings. Using Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North Province as a case-in-point, the study employs multi-sited ethnographic methods to investigate the historical continuities and current changes that have occurred in transnational family structures, lives and organisation in the Matabeleland provinces of Zimbabwe due to transnational migration. This study examines; whether and if so, how families with migrant members are functioning as transnational families and if the changes that are taking place in family structure, life and relations are as a result of living transnationally. The methodology included in-depth interviews and family history accounts from those left-behind in Tsholotsho and transnational migrants from Tsholotsho who reside in Johannesburg. The study adopted a systemic approach combining theories of global care chains, circulation of care, family systems theory and symbolic interactionism to understand how different dimensions of familyhood are affected by transnational migration. A number of critical issues emerged in the findings. In the history of migration in Tsholotsho, there have been noted changes and continuities in the actual processes of migration. There has been a continuous process of migration across borders, most of which has occurred outside the legal parameters, and continue to be so in spite of the changes in migration regimes. Patterns of residence and authority of those left behind significantly changed in response to feminisation of migration and the physical separation of both parents and children. In addition, the definition of family has changed to embrace non-blood relations. Changes in the processes of migration

have largely been shaped by developments in the transport technologies that have made travelling between Tsholotsho and Johannesburg easier. As migrant families transitioned to being transnational families, migrant members were able to be involved in everyday matters of family life while away and exert their authority from a distance. Notwithstanding, although the transition from migrant families to transnational families has eased the burden of interaction and decision making on families in migration in Tsholotsho, there remains a perpetual and constant negative that cuts across the realities of both the migrant and transnational families. This is mainly evident in spousal relations as well as in parent-child relationships. On one hand, separation of spouses due to migration in transnational families has had detrimental effects on the survival of marriages as both public and private extra marital affairs emerge to be a common feature. On the other hand, parent-child relationships are significantly weakened. In both epochs, the left behind children see their migrant parents as mere providers and financiers of their needs and do not have that strong emotional bond with them as parents. Thus, regardless of the efforts and abilities to be socially present through virtual platforms, the transnational social spaces do not provide platforms for emotional and psychological needs that are key in spousal and parent-child relationships. In relation to life-cycle rituals, while continuously performed across borders, those relating to births, marriages and deaths are changing, telling us a lot about the changing social relations and the emergent influences of space, place and time. As migrants became simultaneously embedded owing to transnational migration, there was an evident transnationalisation of ritual spaces as families adjusted to the realities of their transnational familyhood. In rituals related to deaths and births, that is, the place of burial and disposal of the umbilical code, the importance of the place called home emerged as most migrants viewed burial in Tsholotsho as a must. The findings from this study thus contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex of transnationalism and families and the changes and continuities that occur within families as they are exposed to constant and sustained migratory trends. The resultant family life defies normative notions of familyhood based on proximity and shared residence as family life and other significant family practices are transacted virtually regardless of distance. As migrants are simultaneously embbeded, they perform and at times participate in family rituals transnationally depicting migrant families' engagement in symbolic interactionism even across place and space.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God, my sure foundation whose grace carried me through this far. Had it not been for the Lord who was on my side!!!

I also dedicate this work to my parents Timothy and Thokozile Ncube who braved the ordeals of being uprooted from their comfort zone just so we could have a chance at life; and to my siblings who, while scattered all over, became a solid united whole and the best family I could ever ask for.

Finally, this thesis is also dedicated to my husband, son and our soon coming addition to the family, we lived the realities of a transnational family throughout the life of this thesis – this is for you my darlings!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my God, my sure foundation, I am forever grateful that He has been faithful to me till the end. Surely, HE IS NOT A MAN THAT HE SHOULD LIE!!! Had it not been for the Lord who was on my side!!!

I also wish to extend my sincere gratitude to my Supervisor, Prof Lorena Nunez Carrasco for all the expert counsel, criticism, and guidance she gave me throughout the life of this study. Through the good and really bad episodes along the way, she kept true to the expectations of mentorship, patiently guiding and passionately criticising the multiple drafts that resulted in this thesis, Thank you Prof.

I would also like to acknowledge the National University of Science and Technology's Staff Development Department for the financial support I received towards achieving this milestone. Furthermore, I want to acknowledge the University of the Witwatersrand's Scholarships and Financial Aid Office for the Postgraduate Merit Award they offered me which covered my tuition fees. My sincere gratitude also goes to the Director and my colleagues at the Institute of Development Studies of the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe where I am permanently employed. I am forever grateful for the moral, social and technical support I received from all of you during the course of my studies. Special mention goes to Mandlenkosi Maphosa for being my editor and reader at every stage, even at the shortest of notices, he always delivered. Thank you bhut'wami.

To the different individuals who helped me in one way or another during my studies, THANK YOU! Special mention goes to Ntobeko Ndlovu, Nomvula Majoni, Sibonile Ncube, Jongen Ncube, Nkosana Khumalo and Nkosikhona Dibiti for the help they offered me during my fieldwork in Zimbabwe. To Kholakele Ngwenya, for the complementary tickets for my travels to South Africa, the off-road vehicle for my fieldwork, thank you my friend, God bless you more and more. To Sibongiseni Ngwenya, for forcing me to work even on Sundays, pushing me even when I did not feel like it, thank you my friend. Auntiza and Mtshana, for your unrelenting support through this journey, thank you guys. For my fieldwork in South Africa, I am forever indebted to my uncles i.e. Uncle Ronnie and Uncle Vee. Uncle Ronnie for giving me his car for ease of movement while doing my fieldwork in South Africa and Uncle Vee for going out of his way to make sure my fieldwork exercise was a success. Uncle Vee chauffeured me around at any time of the day and helped me with contacts of potential

respondents, surely the burden became bearable because of your unrelenting support. And to Nomvula Majoni for helping out with data collection, thank you nawakhe.

My special thank you also goes to all the villagers in Tsholotsho and transnational migrants in Johannesburg whom I interviewed for this study. I am grateful for their cooperation and for welcoming and allowing me time in their busy schedules during my fieldwork. I would also like to thank all the Local Government authorities in their different levels for granting me the permission to work in their jurisdiction. I would also like to thank those who participated in the study as key informants, thank you.

My gratitude also goes to my PhD colleagues and fellow Zimbabweans at Wits - Thatshisiwe Ndlovu, Khangelani Moyo, Simbarashe Nyuke, Sifiso Ndlovu – Gatsheni, Admire Thonje – to mention but a few - thank you guys for the companionship and the shared moments of struggle and encouragement. Special mention goes to Khangelani Moyo – you oriented me and showed me my way around Wits when I first came. You even showed me all the resourceful places like the Humanities Gradcentre and made sure I settled as comfortably as it could get. Special mention also goes to Joyce Takaindisa – you became the Big sister since the first time we met in 2016. All through the journey, you were my sounding board and ever there to listen, thank you Big Sis.

Finally, many thanks go to my family and friends for their support and encouragement during my studies. There were times I got discouraged along the way, but they were there to cheer me on. I can never fully and adequately express my gratitude in words.

To my parents and siblings (Mum, Dad, Abbie, Patie, Guide, Nginga), you guys are the best, thank you for giving me the best family experience and support during this journey. You all are the world's greatest. To my Aunt Matilda Ndebele, thank you for sacrificing your time to look after my son Adiel in South Africa while I worked on this thesis, I am forever grateful. To Mzala, Sokhela, thank you for sacrificing and standing in the gap watching Adiel and in the later years, Amaris, while I pursued my studies, ngiyabonga! To my beloved son, Adiel Wandile Maviza, you endured long travels when I could not leave you home yet just so I could be at school and do my work. You later endured the realities of transnational mothering when I left you home and travelled to South Africa for months and mothered you from a distance and yet you loved me so. To my unborn child, the last lap of this work was done in your company. It was not easy at first, we had a lot of challenges coping but by and by, we learnt to co-exist and work together in harmony, I love you. Last but not least, to my husband and best friend

Auther Maviza, thank you for believing in me and pushing me to pursue my dream. Against all the socio-cultural stereotypes, you were still comfortable to see me shine and register for my PhD before you could do yours and supported me whole heartedly. You took care of our son while I was away. You always encouraged me when the going got tough. You weathered the realities of being a transnational family – the core of this thesis. You became my personal editor for my chapters where you could and gave me reason to keep going, I am forever indebted to you sthandwa sami.

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CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE SCENE

Growing up, uncles, brothers and cousins and later sisters and aunts migrated to South Africa and that was the norm. In 1992, my father lost his job as an aftermath of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Like all others of his age and home area, immigrating to South Africa became the most practicable solution to deal with his loss of employment and subsequently, of income. Off he went, leaving us with my mother and grandmother, among other relatives. His absence reconfigured our family life in terms of household roles, family headship and patterns of authority. My father had an accident while staying in South Africa and had to return home to recuperate. In 1998, my mother had to leave Zimbabwe for South Africa to fend for the family as my father was now home recovering from the accident injuries. My mother communicated with us through letters on a monthly basis that she sent alongside groceries, money for school fees and clothes. Upon getting better, my father travelled back to South Africa to join my mother where they both worked for our upkeep. When my mother left home, we became a family scattered as my other siblings moved to live with aunts and uncles in different places. As for me, I was left in the care of my maternal grandparents. It took us almost two years to see our mother again after her initial travel to South Africa. Thereafter, they visited home every August when they took their annual leave. While living with my grandparents, my grandfather would narrate stories of his own migration journeys to and from South Africa and reminisce the experiences in his traveling and stay in Johannesburg. His accounts made me accept my situation as it was because it appeared as if family separation had had a long-standing history in the family. Thus, as a child, none of these changes meant anything to me because this was the norm in the village of origin. As such, for me, family was characterised by the dichotomy of proximity and separation i.e. with some members being away while some were present. Thus, I cannot say that my childhood was different from that of other children from the same area because my experience was typical of most families in the community. Later in my life, while doing my Masters studies in 2010, I chose migration as a topic for my research project as it was appealing and resonated with my life experiences. I studied the experiences of migration in Tsholotsho with my initial inquisition focused on migrant remittances, household livelihood strategies and local development. This marked the beginning of my keen interest on the question on migration and families, firstly as a lived experience, and secondly, as experienced by the greater community. The initial enquiry focused on remittances as one of many dimensions of the migration and family nexus. Although it covered significant aspects of migration and family life, there remained some other critical elements unstudied. As I reflected in retrospect on my experience as a child, the family I considered to be mine was that characterised by members spread in different places. I wondered if my grand-parents and my parent's experiences and perspectives of family resonated with mine or they were different in terms of where they stayed, who they stayed with and how they linked with their migrated parents. I became curious as to whether these did or did not change over the course of the families' history with migration. I questioned what family meant to grand-parents and my parents back then when they were children of my age? Have there been any changes noted in the course of time as migration persisted through the years? How were the family living arrangements across the three generations? Although my grandfather used to tell us how they linked with their families back in Tsholotsho during his time as a migrant, some questions lingered in my mind. These questions led to what I later decided to investigate in my PhD and during the course of this study, different family practices gained more meaning. For example, instances where children could live with other relatives, (like what happened to my siblings, and

me) became clearer as I viewed them through the lenses of circulation of care among families in general. Thus, while I embarked on this study with my own motives and normative assumptions and beliefs on the impact of migration on families, I could not assume these assumptions and beliefs would remain fixed or that they represent the truth. They were shaped by my own up-bringing in a family with migrant parents and re-shaped by my study of the subject through interactions with the migrants, migrant families and other participants. Looking back, I realise that for me, this is more than just a PhD study, but rather the reality of life's experiences that have influenced what I, today:

> ***choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods deemed most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions (Malterud, 2001, pp. 483–484).***

1.1 Introduction

In this study, I explore the continuities and changes that have occurred within families as a result of sustained migration in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe. The evident sustained cross border migration from Tsholotsho offers a richer perspective on the families that this study aims to investigate. I depart from a keen stance to unpack experiences and influences of migration across time in the past and in relation to transnational migrants' maintenance of membership in their families, patterns of residence and authority, lifecycle rituals and family formations. I look at these family dimensions from the perspective of past generations of migrants and interrogate how migrant families related before and currently. I examine; whether and if so, how families with migrant members function as transnational families. I assess how this form of family engagement influences other areas of family life such as the way in which parents and spouses exert authority over children and how they navigate their marital relations. I also examine how members that are away take part in family events including family rituals.

To understand these dynamics, I try to identify the role that an increasingly easier and fluid communication and travel system plays in shaping family lives from the perspectives of three generations. The voice of the first generation is missing as these are historical migrants who have long died. They are spoken for by the second generation through family histories as they give accounts of the history of migration in their families. To achieve this, I use an intergenerational perspective to identify effects of transnationalism as a result of infrastructural changes - legal, transport and communication – on families. Using family histories, I gather migrant's family histories from family members in Tsholotsho and transnational migrants in Johannesburg[1]. Although pioneers of this paradigm suggested use of the word transmigrant (as referred to in Chapter 2 of this thesis), in this study, I will use 'transnational migrant' instead. I do so to avoid conflation of terms in light of the growing scholarship in the transgender domain where the term transmigrant can easily be mistaken to mean 'transgender migrants'.

The focus of the study is motivated by the fact that over the last fifty years, families have significantly transformed and adapted to a number of processes that take particular shape in African societies worldwide. These processes include urbanisation, migration, the penetration of market economy, the influence of western education, and the influence of religion, most

[1] While I focused on people from Tsholotsho in Johannesburg, I made sure interviewees were not from the same family. I did this for ethical reasons and also to allow for freedom of expression among the respondents.

notably Christianity and Islamism. Some noticeable transformations include a decrease in fertility rates and marriages (Charrad & Goeken, 2006a; Chimbiri, 2006) and an increase in premarital childbearing (Moyo & Kawewe, 2009) and of divorce rates (Mbanefo, 2014). These changes have resulted in the nucleation of families and weakening of the extended family structure that have been characteristic of African societies. In addition, over the last 25 years, HIV/AIDS has impacted the African continent and has changed the demographic profile of families in the most affected African countries. In particular, the devastating effects of the epidemic have led to the emergence of mono-parental and child headed families. One of the noticeable changes in the continent and the focus of my study, is the phenomenon of migration driven by political, security and socio-economic factors (Moyo, 2017; Nzima & Moyo, 2017; Van Hear, Bakewell, & Long, 2018) and its impact on families.

More recently, transnational migration has emerged – here defined as "a process of movement and settlement across international borders in which individuals maintain or build multiple networks of connection to their country of origin while at the same time settling in a new country" (Fouron & Schiller, 2001, p. 60). Transnationalism is inducing changes in families in the world and in the contemporary African landscape (Kufakurinani, Pasura, & McGregor, 2014; Madzivadondo, 2012). As a result of transnational migration, the emergence of transnational social spaces has facilitated dispersed family members' engagement in family life across national borders. Transnational social spaces are defined as "configurations of social practices, artefacts and symbol systems that span different geographic spaces in at least two nation-states without constituting a new 'deterritorialised' nation-state" (Pries, 2001, p. 18). Families have adapted to these changes and as a result have transformed (Kufakurinani et al., 2014; McGregor, 2010). A notable transformation is the "continued participation in family life by family members who are far, leading to new family formations known as transnational families" (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 3). However, although families are able to maintain relations that transcend borders, this can be complicated by a number of factors, for example legal and restrictions resulting from the lack of resources. In the next session I present the background of migration in Tsholotsho.

1.2 Rationale

The Matabeleland region in Zimbabwe has had a long standing history of migration (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). The migration has been driven by marginalisation and confinement to second class citizenship of Ndebele-speaking people in Matabeleland that began in 1980 (Maphosa et

al., 2014; Ndlovu, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011), political violence against people in Matabeleland stemming from the Gukurahundi era between 1983 and 1987 (Mabhena, 2010), lack of economic opportunities in the south-western parts of Zimbabwe (Mabhena, 2014; Nzima & Moyo, 2017, McGregor, 2010) – see chapter 4. Unlike in the past, today's migrants can maintain regular communication with their families left behind owing to the infrastructural developments in transport and ICT developments, leading to the prominence of transnational migration.

The transnational perspective on migration is premised on the notion that migrants develop transnational practices that are not adequately captured in conventional migration theories (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994). Some scholars have argued that the traditional theorising around migration treats migrants as people who departed or arrived (Kearney, 1991), without capturing the migrants' multiple attachments (Levitt & Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004; Mcauliffe, Goossens, & Sengupta, 2018). As such, there has been proposals for an approach that understands migrants "as forming part of two or more dynamically intertwined worlds" (Basch et al., 1994, p. 6), resulting in the viewing of sending and receiving societies as one single field of analysis.

As migrants maintain multiple attachments across nation states, family dimensions emerge as a critical component of the resultant relationships and practices. The dynamics of family relationships and practices in transnational settings include maintaining relations and interactions across national borders, thereby creating families 'living apart-together' (Mazzucato & Schans, 2008). This has given rise to the phenomenon of transnational families as described earlier. Within these families, members live in different nation-states and find means of establishing care arrangements for and modes of relating with family members across international borders (Mazzucato & Schans, 2008). Inevitably, these sets of sustained long-distance cross border connections have had effects on broader social systems. These effects may result in transformations in social structures like kinship and family (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

Notably, a number of studies have been done on the changes in African families in general. For example, Oheneba-Sakyi and Takyi (2006) have consolidated perspectives on African families in the turn of the twenty first century with several authors writing about changes within families due to a number of socio-economic factors, for example in North (Charrad & Goeken, 2006), West (Assie-Lumumba, 2006), Central (Mba & Bangha, 2006), East (Prazak, 2006) and

Southern Africa (Chimbiri, 2006). Some studies have also been conducted to explore the complexities and dynamics around transnational families, for example, transnational parenting (Carling, Menjívar, & Schmalzbauer, 2012; Ducu, Nedelcu, & Telegdi-Csetri, 2018; Menjívar, 2012); transnational motherhood (Erel, 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2001; Vives & Vazquez Silva, 2017), and transnational childhood (Orellana, Thorne, Chee, & Lam, 2001; Parreñas, 2005; Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Recently, studies have also focused on practices of transnational fatherhood (Poeze, 2018; Souralová & Fialová, 2017) and trans-migrants' economic and socio-economic activities such as financial remitting patterns (Bloch, 2008; Nijenhuis & Zoomer, 2012; Strielkowski, Šperková, & Jacek, 2017; Teye, Awumbila, & Darkwah, 2017; Van Meeteren, 2012).

Most of these studies have focused on South to North migration, for example Mexicans migrating to the United States of America and Filipinos migrating to Europe. Limited attention has been paid to the South to South transnational migration (Campillo Carrete, 2013; Kitimbo, 2019; Núñez, 2010). More often, South – South migration happens regionally, between neighbouring countries. Within these countries, (e.g. between South Africa and Zimbabwe), spatial proximity and cultural affinities are strong push and pull factors that shape population mobility (Ncube eta al, 2014). The short distance between the countries ideally allows for increased proximity between family members unlike in the more distant South – North migratory trends. Although this is the case, in most South – South migration, the vantage position of spatial proximity is undermined by factors such as legal and economic restrictions (Makina, 2010; Maphosa, 2010; Nunez, 2010; Ratha and Shaw, 2007; Tshabalala, 2017). As such, although geographically proximate, migrants may not have the liberty to move back and forth freely and frequently. In Southern Africa, this intra-regional migration dates back to the nineteenth century (Crush, Williams, & Peberdy, 2005; McDonald, 2000). For instance, cross-border migration for employment was a common phenomenon long before the drawing of colonial national boundaries (Crush, Williams, & Peberdy, 2005). As such, migration was possibly the single most important factor that bundled the various colonies and countries of the sub-continent into a single regional labour market during the twentieth century. More so, it also helped maintain family connections and shared ethnicities across the national boundaries created by the colonial order (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). Thus, the Southern African context gives an interesting milieu of sustained migration within the region as well as shared similarities and experiences within the countries of the sub-continent.

Notwithstanding, there has been some notable work done on South – South migration. For example, in Southern Africa, studies on migration in general have been done on the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic exacerbated by migration in Zimbabwe and South Africa - for example through contributing to the main form of transmission which is multiple concurrent partners, resulting in households increasingly being headed by females and children (Gubwe, Gubwe, & Mago, 2015; Kufakurinani et al., 2014; Zanamwe & Devillard, 2010). Hishongwa (1992) also focused on the effects of the contract labour system with South Africa on families in Namibia, Murray (1976) focused on migration between Lesotho and South Africa and its effects on families, while Maphosa and Chingarande (2007) focused migration as a coping strategy for illegal migrants from Zimbabwe to the United Kingdom and South Africa. Crush and Tevera (2010) also wrote about migratory patterns between South Africa and other countries in the region like Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia and concluded that generally, migration has significant effects on families such as economic emancipation on one hand and fragmentation of social relationships on the other.

In the Zimbabwean context, scholars writing on transnational families and transnational migration have focused on transnational migrants' economic and socio-political activities. For example, remitting patterns (Bloch, 2008; Ncube & Gómez, 2015), transnational parenting (Kufakurinani et al., 2014), spousal separation (Madzivadondo, 2012), diaspora involvement in political processes (Kuhlmann, 2010; Pasura, 2008) and household livelihoods (Ncube & Gómez, 2015; Nzima, Duma, & Moyo, 2016). Moreover, migration from Zimbabwe has also been approached mainly from assessing the gendered patterns of migration (Mutopo, Dzingirai, & Landau, 2015, Thebe and Maviza, 2019); the vulnerable situation of unaccompanied migrant children (Elphick & Amit, 2012; Liedeman, 2017) , the need to regularise Zimbabwean migration to South Africa (ACMS, 2010) and migrants and HIV (Vearey, Oliveira, Wilhelm-Solomon, & Mahati, 2011). There has been focus also on caregiving arrangements for the left behind children (Kufakurinani, Pasura, & McGregor, 2014; Lee, Foster, Makufa, & Hinton, 2002). While the merits of these economic studies are undeniable, more scope can be covered through a holistic analysis of how this mass exodus of the populace affects the different dimensions of family systems in transnational settings. Moreover, most of the methodologies and perspectives used have tended to focus on individual members and not the family as a whole thus presenting a knowledge gap.

The scope of coverage in most of these studies has not paid much attention to the infrastructural shifts across time which have changed the nature of migration. As such, in this study I believe that tracing these shifts through the lenses of three generations within migrant families allows me to gain deeper insights into the ways through which their migrant family members relate to each other and how they carry out their family life in the context of sustained migration. Thus, using an intergenerational perspective to narratives of migration within families through the family histories method helps expound the past and current processes in infrastructural development that have shaped and reshaped families over time. The perspectives from the past allows for the exploration of family organisation over time through people's narratives in understanding the subtleties within and processes involved in the formation of transnational families (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004). My study, thus, seeks to build on a nascent body of literature that has already laid the foundation for further analysis of family dimensions in the context of improved transport and communication infrastructure.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In Zimbabwe, as has been alluded to, migration is a widespread phenomenon that has involved as well as affected many families, most significantly in the Matabeleland region. This is the region with the largest historical and contemporary migration record particularly migration to South Africa (Ncube, 2010; Nzima et al., 2017). Regardless of the sustained history of migration in the area, some pertinent processes have remained understudied. For example, the reactivation of extended family formations to meet the care needs of nuclear families with migrated members and the new family formations that emerge. Most methodologies and perspectives have focused on singular aspects of migration without holistically focusing on several family dimensions linked to migration. As such, these studies give a fragmented analysis of transformations and renegotiations in family forms and lives in transnational settings. These may have a significant bearing on the broader social order. To this end, this study focuses on four critical strands of analysis to proffer a systemic analysis of the different family dimensions under study. These are transnational migrants' membership, patterns of residence and authority, life cycle rituals and family formations. This will give a holistic analysis of the complex of transnational migration and families that will capture the intersections between and among different aspects of transnational family life. Transnationalism allows members to be present and interact with family members in transnational social spaces, although not without challenges. Thus, this study investigates the

nature of this interaction by examining whether and how they are currently functioning as transnational families as well as the changes that families have undergone throughout three generations as a result of members living multi-sited lives. It assesses how families in Tsholotsho, in the Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe have transformed and adapted in response to the sustained migration and dispersion of their members across vast geographic territories. In the next section I present the research question allows me to contribute to an emerging migration research area that interrogates new family formations emanating from migrant transnationalism.

1.4 Research questions and objectives

The main research question guiding this study is:

What are the changes and historical continuities in family structures, lives and organisation in the Matabeleland provinces of Zimbabwe as a result of migration and transnationalism?

To effectively unpack this research question, I also engaged in other critical strands of analysis that included transnational migrants' membership, patterns of residence and authority, cultural changes and family formations. As such, I disaggregated the main research question into four areas of focus that make up the key strands of analysis as detailed in the ensuing:

(1) How do transnational migrants from Matabeleland maintain membership in their families and communities of origin and how do they engage in and experience family life?
(2) What changes associated with transnational migration have been experienced by families in Matabeleland? Are there new family formations emerging?
(3) What changes in patterns of residence and authority are observed within families with migrant members?
(4) Are changes in family lives and organization reflected in family life cycle rituals? If so, how?

The answers to these questions are conceptually significant for better understanding the relationship between migration, transnationalism and family changes in the context of sustained cross-border migration.

1.5 Chapter outline

My thesis consists of seven chapters including this introductory chapter. The focus of chapters 2-7 is summarised below.

CHAPTER 2:
MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE FAMILY: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I review literature on migration, transnationalism and the family. The aim here is to build a concise theoretical and conceptual background necessary for the interpretation of the ethnographic data generated through fieldwork that will be presented in the analysis chapters. I explore the principal debates on migration, transnationalism and rituals within families in transnational settings. I focus on four critical strands of analysis (patterns of residence and authority, life cycle rituals, maintenance of membership and family formations). This has enabled me to proffer a systemic analysis of the different family dimensions under study. This chapter gives a holistic analysis of the complex of transnational migration and families that captures the intersections between and among different aspects of transnational family life.

CHAPTER 3:
METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted to investigate transnational family lives in the context of sustained migration and transnationalism in the Tsholotsho district of Matabeleland North in Zimbabwe. The study takes a qualitative approach in both the data collection and analysis processes. One of the key data collection methods was family histories wherein the family story was told from the perspective of women left behind. The narratives trace their family histories in relation to migration and provides a perspective on the transitions and continuities that have occurred over time within specific sociocultural contexts regarding various family dimensions. The women's accounts of their life histories, feature overlaps of histories from their maiden families as well as the families they were married into. They view their families as extended to both sides of the families involved. This method thus, unearthed other ways of conceptualising families that deviated from the normative approaches to the study of families. The chapter also presents the challenges I encountered during fieldwork and how I overcame them.

CHAPTER 4:

HISTORY OF ZIMBABWE'S MIGRATION: MAPPING THE CONTEXT

This chapter is an account of Zimbabwe's historical and contemporary waves of and experiences with migration. I focus on the movement of Zimbabweans from pre-independence epochs to present day Zimbabwe. I bring together both background literature as well as some findings from my fieldwork. This allows me to trace some of the similarities between the historical and contemporary migration flows in Zimbabwe at large and Matabeleland in particular. By combining these sources, I want to expose the sustained historical trends of migration and map out the changes and continuities in the relationship between migration and family formations, structures and dynamics in the selected region.

CHAPTER 5:

MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN FAMILY LIFE

I explore how migrants, by being simultaneously embedded, maintain membership to their families left behind. Though virtually present, their physical absence may threaten or challenge their membership and engagement in family life. As such, I explore the diverse ways migrants have historically and contemporarily as transnational migrants, employed to navigate the realities of their spatial separation as well as participate in family life and maintain membership within their families in Tsholotsho. I also present what happens when migrants fail to maintain linkages with their families back home as well as when they belong to more than one family.

CHAPTER 6:

FAMILY RITUALS, MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM

I explore how rituals in migrant communities have been changed, adjusted and/or transformed in the context of transnationalism and its consequent effects on families. I pay particular attention to rituals linked to three life cycle events: birth, marriage and death. I track the continuities and changes that these rituals have undergone as a result of migration and of transnational migration in Tsholotsho. Over and above the foregoing, I also assess the different reasons why transnational families choose to perform some rituals and forego others within their families. In so doing, I also assess how ritual practices are influenced by socio-cultural transactions that take place in the transnational social spaces and how they are influenced by both contexts in which migrants remain simultaneously embedded.

CHAPTER 7:
REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This is the concluding chapter wherein I fuse all the critical elements of this study and present a synthesis of the continuities and changes that emerge within transnational families in Tsholotsho. I engage with theoretical concepts of circulation of care, transnationalism, family systems and symbolic interactionism. I draw conclusions on how my study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex of transnationalism and families and the changes and continuities that occur within families as they are exposed to constant and sustained migratory trends.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I review and reflect on migration literature to build a comprehensive framework to analyse the interplay between migration, transnationalism and families. I start off with a review of early attempts to conceptualise migration and the basic theorising that has informed the field of study, unearthing the criticisms that have been proffered over time. Thereafter, I move on to reflect on recent developments in the field of migration, with a keen focus on transnationalism as a major development in the study of migration. I go on to review literature on how this concept has shaped and reshaped the study of migration in the contemporary landscape. Within the transnationalism and family nexus, I also assess how the central elements of space, place and time influence and affect the analysis and understanding of family life. Finally, I look at the reconceptualisation of families within migration studies, along the new debates within the study of migration.

2.1 Migration

Migration continues to be a common global phenomenon which 'sets in motion a range of significant transnational processes that potentially contribute to development' (Sørensen & Vammen, 2014a, p. 89). It is 'a process that involves the geographical movement of people from their area of origin to take up temporary or permanent residence in another area'(Kendall, 2016, p. 558). The persistent and widening global inequalities between the Global North and the Global South has, over time, resulted in an exponential rise in migration flows (Dávalos, 2012). Research on these migration flows has shown three distinct features in internal, regional and international migration. In international migration, migrants from the Global South move to the Global North as a reaction to socio-economic and political crises in their countries and the demands for unskilled labour in the Global North (Adepoju, 2000; Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). Although the motivations for regional, also known as South to South migration, have similarities with international migration, the notable difference is that migrants move within the same region due to proximity, networks and regional and bilateral agreements (Ratha & Shaw, 2007). In internal migration, the movement is fuelled by the urban-biased developmental policies within countries in the Global South, producing uneven spatial development between

the rural and urban areas (Kurekova, 2011; Takyi, 2011). Thus, migration has attracted significant academic interest in a quest to understand its sociocultural, economic and political implications on broader development concerns (Adams & Page, 2005; Freeman, 2006; Ghosh, 2006; Maimbo & Ratha, 2005; Tevera & Chikanda, 2009).

Notwithstanding, the field has however remained under-theorised and its theories have been criticised for being in a stalemate for some decades, remaining stalled in 19th century ideas, models and assumptions (De Haas, 2014; Massey et al., 1993). The subject of analysis of the theories has been the determinants and perpetuation of migration. The theories have been criticised for being lineal in terms of their analysis of migratory movements based on push and pull factors. Moreover, these theories have treated migrants as people who move from their place of origin to settle in the destination areas with remittances being one aspect that has received significant scholarly attention (Nzima et al., 2016, 2017; Nzima & Moyo, 2017). Historically, migrants moved to settle permanently in the receiving countries, and they did not maintain regular contact with their communities of origin. However, with progressions in the study of migration, there has been an appreciation of the fact that these migrants engaged in some bidirectional mobility, although it was not regular (Czaika & Haas, 2014). Further, that they do not necessarily become assimilated in the host societies (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Levitt & Schiller, 2004). In the contemporary landscape, technological developments have permitted some migrants to maintain regular contact with their countries of origin. This ability has allowed them to remain simultaneously embedded in multiple locations and layers of the transnational social spheres (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Vertovec, 2009). This 'simultaneous embeddedness' of migrants in multiple geolocations has been made possible by the modern-day structuring of the world economy and the subsequent technological advancements in transport and communication (Helmsing, 2003). This realisation has led to critical revisions of the theoretical and methodological frameworks for the study of international migration (Lazar, 2011). The revisions were done in search of better and more suitable theorising that will capture the realities of migrants in their totality. In the next section, I will examine transnationalism as a perspective in migration.

2.2 A transnational perspective on migration

In the late 1960's, the word 'transnational' was mainly used in economic studies where it referred to the institution of commercial entities that had bases in more than one country (Martinelli, 1982). Generally, the term denoted an attenuation of national boundaries through development of ideas and institutions that transcended national borders (Schiller, et al., 1995). It provided a deeper appreciation of several globally contingent socio-political and economic processes (Nye & Keohane, 1971; Robinson, 1998). This rise to eminence of transnationality rendered state boundaries insignificant and in the social sciences and cultural studies, the resultant global restructuring that weakened the importance of national borders paved way for fluidity in the production and distribution of objects, ideas and people (Martinelli, 1982; Rouse, 1992; Schiller et al., 1995). For anthropologists, transnationality resuscitated interest in cultural diffusion and population flows across state boundaries (Schiller et al., 1995). According to Schiller, et al., it reflected "current transformations in the way in which time and space is experienced and represented" (1995, p. 49) in a global village. Furthermore, Dunn (2005), opined that the advent of transnationalism retarded assimilation as regular communication and return visitation became possible.

In migration studies, a growing body of research has acknowledged that transnationalism provided a new lens to understand the changing dynamics of the contemporary world (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Ozkul, 2012). The word transnationalism was first used in the 1990s, pioneered by Schiller, et al., (1992) and Basch et al., (1994). Basch et al., (1994, pp. 1–2) defined transnationalism as:

> *The processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated '[transnational migrants].' [Transnational migrants] develop and maintain multiple relations—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders. [Transnational migrants] take actions, make decisions, feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously.*

Vertovec (1999, p. 447) simply defined it as the "multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states". Thus, transnationalism creates notable degrees of interconnectedness between people, communities and societies straddling across borders and fostering changes in the socio-cultural, economic and political landscapes of both migrant sending and receiving societies (IOM, 2010). Within these linkages, transnational migrants have the ability to maintain, build, and reinforce relations with their families in their

countries of origin (Dunn, 2005; Schiller et al., 1992). Radical proponents of the paradigm even spoke of a 'de-territorialised world', wherein the nation-states' power to control population circulation was weakened. (Dunn, 2005). This led to the advent of transnational migration.

Scholars have proffered a number of definitions of transnational migration have been proffered by different scholars. For example, Schiller, et al., (1995, p. 48), defined transnational migration as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous, multi-stranded relations that link together the societies of origin and settlement". These are the pioneers of the notion of transnationalism in migration studies. A few years later, Schiller & Fouron (1999, p. 344) defined it as:

> *[…] a pattern of migration in which people, although they move across international borders, settle and establish on-going social relations in the new state, maintain on going social connections with the polity from which they originated.*

The emphasis in the definitions has been on the simultaneous embeddedness of migrants between their sending and host countries. It is about how migrants and their descendants participate in familial, socio-economic, religious, political, and cultural processes that transcend borders (Basch, et al., 1994; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Portes et al., 1999; Schiller, et al., 1992). Scholars in this paradigm of migration have accentuated the continuous and constant ways in which present day migrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one locale (Schiller et al., 1995). This simultaneous embeddedness affords the transnational migrants novel ways of being and belonging to their families (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

Prior to transnational migration, migrants had been seen as people who uproot themselves from their countries of origin and assimilate/ integrate into a different socio-cultural environment (Handlin, 2002; Schiller, et al., 1995; Takaki, 2012). However, due to global restructuring and the increasing interconnectedness and incorporation of different parts of the world into a mono system of production (Helmsing, 2003); and advances in communication, transport and coordination technologies, transnational processes are now increasingly seen as a central part of the globalisation phenomenon (Schiller et al., 1995). Although transnational processes have been in existence for some time, previous migration studies have not highlighted the scale of intensity and simultaneity in the current migration and cross border activities (Vertovec, 1999). This has been the case regardless of the fact that migration is one of the most significant ways through which borders and national boundaries have been challenged and contravened

(Kearney, 1991; Rouse, 1991, 1992). Migrants have always maintained some form of contact with their families in their countries of origin through different forms of correspondence and remittances (Vertovec, 2009). The only difference with the current forms of migrant transnational practices is the frequency of the correspondence and visits owing to technological improvements that facilitate ease of movement and communication, unlike in the past. This transnational paradigm, thus has proffered what Levitt and Sorensen (2007) and Vertovec (2009) have called a 'new analytical optic' which allows for a novel analysis of the increasing multidirectional engagements that form migrants' realities. Moreover, the ability by migrants to live their lives transnationally allows for a more nuanced study and appreciation of the relationship between movement and identity. From the foregone, it is evident that many people now migrate and settle in host communities while maintaining relations with those back home (Schiller, 2012).

Notwithstanding the earlier presented facts, I am careful not to fall into the trap of over-emphasising transnationalism and transnational families as institutions where members smoothly and freely engage in transnational migration. Transnationalism has been criticised in numerous scholarly works. Some critiques have argued that what has been labelled transnational has been happening for a long time and as such, transnationalism is not new (Foner, 1997; Waldinger, 2015; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). The only difference is the intensity and regularity of the connections as enabled by ICT and transport/physical mobility technologies. Although this has been the case, Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2002, p.302) note that "the value of studying transnational communities and migration is not to discover something new but rather to have contributed to this shift away from methodological nationalism". Schiller (2005, p. 439) defined methodological nationalism as an "intellectual orientation that assumes national borders to be the natural unit of study, equates society with the nation state and conflates national interests with the purposes of social science". It has been criticised for its epistemological tendency to assume the nation state and its boundaries as defining objects of social inquiry.

Similarly, De Jong and Dannecker (2018), further posit that transnationalism has also been criticised for merely replacing globalisation and internationalisation and intentionally ignoring power relations at different levels. As such, it exaggerates the degree of population mobility and downplays the power of nation-states to curtail movement (Dunn, 2005). It also portrays a glamorous picture of a free flow of people overlooking the costs of mobility. In reality, moving

between countries remains expensive and challenging as countries continue to more strictly enforce control, reinforce and secure their territorial borders. Although celebrated, transnational migrants still experience the inherent tensions characteristic of immigration like the othering barriers and discrimination just like the migrants before them did.

Waldinger (2015) also notes that although ICTs and travel technologies have significantly shaped accessibility and frequency of communication and travel, these cannot adequately compensate physical contact and shared daily experiences that are the bedrock of intimate relationships within families. Furthermore, Waldinger notes that there is a glaring digital between sending and receiving countries as the spread of technology has not been complete and even. He highlights how, mostly, migrants have limited connectivity in the receiving countries while their rural homes in the sending countries completely lack connectivity and the knowledge to access and use modern technologies. Thus, my analysis of the transnational family life does not claim to be studying a new phenomenon, nor am I arguing that all migrants are equally able and willing to become transnational. Rather, my study of transnational families is an opportunity to challenge the approach to societies as neatly contained within nations. More so, I am careful not to idealise the processes of interaction in the context of transnationalism as these can be fraught with challenges and limitations. In the next section, I present the different dimensions of transnational migration as elaborated in transnational migration scholarship.

2.2.1 Dimensions in transnationalism

Portes (1997) and Van Bochove and Rusinovic (2008), identify four dimensions of migrant transnationalism (i.e. political, economic, social-cultural and family). Political transnationalism is about migrants' citizenship and voting practices between their countries of origin and host countries (van Bochove & Rusinovic, 2008). It emphasises the ability by migrants to participate in voting and lobbying in both their countries of origin and host countries (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2001, 2003).

Economic transnationalism refers to investment activities and monetary remittances sent to home countries by migrants (Lima, 2010; van Bochove & Rusinovic, 2008). According to Ban (2012, p. 130), economic transnationalism is "a space of relatively recurrent and patterned material and ideational interactions which entails the circulation of goods and capital through either formal or informal trans-border operations that are linked to migration and

labour movements across borders". For Lima (2010, p. 4), "in essence, this intense influx of resources may mean that for some nations, development prospects become inextricably linked – if not dependent upon – the economic activities of their respective Diasporas". Thus, economic transnationalism is more concerned about the economic transnational engagements that take place across borders owing to migrant transnationalism.

Socio-cultural transnationalism refers to a wide range of socio-cultural transactions that facilitate exchange of ideas and meanings across boundaries (Lima, 2010). The transactions may include membership to organisations across borders; new forms of cross-border interactions and mobility which expand across physical space (Mau, 2010). They may also include mere social formations spanning borders (Vertovec, 1999), which emigrants form and maintain. In line with the foregone, Levitt (2001, p. 54) refers to the concept of "social remittances," a term referring to a "distinct form of social capital between migrants living abroad and those who remain at home". All these dynamic social processes characterising the lives of transnational migrants and their families as they negotiate their existence in transnational settings is enabled by the concept of transnational social spaces as discussed in the next sub-section.

i. Migrants' family life as a transnational social space

Pries (2001, p. 18) defines transnational social spaces as "configurations of social practices, artefacts and symbol systems that span different geographic spaces in at least two nation-states without constituting a new 'deterritorialised' nation-state". They entail sustained connections of geographically mobile persons, networks and organisations across borders of multiple nation states (Faist, 2006), facilitated by the 'space-shrinking' technological advancements. This made it easier for people and products to move across the globe, rendering geographical distance less of a barrier to movement (Faist, 2006; Pries, 2006) and promoted interaction between migrants and their families and kinship groups, ensuring continuous and bidirectional connections between the host and origin countries. These sustained long distance, border crossing connections have notable effects on broader social systems (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Family dimensions emerge as a critical component of the resultant relationships and practices of migrants as they maintain multiple attachments across nation states. Within these transnational social spaces, families have transformed, and migrants have adapted to new forms of being family that include care arrangements (Kufakurinani et al., 2014; McGregor, 2010) to meet their caring responsibilities within their families. They engage in what migration

scholarship refers to as transnational parenting (Carling et al., 2012; Kufakurinani et al., 2014; Menjívar, 2012). Some scholars focus on more specific aspects of parenting and refer to transnational mothering (Millman, 2013; Parreñas, 2013; Parreñas, 2001; Schmalzbauer, 2004) and transnational fathering (Chereni, 2015). Thus, although emigrants are physically absent, transnational social spaces facilitate their virtual presence, allowing them to continue to participate in family activities and their parenting role (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). As a result, transnational family life emerges as a form of transnational social space where there is continued participation in family life by family members who are far. This leads to new family formations known as transnational families Bryceson and Vuorela (2002, p. 3). The transnational families render geographical distance less of a barrier to movement and involvement (Faist, 2006; Pries, 2006). Focusing on the family life of migrant families as an example of a transnational social space, I seek to understand the dynamic social processes characterising the lives of transnational migrants and their families as they negotiate their existence and interact in transnational settings. I explore how the simultaneous embeddedness of transnational migrants facilitates their engagement in transnational family lives as they interact with their families both in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg. I use the concept of simultaneous embeddedness to refer to migrants' ability to be dually engaged in family life activities in both Tsholotsho and Johannesburg. I explore the different ways in which migrants integrate their everyday activities and routines in both sites, which facilitate their multiplicity of involvement in both their home and destination countries. Furthermore, I assess how different ways of being 'here and there' at the same time allows transnational migrants to exercise their rights, power and authority in their families. This could be as spouses to left behind partners or parents to left-behind children respectively. I also assess how the migrants exercise their caring roles across distance. Furthermore, I explore instances where transnational migrants' virtual and tele presence cannot compensate for physical presence. Associated to this, I examine the negotiations that are carried out in terms of the transnational migrants' authority, rights, power and caring roles.

To have a deeper appreciation of these interactions within these transnational families across place, space and time, the sociological theory of symbolic interactionism will be employed. According to Carter and Fuller (2015, p. 1), symbolic interactionism "is a micro-level theoretical perspective in sociology that addresses the manner in which individuals create and maintain society through face-to-face, repeated, meaningful interactions". The theory emerged through influences of such philosophers as Hebert Mead (1934) when he shifted from the

mainstream positivist perspectives that examined society from macro level perspectives. The prevailing approaches had for long focused on macro-level traditions and social structures and how these controlled and constrained individuals. In this light, symbolic interactionism emerged as an attempt to understand the societal processes from a micro perspective on the relationship between individuals and society (Blumer, 1986; Carter & Fuller, 2015). Thus, the basic tenets of symbolic interactionism are:

> *(1) "individuals act based on the meanings objects have for them; (2) interaction occurs within a particular social and cultural context in which physical and social objects (persons), as well as situations, must be defined or categorized based on individual meanings; (3) meanings emerge from interactions with other individuals and with society; and (4) meanings are continuously created and recreated through interpreting processes during interaction with others" (Carter & Fuller, 2015, pp. 1–2).*

It illuminates how meaning is constructed and managed across spatially disparate geographical localities. Symbolic interactionism is concerned with the ways in which individuals create and maintain society through proximate, repeated and meaningful interactions (Becker & McCall, 1990; Blumer, 1986; Carter & Fuller, 2015). The main tenet of this perspective is that individuals respond to physical, philosophical and social objects in line with the meanings created through constant and active interaction within their diverse contexts (Jeong et al., 2014). According to Carter and Fuller (2015), in symbolic interactionism, individuals accord meaning to objects and activities as they interact within certain sociocultural contexts. Individuals constantly create and recreate meanings to different aspects of life through interpreting processes during every day's lived realities (Blumer, 1986). Thus, symbolic interactionism will further allow me to trace how individual members within transnational families interact and accord meaning to different aspects of familyhood within transnational social spaces. However, although the theory has its merits, it has also been criticised for overlooking macro social structures in explaining individual behaviour (LaRossa & Reitzes, 2009; Stryker, 2017). It basically trivialises the influences of macro societal forces like norms and culture on individual interactions (Crossman, 2018). For example, in the case of transnationalism, external forces such as culture, economic and political realities may limit the extent to which an individual can construct their own realities. Thus, symbolic interactionism in this case may miss some of the critical aspects of society by focusing more on the individual agent than the structure. In my study, this shortcoming is countered through the family systems theory (as is presented later in this chapter, section 2.3.1) which puts more emphasis on the structure as represented by the family compared to the individual agent which is the focus of

symbolic interactionism. In the next section, I focus on family transnationalism in relation to transnational migration.

2.2.2 Family dimensions in transnational migration

The effects of migration on the social order, social structures and processes have attracted scholarly attention on the significant transformations and changes taking place as a result. Migration has been seen from a positive side, emphasising that it can lead to the improved socio-economic status of families (Ncube, 2010; Ncube & Gómez, 2011, Nzima, et al., 2016). For a long time, a rather negative perspective on migration has been linked to the disintegration of the family as an institution for socio-economic development (Madzivadondo, 2012; Mokomane, 2012). Some studies have shown that family members on either side of the spectrum undergo stresses of one form or another (Kufakurinani et al., 2014; Madzivadondo, 2012; Silver, 2006). The separation of family members emanating from migration has a great influence on the roles, support structures, and responsibilities of family members. For example, it affects family production, consumption, reproduction, and accumulation functions which may result in negative outcomes for socio-economic development. Furthermore, Bijwaard & Van Doeselaar (2012) noted that it is often found that migration leads to higher divorce rates. This is largely due to the fact that continued spousal separation may invoke feelings of loneliness which may lead partners to cheat. It may also cause an emotional drift between the two spouses which may escalate and result in divorce (Madzivadondo, 2012).

Undeniably, this is not new. Throughout history, migration has led to the transformation of families even prior to current transnational migration. However, in transnational migration, where family relations are sustained across national borders, (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; Mazzucato & Schans, 2008, 2011a; Núñez, 2010) a new dynamic emerges. Although the same patterns are observed, there is some notable flexibility as families engage in transnational familyhood, albeit with inherent challenges and limitations. This led to the formation of a transnational social space known as transnational families (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002) as discussed in the next section.

i. Transnational families

Transnational families are transnational social spaces defined as “those families whose members live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create

something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity , namely familyhood, even across national borders" (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 3). For Boyd (1989, p. 643), in this sense we can understand transnational families as "a social group geographically dispersed, they create kinship networks which exist across space and are the conduits for information and assistance which in turn influence migration decisions". According to Bryceson (2019), transnational families as an evolving form of institutionalised human interdependence, are not a new phenomenon, they have just become more than before. They constitute a multi-dimensional spatial and temporal support environment for transnational migrants and their families. Thus, transnational families demand a deeper appreciation of social change and the effect it has on families and their social capital base (Harry Goulbourne et al., 2010).

Most family studies premised on the ideals of proximity of members assumed that spatial separation between and among family members, as in transnational families, inevitably vetoed the exchange of care-giving leading to the incrimination of transnational families as deficient, at risk, fragmented/broken (Ahlin, 2015). Within transnational family literature, some scholars have conceptualised transnational families as characterised by lack, dispersion and absence of members and abandonment (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; Chereni, 2015; Graham et al., 2012). Scholars like Levitt and Schiller (2004) pioneered a reconceptualisation of social life boundaries in the context of transnational connections. They did this owing to simultaneous embeddedness of migrant family members. This conceptualisation illuminated the fact that within transnational families, members live in different nation-states. While in different national states, they find means of establishing care arrangements for and modes of relating with family members across international borders (Mazzucato & Schans, 2008). As such, transnational families thus flout the traditional fundamentals of families, where some aspects are no longer applicable. For example, shared residence and performance of tasks related to reproduction and consumption based on core-presence (Chant & McIlwaine, 1995). Within transnational families, collective performance of basic tasks related to reproduction and consumption is still maintained, albeit virtually.

Transnational families, thus, fit into the paradigm of transformative social innovation. This is "a process in which social relations, involving new ways of doing, organising, framing or knowing challenge/alter/replace established dominant institutions in a specific social context" (Haxeltine et al., 2016, p. 21). As a result of this development, for example, a significant number of children worldwide are nurtured in transnational families (Mazzucato & Schans,

2011a; Parreñas, 2005; Poeze & Mazzucato, 2013), separated from their migrant parents (Hoang et al., 2015). When parents emigrate, children may move from their homes to stay with extended family members (De Silva, 2003; Madzivadondo, 2012). In some instances, certain care arrangements through hiring of domestic workers are undertaken and children remain in their 'homes' (Hoang et al., 2015). Literature also shows that at times the left behind children remain in the care of grandparents (Hoang et al., 2015; Senaratna, 2012). The grandparents assume the carers role to the left-behind children in instances where one or both parents are away. In these cases, not only patterns of authority change, but those of residence may also change. Thus, within these family formations, a number of family dimensions (structures, formations and functions) are bound to be altered, tasks reassigned and roles and responsibilities realigned to adapt to the effects of the departure of the migrant member (Gamburd, 2000; Hugo, 2002; Parreñas, 2005). For example, some cultural and social constructs like gender, marriage, parenthood and family may be altered and reconfigured in response to the new realities created by the movement of a member or members. Some scholars have noted that when husbands or other male counterparts migrate, women are empowered, accorded better autonomy and self-confidence, as well as realising improved social status (Dávalos, 2012; Hadi, 2001). All these shifts and adaptations inevitably reconfigure the patterns of authority and power within these transnational families (Bernhard et al., 2005; Graham et al., 2012).

The main concern in the study of transnational families has been to understand how families continue to be significant and viable social entities regardless of separation of members by distance, dispersal and translocality and what can occasionally rapture families (Vanotti, 2014; Yeoh et al., 2005). At the same time, it is to establish whether and if so, how they disintegrate or give origin to other forms of families. A clearer understanding of the concept of transnational families hinges on appreciating them as a representation of a form of transnational social space. This is where relationships are crafted and sustained across time and space through regular interactions between migrant members and their family members back home (Vanotti, 2014). These virtual relations may result in a flow of remittances, communication and care giving practices that transcend borders (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; Halabuza, 2014). This shows that there are several processes employed by transnational families to perform and negotiate relationships that traverse national borders (Vanotti, 2014), challenging traditional understanding of families.

Within transnational families, as will be discussed later, life cycle rituals emerge as key elements of the realities that sustain family life performed across geographical divides (McCarthy & Edwards, 2010). These include rituals related to births, marriages and deaths within migrant and transnational families. In Zimbabwe, like in most African societies, most of the rituals are performed during specific times/months of the year (Bozongwana, 1983; Ndlovu et al., 1995; Nyathi, 2005). Epstein & Gang (2010a), in a study on transnational families noted that, in the context of migration, although there are stipulated times for the performance of some of the rituals, this has undergone significant modifications. The alterations are made to the convenience of the migrant family members yet at the same time attending to the cultural logic underlying the specific rituals. Similarly, Chirozva, Mubaya, & Mukamuri (2006) also proffered that, within the context of migration in Zimbabwe, rituals have been overlooked and some modified. This has been due to the fact that physical separation of family members deems it near impossible to perform them in the manner they have to be performed. To buttress this notion, for example, Bloch (2008) noted that among Zimbabwean immigrants in the United Kingdom, there are many instances where some migrants fail to travel back home to bury their relatives due to their irregular/illegal migration status. She noted that at times the deceased may be the migrants' parents or children. However, in transnational migration, some migrant members have been able to attend or at worst be absent physically while in constant communication with their families and following the proceedings of events through internet, telephones, among other modes of communication (McCarthy & Edwards, 2010).

Thus, as family life takes place in a virtual space within transnational families, roles and responsibilities of different members may be affected in one way or another. For purposes of this study, I will focus on the role of elders in general, (both men and women) within these transnational families from the perspective of the sending communities often situated in the Global South. By elders I refer to elders as relatives and as leaders of communities. For example, in the African context in general and Zimbabwe in particular, these emerge as relevant and critical figures in the context of migration as presented in the next section.

2.2.3 Families and kinship organisation in Southern African

Generally, the definition of a family is highly contextual and subjective, and hence contested (Lamanna et al., 2017; Trask, 2009). In most Southern African societies, family denotes

expansive kinship systems in which descent follows patrilineal lines[2]. Patrilineal descent emphasises tracing relationships from the male/ father's side (Gwakwa, 2014; Strassmann & Kurapati, 2016). In this form of kin organisation, when a woman got married, she became subsumed into her husband's kin group (Lowes, 2020). There is also emphasis on patrilocality, a system wherein women move to their husbands' kin after marriage (Hirschman, 2017; Ji et al., 2014; Scelza, 2011). Kinship organisation is especially important in Southern African societies as it determines an individual's belonging, gender, identity and roles as well as their obligations to other members of the same group (Lowes, 2020). For men, masculinity is perceived and judged in terms of ability to protect and provide for the family at all times (Musanga, 2016), while women's femininity is linked to being a home carer (Donaldson & Howson, 2009; Masanja, 2012).

Moreover, in terms of marriages, most Southern African societies allow the practice of polygyny, where a man is allowed to marry more than one wife (Muchabaiwa, 2017; Gwirayi, 2017). Although what is largely practiced is polygyny, most people often refer to it as polygamy. Polygamy, in its true sense, refers to a marital union made up of more than one partner (Jonas, 2012). It can take the form of polygyny, where a man can have more than one wife or polyandry where a woman can have more than one husband (Jonas, 2012; Muchabaiwa, 2017). The reason polygamy and polygyny have been used synonymously in most instances is that polyandry is a rare practice especially in Southern Africa (Muchabaiwa, 2017). In Zimbabwe, although polygyny is common, it is prohibited under Civil law and only allowed under customary law (Dube, 2013; Gwirayi, 2017). Among the Ndebele, although a man is allowed to have multiple wives, he cannot not do so without the permission of the first wife (Ndlovu et al., 1995; Nyathi, 2005). In Tsholotsho, most couples are married under customary law which permits polygyny. However, it is no longer a common practice in present time due to the influences of Christianity and modernisation.

Within this form of kinship organisation, family structure and set up are also key. In most instances, when discussing family organisation in these societies, the terms family and household tend to be loosely used yet they are conceptually different. The referent of family is kin linked by birth, marriage or adoption while for household it is spatial proximity and shared residence (Amoateng & Heaton, 2015; Yanagisako, 1979). In most instances, this conflation

[2]Zimbabwean culture. Available from: https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/zimbabwean-culture/zimbabwean-culture-references#zimbabwean-culture-references

of concepts emanated from the fact that traditionally, family in Southern African societies mainly took the extended form. People lived in units that incorporated a father, mother, their children, grandchildren, aunts and uncles and in some instances, grandparents (Amoateng & Heaton, 2015). The extended family network was a source of effective social security to family members (Mushunje, 2016) with much emphasis on solidarity and interdependence. However, the extended family organisation weakened with modernisation and its coordinates such as industrialisation, urbanisation, labour migration and development of cash economies which are largely skewed towards westernisation (Dziro & Mhlanga, 2018). This resulted in a gradual shift in family organisation towards a Eurocentric nuclear form of family. Despite this move towards nucleation, the nuclear family in its pure sense has never really been a reality for most Southern African societies like in most African countries (Amadiume, 2005; Chimbiri, 2006). Even under conditions of modernisation which emphasises a nuclear dimension to the family - emphasising monogamy and a male headed nuclear unit - it rarely takes on the ideal form the nuclear. Rather, most people of African descent still esteem communal ethos such that they prefer living in units that include members of the extended family (Amoateng & Heaton, 2015; Casimir & Tobi, 2011). Kinship is thus organised such that it does not translate into western conceptions of family relations. Instead, families in Southern African societies have their own logics that do not conform to the western ideologies of family (Amadiume, 2005).

Within these logics, authority is placed on elders who play the role of advising, directing and leading their families to ensure survival and continuity (Nhongo, 2004). The elders preside over family matters and strategic family practices, rituals and ceremonies that promote family identity (Chimbiri, 2006; Chirozva et al., 2006). In most African social systems, the significance of age as an important benchmark in attaining authority, power, privilege, prestige and leadership in the community at large and family in particular is emphasised (Rwezaura, 1989). Within most Southern African families, as people become older, they gain upward mobility in the social echelons and hierarchies of authority, placing them in a position of authority to preside over family matters and strategic family practices, rituals and ceremonies that promoted familyhood (Chimbiri, 2006; Chirozva et al., 2006). They become custodians of traditions and cultural practices with the responsibility to pass on the knowledge to younger generations through different socialisation processes (Bozongwana, 1983; Nhongo, 2004; Nyathi, 2005; Rwezaura, 1989). However, with the increase of formal education, the influence of religion, and as a result of migration/transnational migration among others, some changes in these traditional arrangements have been noted (Oheneba-Sakyi & Takyi, 2006a, 2006b). This

can also be linked to the weakening of the extended family by such other socio-economic processes as modernisation, religion and urbanisation (Chimbiri, 2006; Puschmann & Solli, 2014; Wekwete, 1994). Thus, it is critical to assess how, transnational migration has affected the forms and organisation of families in the study area. The key question in this regard being: Are there any new forms of family organisation that have emerged? The next section presents theoretical perspectives to the study of transnational families.

2.3 Theoretical perspectives on transnational families

As already shown in the foregoing, initial perspectives on transnational families focused on the absence of members and the associated cost for those family members left behind. The prevailing view was that while transnational migration carried economic benefits for families, the loss of proximity of family members led to the breakdown of family structures, values, and to societal decay e.g. (Ahlin, 2015; Chirozva et al., 2006; Sørensen & Vammen, 2014b). However, there has also been scholarship that has proffered theoretical concepts on families as systems that are made up of different elements that facilitate the adaptation of the system to different stimuli. Furthermore, there are some concepts that have been developed that deal with complexities of care and familyhood typifying transnational families. Thus, the dimension of families as systems and the different concepts of care are presented below.

2.3.1 Systems thinking in the study of transnational families

According to Ram, Shiyko, Lunkenheimer, Doerksen, & Conroy (2014), families are coordinated and continually changing symbiotic and relational systems. Family scholars who promote the systems approach view a family as a unit that is made up of co-dependent subsystems. Families are seen as made up of interrelated elements which exhibit coherent behaviours, have regular interactions, and are interdependent on one another (Broderick, 1993; Constantine, 1986). As such, they cannot be understood by investigating their individual parts in isolation from each other (Doherty et al., 2009). The main assumptions of the systems theory are: (i) all parts of the system are interconnected such that changes in one part of the system influence all other parts; (ii) understanding the intricacies of the system is only possible by viewing the system in its entirety; (iii) all systems have boundaries that separate them from other environments; (iv) systems have predictable patterns of interaction and use messages and rules to shape members (Klein & White, 1996; Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016). The interactions

of these subsystems are directed by circular processes that are influenced by both external and internal strains (McHale et al., 2013; Ram et al., 2014). This means that individual members within these families, affect, and in turn are affected by other members. Cox and Paley (1997) proffer that these dynamic systems have an adaptive self-stabilisation ability as actions of subsystems compensate for changing conditions. Furthermore, they also have adaptive self-organisation where the system has the ability to change to accommodate transformations to its current structures/formations. Understanding these fundamental concepts in the study of transnational families as dynamic systems lays the foundation for exploring and understanding the changes that happen within families as systems over time (Cummings, et al., 2014; Ram et al., 2014).

The reciprocal and interdependent actions of the different family members (known as the subsystems) within transnational families give the family system its ability to self-organise and self-stabilise. The members adjust to either internal or external stimuli that may demand change and adapt to the new reality without prejudicing the existence and proper functioning of the system. As such, the main thrust of the family systems approach to the study of transnational families will be premised on finding relationship structures, communication patterns, power distribution and interpersonal boundaries. This will be done within the complex interplay of the different subsystems within the family system as a whole (Cox & Paley, 1997; Cummings et al., 2014; Ram et al., 2014). These are the different elements that facilitate the adaptation of the system through its subsystems to any change effecting stimuli. In the context of transnational families, migration emerges as an external stimulus. It triggers changes in the different aspects of the family system leading to novel ways of dealing with the emerging transformations at family level. This will thus allow for the analysis of how the family system in Tsholotsho has responded to the effects of transnational migration in terms of patterns or residence, life cycle rituals, family formations and migrant members; maintenance of membership. Initial perspectives on transnational families focused on the absence of members and the associated cost for those family members left behind in particular and the whole family at large. The prevailing view was that while transnational migration carried economic benefits for families, the loss of proximity of family members led to the breakdown of families and ultimately societal decay. Thus, the possibility of simultaneous embeddedness of family members, allowing families as systems, to live lives that integrate daily activities, customs and institutions transnationally needs to be explored and theorised.

However, although the theory can illuminate these dynamics, it has been criticised for focusing more on the system with its characteristics, behaviour patterns and cycles that supersede individual members' actions. It has been critiqued for being reductionist i.e. it ignores the fact that individual members as subsystems have their own agency that may influence their actions and the actions of the rest of the system. It assumes that there are some processes within families that can only be sufficiently understood at a family system level and not individual level. Thus, the family systems theory assumes that "a person's emotions and ideas are a product of his social situation, not that the social situation is a product of the person's ideas and feelings" (Pam, 1993, p. 85). Some scholars even argue that when the family systems theory is taken seriously, the individual disappears, dismissing biological and psychological behavioural aspects. According to Haley (1987, p. 40), "the social surrounding - especially the family - is seen as in control, rendering the individual a social automaton without free will", thus the structure gains autonomy. The family system is thus seen as the influence behind every action of the individual member.

To counter these shortcomings in my study, the theory is complimented by symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism attempt to balance the scales in that it focuses more on the individual member of the family and how they make meaning of their circumstances. Moreover, the theory is also used alongside other theoretical and conceptual developments that have been proffered in relation to the study of transnational family systems as presented in the next subsection.

2.3.2 Perspectives on the global care chains

Global care chains and the commoditisation of care resulted from escalating demands of neoliberal capitalism for cheap, and flexible migrant domestic and care labour of women from the Global South (Hochschild, 2000). The combination of care gaps in the countries with superior economic development, the upsurge of transnational migration and the commodification of reproductive work escalated the emergence of these global care chains (Fudge, 2012; Knight, 2012). For Sassen (2008), global care chains are also sustained by poor economic climates in countries in the Global South which have forced women to pursue migration as a livelihood strategy.

Within this perspective, women from the Global South migrate for employment as domestic workers in the Global North where they cover up for First World women by looking after their children (Murphy, 2014). However, as the perspective of global chains of care emphasises, women from the Global South would have left their own children behind (in most instances) under the care of hired labour or extended family members (Hochschild, 2000, 2003). Migrant women therefore become reproductive labour as they provide domestic and care work for women in the North who are pursuing their professional occupations (Yeates, 2004). Knight (2012) posits that the privileged women, (mainly in the Global North) buy the low-wage services of migrants. Migrant women in turn purchase even lower services of poorer women or even relegate the reproductive duties to their female relatives residing in the migrants' countries of origin.

Notably, global care chains facilitate the transfer of those services normally associated with the traditional roles of wife or mother from the Global South to the North. Critics have condemned global care chains for leading to 'care drains' (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Parreñas, 2001); 'care vaccums' (Vanotti, 2014) and 'disembedded relationships'(Knight, 2012) within families in the countries of origin. This culminates in changes in family structures, driven by women who migrate independently to seek work. This contrasts with historic patterns where women migrated as accompanying spouses (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003). Furthermore, Isaksen, et al., (2008) and Knight (2012) note that global care chains emanating from the care market in the North are implicitly eroding family and social solidarities in the South.

Global care chains have been seen as demonstrating and reinforcing global inequalities (Hochschild, 2000; Vanotti, 2014). At the same time, they are seen as depicting the innovative ways in which people, families and communities are crafting ways to mitigate the effects of these inequalities (Knight, 2012). In this case, people from underdeveloped regions migrate to developed areas to seek employment in the form of providing care for others. At the same time, they come up with novel ways and means of caring for their own families while separated. As such, a significant number of children worldwide are nurtured in transnational families and are separated from their migrant parents (Hoang et al., 2015; Kufakurinani et al., 2014). Although this is the case, there are innovative ways that these families have crafted to make sure there is no care deficit for their own children left behind. This produces what Hochschild (2000) referred to as 'a new ecology of care'. Sassen (2002) calls it 'global survival circuits', where one form of care is reliant on another in a web/chain of transnational interconnections.

Notably, studies on global care chains have largely portrayed women as the main actors in the care chains, with a strong focus on domestic work where women work as nannies (Fudge, 2012). However, Yeates (2004) emphasised that care services are complex and go beyond the simple domestic nanny work (cleaning, cooking, washing, caring for children). They include such other services as health care, sexual care, educational care as well as religious/spiritual care. Thus, this care is a broader realm of activities which is usually provided in diverse settings that range from churches, schools, brothels, hospitals and hospices among others, with more emphasis on payment. Figure 2.1 below, illustrates this global care chain.

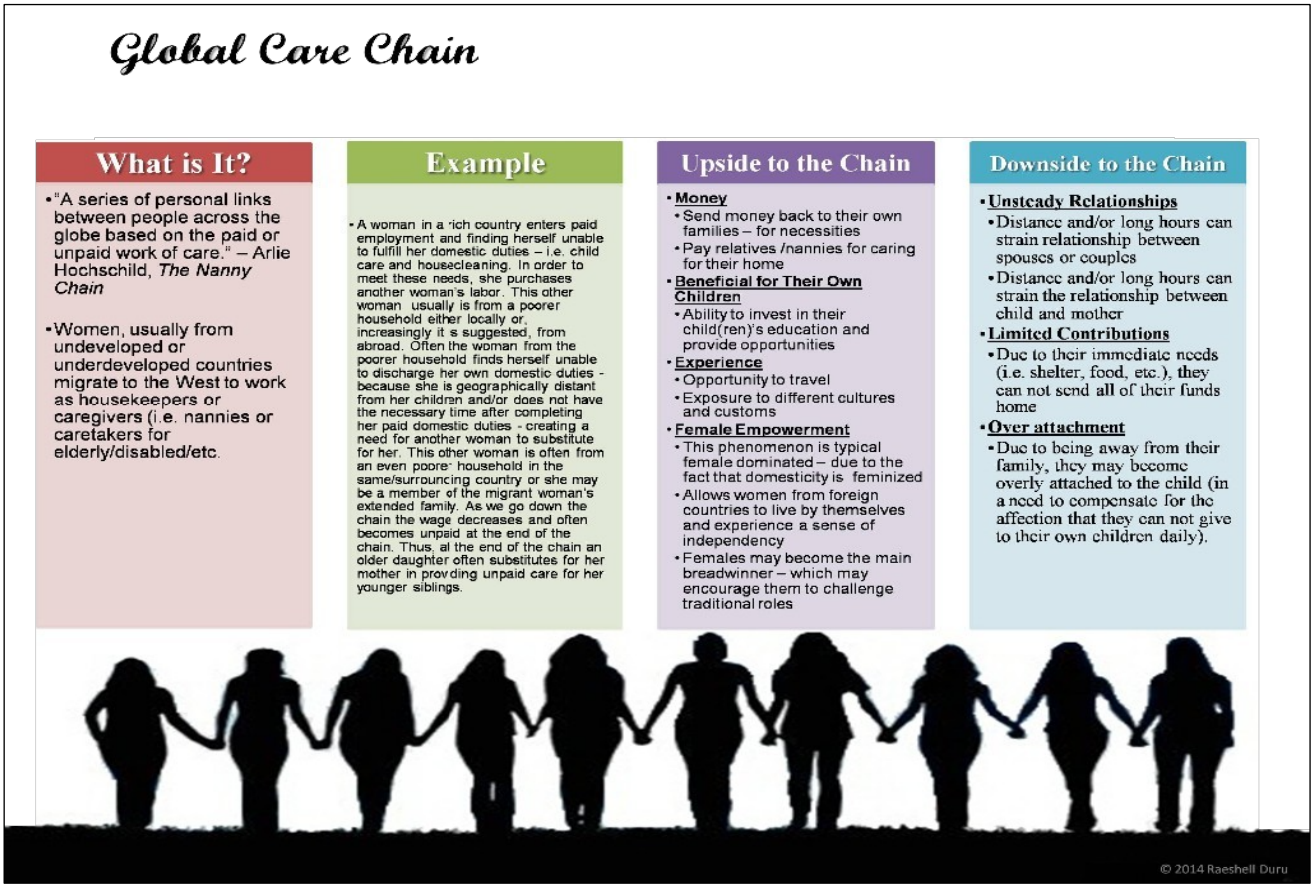


Figure 2.1: Simplified Illustration of Global Care Chains
(Source: Duru (2014) The Global Care Chains of Exploited and Alienated Caregivers and Housekeepers.)

2.3.3 Perspectives on the circulation of care

Contrary to previous views that labelled transnational families as disintegrated, disembedded and dysfunctional, recent literature (Poeze & Mazzucato, 2013; Reynolds & Zontini, 2014; Singh & Cabraal, 2013) emphasises on the creative arrangements of these families to ensure

their sustained coherent existence. Families within transnational settings practice caregiving arrangements that bind their members together in a web of reciprocal obligations, love and trust as well as tensions and relations of unequal power (Baldassar & Merla, 2013, 2014; Vanotti, 2014). These arrangements depict care-giving and kin-keeping practices that have been conceptualised and propagated by Baldasar and Merla (2013, 2014) known as circulation of care. Unlike global care chains where emphasis is on paying for care, circulation of care is a broad formulation of care situated within kin relations and the moral economies of care which form the core of families (Merla & Baldassar, 2016; Vanotti, 2014). This theoretical concept of circulation of care and the subsequent emergence of new family structures are typical arrangements within families (Reynolds & Zontini, 2014). Baldasar and Merla (2013) conceptualise circulation of care as reciprocal, multidirectional and asymmetrical and as influenced by the political, economic, and socio-cultural contexts in which families exist.

On one hand, it is seen as reciprocal in that care within families is an exchange circulating back and forth between members. In the context of transnational migration, it is between those who migrate and those who remain behind (Vanotti, 2014). Those who remain back home take care of the elderly and children of the migrated members while migrated members may reciprocate that care through sending remittances back home. On the other hand, the care is viewed as asymmetrical in that the exchange of care is uneven, and the return may not be equivalent to the care given by the other. Also, it may not be immediate, yet at the same time there are expectations and obligations for the return of the care (Baldassar & Merla, 2013).

This perspective was propagated as an improvement to the concept of *global care chains* (Hochschild, 2000; Yeates, 2012). The global care chains concept was criticised for its narrow and limited focus on care exchanges between two people with one receiving financial returns in exchange of the care rendered (Baldassar & Merla, 2013). Moreover, the global care chains perspective was further criticized for its global focus which ignored the intimate care exchanges within micro-family institutions (Yeates, 2011). Circulation of care however, acknowledged that, although transnational family members were spatially stretched across vast geographical territories, belonging was sustained through reciprocal, albeit uneven exchanges of care (Ahlin, 2015; Tronto, 2016).

The diverse practices of exchange of care within transnational families are seen as an expression of solidarity and belonging. This helps in understanding the constitution and

preservation of relationships within transnational families. For example, in transnational mothering and parenting studies, the concept of circulation of care has been used to understand how mothers and parents maintain and forge relationships with their children across vast geographic distances (Parreñas, 2005). Furthermore, the perspective of the circulation of care highlights the involvement of different actors. This includes even the less visible in the traditional conceptualisations of care exchange (men, children, extended family members, and fictive kin among others) (Baldassar & Merla, 2013). The perspective "questioned the deterioration of family networks and resources as a necessary outcome of migration, while highlighting the potential persistence of a range of family arrangements irreducible to the separation-reunification dichotomy" (Boccagni, 2013, p. 6). Thus, regardless of absence of proximate interactions, the circulation of care concept defies the underlying assumptions that distance and physical absence interdict exchanges of care within transnational families. Rather, it demonstrates how care flows within transnational families over time and space despite separation and geographic distances separating members (Vanotti, 2014). Thus, invalidating the stigma attached to transnational families as broken and at risk (Baldassar & Merla, 2013).

2.3.4 Gender, power, rights and authority in transnational migration

In the context of migration and transnationalism, family member separation challenges established patterns of relating within families (Sheringham, 2010). This leads to transformation in and renegotiations of the existing social constructions like notions and practices of gender within members of families (Dannecker, 2005). Carling (2005) defines gender as how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or man. From the conceptions of gender emanates gender relations wherein different roles are assigned to individuals based on their biological makeup (Radel & Schmook, 2009). Notably, these relations are not biologically assigned but rather are a social construct (Pinnawala, 2009). They are designed to aid maintenance of social order in social relations, in the process creating inequalities between men and women (Jayachandran, 2015) and perpetuating power hierarchies. Gender is culture, geo-spatial and time specific and results from socio-cultural processes out of which sexually based asymmetries are produced and institutionalised (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 2006; Musanga, 2016). In most African societies, there is notable patriarchal dominance. In these societies, men are the heads of families and have legitimate power and authority to control others within the family unit (Mashiri and Mawire, 2013). Although this represents typical patterns in most African

countries, I am careful to generalise given the expansive nature of the continent and its different countries, societies and cultures. Thus, where possible, I make reference to the actual countries or societies.

Within the migration context, gender and power relations emerge as critical aspects as social relations are stretched across space (Bastia & Busse, 2011). This applies in both scenarios where women are left behind and where they are the ones who migrate. On one hand, in the past, migrants were completely uprooted from their families in the sending communities, and integrated into the host countries with very minimal interaction with their original families (Handlin, 2002; Takaki, 2012). On the other hand, in transnational migration, the migrants are socially present, influencing social interaction and decision making within their families while they are not physically present (Pessar & Mahler, 2003). Inevitably, in both epochs, the physical absence and virtual presence of the migrant, respectively, has a significant effect on power relations within families.

i. Power relations in transnational families

Family power relations are understood based on Michael Foucault's view on power as relational, understood in terms of relationships (1980). A number of scholars (Clegg, 1989; Latour, 1984; Nelson & Wright, 1995) have agreed with Foucault in their conceptualisation of power, noting that power is a description of a relation, not a thing which people have. In light of these submissions, power is thus exercised rather than possessed. Individuals always simultaneously exercise power and undergo the effects of power (Few, 2000), as such, people can only be said to possess power if they are relationally seen as having power. In migration scholarship, a number of studies have focused on how migration affects gender and power relations between men and women - see (Menjívar & Agadjanian, 2007; Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2004; Yabiku et al., 2010). These studies show that when men migrate, women gain some form of empowerment through decision making and control over resources. This conception of empowerment is limited as it reduces power to 'control over' as propounded by Weber (1978). For Pinnawala (2009), this overshadows the fact that power has a number of expressions which go beyond power over to include *power to*, *power with* and *power within*. These different dimensions help in explaining some situations where direct control may not be present. According to Pinnawala (2009, p. 51):

> *"today power is conceived as having many expressions ranging from power to' and 'power over' (both [being] variations of the control aspect of power) to 'power with' and 'power within' (the realisation of hidden power)".*

The conceptualisation of power as '*power with'* demonstrates what Pinnawala refers to as "collective action-based power" and '*power within'* as the "confidence related assertive power" (2009, p. 51). These are attempts at unearthing the subtle expressions of power that aid the analysis of instances where direct control is not present and are useful is appreciating power nuances within families. Thus, this further demonstrates the relational aspect of power which is not only limited to control.

In this study, the definition of power is informed by Sithole (2016) and Pinnawala (2009) conceptions of power. In line with Foucault, they regard power as an overt and covert relational concept which is constantly shaped by the different relationships that actors engage in and negotiate around each other. In the context of transnational families and reconfigured families, I seek to understand the power dynamics at play, in relation to gender dynamics (husband – wife) as well as parent – child and caregiver – child relationships. For example, in relation to spouses, I focus on sexuality as part of the rights and power dynamics that are at stake within the relationship. I do this in reference to the expected fidelity between spouses, that is, how each spouse is expected to uphold this expectation. Finally, I also assess how spouses negotiate separation and distance in order to overlook or acknowledge potential infidelity and avoid termination of their relationships. I also do this in light of power dynamics between spouses and assess how power is negotiated when the man migrates, and the wife remains. Is the woman empowered? What does the empowerment mean in terms of power relations? Does the woman gain the traditional variation of power as control or does she realise hidden power that does not necessarily undo the power structures in the family? I do this in the context that, families in general are spaces of contested hierarchical power relations and struggles, which may be further complicated by the dispersion/separation of members. In the case of transnational families, where some of the members who are in positions of authority are physically removed, it is critical to understand how the power is transacted among members within the transnational social space of their family life. Thus, in this study, I go beyond viewing power in relation to gender as limited to control, but rather I look at it in explaining gendered power relations even in situations where control may not be evident. As much as women may be gaining some form of autonomy (Parreñas, 2005), I pose the question: what happens to their male counterparts in the process? Thus, using the concept of gender, I assess how power is negotiated between men and women within transnational families in Tsholotsho. This will entail an analysis of how

power dynamics are negotiated in the multiple spatially separated interactions within transnational terrains. Although literature emphasises women empowerment in migration, I ask whether empowerment leads to the creation of new power structures where women replace men. Or it simply enables women to gain some autonomy albeit within the established power structures in the families? I also consider issues of authority within transnational families as detailed in the next section.

ii. Authority within Southern African transnational families

Authority is a sociological concept which, in some instances, is interchanged with or confused for power. It refers to a legitimate relationship of domination and subjection (Coleman, 1997). The development of the concept can be traced to the works of Max Weber who coined three forms of authority (traditional, rational-legal and charismatic), ultimately concluding that authority is always tied to certain social positions or roles (Weber, 1947, 1986). Within families, authority is structured into subordinate–superordinate positions. For example in parent–child or husband-wife relationship (Mangleburg et al., 1999).

In most Southern African families, authority follows patriarchal lines, meaning the ultimate authority holder is the oldest male in the family, who in most instances are the fathers (Helman & Ratele, 2016; Mangleburg et al., 1999). These patriarchal ideologies of gender framing most African families come with defined duties and responsibilities for men (embedded in notions of masculinity) and women (embedded in notions of femininity) (Masanja, 2012). Tembo (2009) opines that the male figure is the symbol of authority and the head of the family with ultimate power and authority over the women, children and other younger male members of his family. For men, their masculinity is strongly associated with breadwinning while women's femininity is linked to being a home carer (Donaldson & Howson, 2009; Masanja, 2012). Thus, the ideals of patriarchal relations are closely related to conceptions of who can provide and who can pay. Therefore, for a man to affirm his masculinity and be deserving of the authority accorded to him, he should be able to materially support and provide for his family (Donaldson et al., 2009). This notion is explained by Donaldson and Howson (2009, p. 212) who posit that, "by 'bringing home the bacon', a working man exerts control over property, income and what it can buy [and] this is one of the material bases of the maintenance of patriarchy". As such, in most Southern African cultures, men are authority figures who have the sole prerogative to provide for the family (Mangleburg et al., 1999; Tembo, 2009). This has been flagged as one of the reasons why, for a long time, men in most African countries have been

the ones migrating, leaving their wives and children behind (Masanja, 2012; Musanga, 2016). As they play this provider role, the men in turn expect respect, loyalty and obedience from their families. Their responsibility as the main providers for their families is a significant marker of their sense of self, pride and masculinity and failure to uphold the breadwinner role weighs heavily on them and puts their authority in question (Crossley & Pease, 2009; Masanja, 2012).

In some instances, this challenge to their authority often becomes a source of depression for some men who in turn resort to violence and alcoholism (Jolly & Reeves, 2005). In some African countries, the introduction of the cash economy and the need to provide for families pushed a significant number of men to migrate in search for paying jobs (Donaldson & Howson, 2009; Hunter, 2010). The changes in the economic order thus forced men in most countries to pursue wage labour so that they could perform their family roles. For example, in South Africa, the introduction of the cash economy has led to significant changes in household formations due to lack of income (Hunter, 2007, 2009, 2010). For Hunter, the demand for the payment of lobola in in financial terms has resulted in some men failing to raise the money needed to pay lobola, curtailing their abilities to marry. As a result, there has been a notable rise in cohabiting in the cities, a trend also noted by Maphosa (2011). Moreover, there has been a notable shift in gender roles induced by economic issues. As employment opportunities dwindle for men, women are also seen rising up to take on breadwinning roles (Jolly & Reeves, 2005; Masanja, 2012), mainly through migration.

Given that migration physically removes some of the members (especially fathers) as authority figures in families, I assess how authority within transnational families is reconfigured and transacted. In the context of the men migrating, I examine how authority is conferred to other members of the family. I also assess how men exert their authority from afar or lose it. This is in the instances where there are caregivers who will be guardians or *de facto* family heads. I assess how the two negotiate authority in making binding decisions on the children left behind and on productive capital goods. To achieve this, I juxtapose the historical and current migration epochs. Historically, I look at this in the context of the absence of the father who is the 'natural' authoritative figure to the children. In the current landscape, I approach it in the context of parents' ability to be here and there at the same time although physically absent. Over and above power and authority within families being central in family life, rights are another critical element that also needs to be assessed in light of transnationalism as presented in the ensuing section.

2.3.5 Space, place and time in life cycle rituals in the transnational context

Gardner and Grillo (2002, p. 183) refer to rituals as "purposive and expressive ceremonialised performances which often serve to mark or celebrate the classic 'life-crisis' events of birth, marriage and death", (the definition I adopt for purposes of this study). They are actions that are performed repeatedly in a prescribed way to convey some form of symbolism (Runoza, 2016). According to Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2014, p. 236), properly construed, "rituals are an expression of people's thoughts, emotions, social organisation and cultural identities". In most instances, they are performed in specific places and at specific times as prescribed by the families and communities in question (Mwandayi, 2011). Rituals are thus episodic, sacred, formal and premeditated occasions performed within a particular time and place (van den Ende, 2015). As such, they are demarcated from everyday profane practices in that they are temporally and spatially bounded. In transnational families, space, place and time emerge as central elements to the analysis and understanding of rituals. In the next section, I present how these play out through rituals in the context of transnational family life.

The key proponents in the theories of space and place; Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre and Doreen Massey, depart from dislodging the definition of space from its Cartesian roots that emphasise geographic fixity and present it as a *fluid* means for understanding social realities (Moyo, 2017). Lefebvre further propounds that the analysis of space should "not [focus on] things in space but space itself, with a view to uncovering the social relations embedded in it" (Lafebvre, 1991, p. 89). His argument is that conventional methodologies to the study of space have tended to ignore the social relations integral to the construction and composition of space thus, space is a social product, more like an empty stage where social life takes place. Molotch (1993, p. 887–888), reiterates the same when positing that "space is produced and reproduced through human intentions […], it is an interlinkage of geographic form, built environment, symbolic meanings, and routines of life". Thus, space is not abstract, but rather socially constituted through social relationships in various geo-locations. It is produced by individuals through their movements, imaginations and interactions (Low, 2009). As such, in transnational migration, transnational families – with their family life taking place in a transnational space - are established by the constant movements and interactions of members across national boundaries.

Within transnational families, space is stretched across distance (Massey, 1994). This has led to the emergence of transnational spaces wherein family life is transacted and sustained across physical borders of multiple nation states (Faist, 2006; Low, 2009). When transnational families carry out their family life – which is a form of a transnational social space, members engage in rituals that are done in the family context while being far from each other. As they engage in these practices, transnational ritual spaces are created. These are ritual spaces where their sacred nature is preserved while in transit across borders. For example, during repatriation of a deceased body between South Africa and Zimbabwe, the body is protected and accompanied by an entourage while the soul of the deceased is constantly communicated with during the entire journey to the body's final resting place to ensure the soul is not left behind. Thus, transnational ritual spaces are transnational spaces wherein a variety of ritual practices are performed (Collyer & King, 2012) and the ritual space are extended and transcend national borders because of transnationalism. Collyer & King (2015) further elucidate on transnational ritual spaces as they conceptualise them as transnational sites wherein purposive, ceremonialised and symbolic performances (rituals) are performed by transnational families across different geographical spaces. Given that the way in which transnational families engage in family life requires the family space (made of relations, communications and forms of relating to each other) to be fluid, unrestricted by geographic boundaries and essentially deterritorialised (Collyer & King, 2012), the key question to explore here is how do members perform rituals in the context of transnational space? How do families accord meanings to life cycle rituals related to births, marriages or deaths through these spaces? To gain a fuller understanding of these issues within families, I also use historical lenses to understand these dynamics in generations that existed before transnationalism. Through symbolic interactionism, I analyse how families create and recreate meaning around life cycle rituals as symbols through which they enact their familyhood in transnational social spaces.

In light of the foregoing, it emerges that within families as composite micro entities in societies, members develop and accord meanings to various cultural activities that may change over time in response to daily realities of members' interactions. In the context of transnational migration, family members employ many forms to relate real time albeit without physical proximity. This has been through social media platforms powered by the internet such as WhatsApp, Facebook, video calls and phone calls allow them to interact and, in some instances, providing a face to face interface. Thus, in rituals associated to life cycle events in the context of transnational family life, symbolic interactionism will help to explore how life cycle rituals as social

practices and events are performed and accorded meaning within families and how social memory is constructed, performed and transmitted across transnational social spaces (Sutton, 2004a). Thus, I use symbolic interactionism to assess how transnational family members interact within transnational spaces sometimes devoid of face to face engagements in their everyday experiences. I further explore how these families ascribe meaning to rituals as a key element of familyhood from physically distant places but connected through transnational social spaces. I assess how the families repeat, modify, adjust, forget or postpone family rituals through their own interpretative processes within configured social practices and symbol systems across different geographic locations. Furthermore, symbolic interactionism aids the analysis of the conditions in which members in transnational families participate in rituals and how their symbolic interaction is adjusted to fit in space, place and time in the context of being close while far. Within symbolic interactionism, individuals further accord meaning through interactions with objects and the environment at large. It will thus be interesting to establish how family members interact with significant objects (for example umbilical cords imbued in meaning in birth rituals) and the environment in ritual performances in the transnational setting. Are there instances where objects are lost due to lack of interaction? Do meaningful ones make way to the other side of the transnational divide? Or do others become dormant for some time and activated when physical interaction occurs through visits (graves for example)?

Place, on the other hand is viewed in light of belonging to a family as placemaking; where family is where one's home is. The concept of place thus speaks to geolocation in relation to one's place of origin, largely referred to as home as well as one's place of residence (host country). These two distinctions of place thus form the basis of transnational family life. Agnew (2004) conceptualises place to denote location, locale and sense of place. He posits that:

> *The first one is place as a location or a site in space where an activity or object is located, and which relates to other sites or locations because of interaction and movement between them; […] and second is the view of place as a locale or setting where every day-life activities take place. Here the location is no mere address but the where of social life and environmental transformation. The third is place as sense of place or identification with place as a unique community, landscape and moral (Agnew, 2004, p. 2).*

According to Low (2009), "places are socially constructed by the people who live in them and know them; they are politicised, culturally relative and historically specific multiple constructions". Moyo (2017, p. 43), furthers this notion by positing that "place assumes

meaning only in connection with human beings and therefore representations of place are representations of lived experience which translates to lived space". Thus, in general, place receives meaning through human inhabitation; it is seen as the physical location and a container wherein human activity takes place. As a result, as human beings occupy places, they create spaces through their activities which give meaning to place.

For transnational migrants, the place called home changes as they move from their home into new places that eventually form another place they may call home (Christensen & Jensen, 2011). This demonstrates the fact that meanings of place are assigned by human beings, thus place assumes meaning through human interaction. Malkki (1992) problematised the notion of place in the contemporary era of globalisation. She noted that in the new global social order, people are 'chronically mobile and routinely displaced' (Malkki, 1992, p. 24), which leads them to create homelands in multiple spaces - leading to the duality of a place called home. Some of the so-called homelands remain borne in the migrants' memories of places they may no longer occupy. This leads transnational migrants to feel they belong to more than one place. Although this is the case, one's place of origin remains relevant to the migrants as a geographical reference to affirm belonging. Firstly because of autochthony and secondly because part of their family would have stayed behind. When migrants are invested in maintaining a relationship to a place they call home, life cycle rituals will refer to that place. Thus, the performance of these rituals becomes significant as place-making practices that confirms one's orientation in relation to the place called home.

This speaks directly to Geschiere (2009)'s concept of autochthony which means 'to be born from the soil'. The concept of autochthony simply emphasises the significance of and relationship with place in a human being's life. The major emphasis in most African societies is that one belongs to the place of his/her ancestors, which is by and large referred to as home. According to Zulu (2002, p. 479):

> *ancestors are believed to be those who have died but continue to exist in the land of the dead. They continue to influence the living, mostly positively. This belief arises from a feeling that the role of parents (or anyone elderly) is crucial to African society. Elderly parents are believed to be the custodian of moral values. Which is why they are highly venerated in life. For this reason, death will not remove this respect for elders/parents in any way. This explains the continued veneration of elders beyond death when they attain ancestor status.*

Thus, based on the foregoing, this study defines ancestors as dead elderly members of the family who, in most instances, are buried in the vicinity of the place called home. What makes a burial place the right place is when one is buried where their ancestors are buried. Thus, home as a physical location where burial or any other life cycle rituals performed highlight relations of inclusion and exclusion to a family and autochthony in relation to place. These are sites where belonging and the significance of place is expressed through symbolic exchanges, interaction and narratives within families (Gren, 2002; Kebede, 2010). As such, the significance of place in ritual performances becomes part of the complex ways through which individuals claim homelands and belonging to families.

Time on the other hand, also emerges as a critical consideration in ritual performances within families. Conventionally, rituals are situated in and are to be attended at specific places and times (Brown, 2003; Howe, 2000). In most African societies, traditionally, rituals are supposed to be performed during specific times of the year (Bozongwana, 1983; Nyathi, 2005). The concept of ritual time relates to when a ritual is performed and why it is performed at that time. Historically, within non-migrant Zimbabwean families, specific rituals were performed at specific times in cases of marriage, birth and death; see (Bozongwana, 1983; Ndlovu et al., 1995; Nyathi, 2005). For example, in the case of births, by convention, disposal of the child's umbilical cord had to be done as soon as it falls off; while in death, the mourning period for families lasts for a year. However, in the context of mobility, this has changed significantly (Epstein & Gang, 2010a). Three possibilities emerge where rituals can either be performed in the present moment, postponed to be performed later or never be performed. Thus, although there are stipulated times for the performance of some of the rituals, in transnational migration, there are some critical rituals that need to be performed at predetermined times while others can be postponed and be performed at a later stage when circumstances allow. However, within the pending/postponed rituals, situations may arise that may force their immediate performance due to imminent risks emanating from the non-performance (Brown, 2003). As such, in transnational settings, time has been rendered relative and can be negotiated with more flexibility, unlike in the case of place. Although place can also be negotiated, this is impeded by the non-transportability of home in terms of geographic location. Geschiere (2009) refers to this as the constant innovations within rituals where new modifications are added to suit the current landscape of the people involved. However, critical questions emerge in the time negotiations. For example, what are the limitations and implications of the adaptations made? How are the modifications in time changing the actual rituals? Are the changes in the actual

rituals reflected in family organisation and formations? All these are critical aspects that will be unpacked in this study.

i. Space, place and time in marriage rituals

Rituals within transnational families facilitate the experience of togetherness, act as rites of passage, incorporate new family members at birth or marriage, reproduce family and kinship networks, assert power and confirm relationships (Goulbourne & Solomos, 2002). For example, in most African countries, traditional practices dictate that people should marry from families that are known to their families (Tembo, 2009). In marriage processes in Zimbabwe, a number of rituals are performed which act as symbols of incorporation where an alliance between two families is negotiated and consummated through lobola[3] - bride price (Nyathi, 2005). Furthermore, the lobola ritual is performed as a significant marker and commemoration of a new stage in a young man or woman's life. Thus the lobola ritual transforms people in society by giving them a new identity, role, purpose and in some instances, a new sense of belonging (Mwamanda, 2016). Traditionally, in Zimbabwe, like most African societies, place is critical as this ritual had to be performed at the bride's home. This applied to other marriage rituals, for example, the ritual of *ukucola*[4] which also had to take place in the bride's home (in her father's kraal) (Nyathi, 2005). In this ritual, the father of the bride is supposed to inform the living dead (the ancestors) that their child was leaving them for another family, and they should continue protecting her. It was performed as a process of acknowledging and blessing the union of the two who are getting married. However, in the transnational context, the critical question that emerges is what is the significance of the place called home in marriage rituals such as lobola within transnational families? Presumably, in transnational contexts, place also moves and perhaps some rituals are written off. As this happens, is this move and change negotiated and agreed upon? What are the conditions that lead to the acceptance of a new place as a valid place to perform the rituals? In this regard, I am not looking at all these rituals in

[3] Lobola is the Ndebele word for the bride price paid by the bridegroom to his bride's family as a way of legalizing the marriage and also a token of appreciation and a symbol of commitment by the man to his woman (Mangena & Ndlovu, 2013).This is paid in the form of cash or livestock.

[4] Ukucola is an isiNdebele word that locals in Tsholotsho could not give a literal translation to. However, they knew the pragmatic meaning of the word and for them, just like proffered by Nyathi (2005), the word ukucola refers to an important ritual in Ndebele marriage rites which is a prayer and appeal to the ancestors not to relinquish their responsibilities on the daughter that is getting married. It is about acknowledgement, acceptance and blessing.

themselves, but rather in terms of how they are performed and negotiated within the space of transnational familyhood as far as they reveal what is happening within transnational families.

Ordinarily, the timing of marriage ritual performances in Zimbabwean families is determined by the families themselves or communities at large (Mwandayi, 2011; Ndlovu et al., 1995). However, in the context of transnational families, the time to perform these rituals is usually determined based on the availability of all family members, including the transnational migrants (Epstein & Gang, 2010b). Thus, although time is a relevant variable in marriage rituals of transnational families, it can be negotiated in some cases. Nonetheless, it should be noted that failure to observe some of the rituals, for example, lobola, may impact family relations. For example, where the mother-in-law may not talk to the son-in-law because his status would not have ben formalised. Furthermore, failure to pay lobola may invoke the wrath of the ancestors as it may be seen as a sign of disrespect of the bride's family by the man (Nyathi, 2005). In some instances it also robes the man of the respect due to a son-in-law as non-payment may be interpreted as a sign of poverty, hence no dignity (Ansell, 2001; Mwamanda, 2016).

Notably, another central element in the performance of marriage rituals is that, often family elders play a critical role as custodians of these symbolic activities (Bozongwana, 1983; Nyathi, 2005). According to van den Ende (2015), rituals in most communities are performed by those considered to be the most 'legitimate and authoritative' representatives of the families in question. Mwamanda (2016) proffered that during marriage ritual performances, the elders within families are accorded significant power and control of the processes. This demonstrates relations of power and claims to it within families epitomized through and within the performance of rituals. Therefore, within transnational families, it is imperative to understand how families handle marriage ritual performances in the context of spatial separation. For example, in lobola (bride price) negotiations, if the elders as custodians of ritual practices are separated from other family members, it is important to pose the question: what kind of negotiations take place to decide who performs a ritual? As all of this happens, other critical questions emerge, such as: what adaptations and modifications are made, for example, other family members standing-in for an absent member? In the event that this happens, who is chosen to stand-in and on what basis? And finally, as these negotiations around these spiritually significant practices occur in the ritualistic space, is power ceded to women or other men to represent absent male family members and on what basis (i.e. on a permanent or transitory

basis)? Furthermore, is this an indication of any gendered transformations in relation to authority and power? Answers to these questions are very critical to ensure a holistic appreciation of the enactment of familyhood through life cycle rituals in the context of transnational migration.

ii. Birth rituals in relation to space, place and time

In birth related rituals, among the Ndebele people of Zimbabwe, child birth is viewed as a consummation of marriage and a blessing from the ancestors (Bozongwana, 1983). Thus, after the child is born, certain rituals are performed, for example, disposal of the umbilical cord, to dedicate the child to the ancestors and also incorporate them into the family and to place - the soil (Bozongwana, 1983; Geschiere, 2009). Place and time are critical variables in the performance of these rituals. On one hand, the place dimension related to the place of burial of one's umbilical cord when born is a very significant marker of belonging to a particular place. It emphasises the need not only to reproduce familyhood (Moyo et al., 2016) but also to assert and claim belonging to a particular land, that is autochthony (Geschiere, 2009). On the other hand, time is a very critical variable in birth rituals because the rituals have a spiritual significance in the child's life in ensuring its protection from danger. Failure to perform them on time may lead to dire consequences for the family at large and the child in particular (Nyathi, 2005). Thus, adhering to time is critical as a way of circumventing danger.

Families do this in different ways. According to Ndlovu, et al., (1995), it is very important for the cord to be disposed according to the family's prescribed pattern and timeframes. This is done to avoid invoking danger or risk for the child or creating a sense of wrongness (Tonhati, 2018) as well as affirming the child's relationship to the place of their birth. In the context of transnational families, the critical question is, how do transnational migrants negotiate space, place and time in ritual performances? What are the implications of the negotiations on the broader issues of familyhood and belonging?

iii. Space, place and time in death rituals

According to Geschiere (2009), burial is one of the major rituals to confirm autochthony, that is, one's relationship with place i.e. with the soil. Although transnational migrants may belong to more than one place, one's place of burial becomes an ultimate test of one's belonging (Geschiere & Gugler, 1998). This is because they believe a person should be buried in the place

where they were born, where their umbilical cord was buried, and not where they lived (Geschiere, 2009). A funeral at home thus, becomes a celebration of one's autochthony, one's belonging. In most African societies, burial away from home is believed to have unintended consequences in the afterlife, for both the dead and the living (Lee & Vaughan, 2008; Moyo et al., 2016). Therefore, performance of all the rituals related to death as a life cycle event is a strong indication of the demonstration of the significance of place as a marker of belonging even in the transnational context. Thus, within transnational families, place is also a form of orientation, which forms part of the dual placement of transnational migrants notwithstanding the significance of timing.

In death related rituals, transnational migrants demonstrate their preoccupation with place mainly in ensuring that rituals that confirm their belonging to a land need to be performed in their countries of origin. This has largely been seen in deaths (just like in births) where migrants put much emphasis on place of burying the umbilical cord at birth and place of burial at death.

The importance of home as a place of burial and the need to return home to be buried has preoccupied African migrants in the past as well. Lee and Vaughan (2008) on the history of death and dying note that the way death is managed in African societies is a key aspect to understanding the underlying belief systems of traditional societies. As the authors put it, African societies have always believed in the ongoing relations between the living and the dead (ibid). The place of burial is a significant vehicle to facilitate a smooth interaction between the two worlds and to ensure a harmonious existence between the living and the dead (Kwigomba, 2013). However, in the past , migrants in South Africa faced mobility challenges. A significant number of those who died in that period were buried in the host countries (Van Onselen, 1976). Most of these migrants were mine workers and had to be buried in cemeteries in the mines. Lee and Vaughan (2008, p. 356) assert that:

> *While the establishment of cemeteries at the mines acknowledged that mines themselves had become spaces of (accidental) death, it was the fact that they could now be spaces of burial which further troubled African labourers and their families. How would the dead be ensured safe passage into the afterlife, if not buried at 'home' under the watchful eyes of the living? And how would the community attain ritual and spiritual closure without the assurance brought by the ceremonial treatment of the body of the deceased*

Van Onselen (1976), expounding on the same notion of burial in mines highlighted that when mine workers died, they were given mass and in some instances shoddy burials devoid of

respect for the dead. Moyo et al., (2016) also highlighted that migrants were disgruntled as burial of the corpses of their fellow 'brothers' who died in the mines was treated as waste disposal by mine authorities. In reaction, Onselen noted that in 1918, mine workers (migrants and locals) formed their first burial society whose main objective was to give fellow migrant workmates who died in the mines a decent burial (1976). This was done within mine cemeteries as repatriation was impossible due to mobility challenges. The burial societies' mandate went beyond death and burial as they also focused on sickness and destitution and as a result benefits extended to include some form of pay out if a member was sick (Van Onselen, 1976). This emanated from the fact that in the mines, workers were paid using a ticket system which meant they did not receive any pay if they did not work due to sickness. The associations were thus, a sensible and innovative reaction to migrant workers' deeply felt needs and a way of expressing 'brotherliness and camaraderie' (Ibid). Thus, burial societies have been in existence since the onset of the labour migration regime in the 19th century (Lee, 2009) but their operations had only been limited to South Africa.

In current times, transnational migrants replicated burial societies created by migrant miners. This was driven by migrants' intrinsic desire to be buried at home. This time, the burial societies were organised in the host cities along familial and geolocation coordinates in the countries of origin. This was a means to ensure that when a migrant who was a member of the burial society died in a foreign land, their body was repatriated for burial at their home (Núñez & Wheeler, 2012). Among Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa and the United Kingdom, for example, there is so much importance placed on the burial societies as a vehicle to escape the stigma of a pauper's burial (Mbiba, 2010) which a migrant would be condemned to if not assisted by other co-nationals . The trend even changed in the context of HIV and AIDS where even younger generations joined these societies due to their increased vulnerability, making burial societies a form of assurance (Mbiba, 2010; Núñez & Wheeler, 2012). The issue of burial societies is also the case among Cameroonian migrants from the Maka and the Ewando, as they use burials as instances to affirm and cement a sense of belonging to the home village (Geschiere, 2005; Moyo et al., 2016). This affirms the belief among Africans that place of burial is directly linked to one's identity and belonging (Kwigomba, 2013). Notably, this is in sync with the general belief in most African countries where burial in one's home village is more of an obligation than a choice, signifying the importance of place in affirming home and belonging even in death (Moyo et al., 2016; Núñez & Wheeler, 2012). In Cameroon for

example (Geschiere, 2009; Geschiere & Gugler, 1998) , burial in a foreign land is seen as a disgrace, a highest form of social failure and can only happen under exceptional situations.

Notwithstanding, since the onset of migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa to date, some dynamics have perpetually arose where migrants from Zimbabwe marry and start new families in South Africa (Mazuru, 2014). However, in the era of transnational migration, contestations between the family in South Africa and that in Zimbabwe on where the deceased will be buried may arise. The death of a migrant thus, becomes an object of dispute between families as the place of burial constitute a maker of home. When such dynamics occur, they reflect Moyo et al., (2016)'s notion that in death, place of burial reveals the intricate relationship between human beings, territories and belonging. Thus, the dispute between families over the final place of burial as it confirms belonging shows that creation of families may modify one's place of belonging (Lee & Vaughan, 2008; Moyo et al., 2016). As such, although transnationalism may be seen to facilitate continued family life, there are some instances where geographic distance may facilitate removal of some migrants from being part of families. In such instances, migrants disengage themselves with any processes that may link them with their families of origin. Geographic distance may also operate as a safe distance to avoid or postpone rituals that individuals may not be willing to participate in, for example lobola.

In relation to burial of those left behind, some negotiations of time, although with limits, have been carried out mainly by Africans in the Diaspora. Such adaptations are exemplified in the case of South Cameroon where wealthy migrants living in the diaspora invest in the construction of mortuaries so that the deceased can be preserved in-waiting while they travel to be part of the local funerals (Geschiere, 2005; Page, 2007). However, although mortuaries help keep the deceased body for an extended period of time while waiting for other family members, the waiting period cannot be indefinitely extended (Núñez & Wheeler, 2012). Thus, although time can be negotiated, it also does have limitations. As such, there are instances where the burial will go-ahead and then some of the rituals consummated later when all family members are present.

Likewise, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in instances where transnational migrants failed to travel back home to bury their kin, they would pay for some of the funeral expenses as a way of asserting symbolic presence though absent. Within transnational families, these

become a significant way of asserting belonging to place both as a home and family and honouring time as a critical variable in death rituals. This is also in light of the fact that failure to perform the rituals may have consequences (Howe, 2000). This augments Tonhati (2018)'s assertion that life cycle rituals are not rigid, their practice and form is subject to change as family structures and processes are transformed over time. Thus, within transnational families, death rituals become vehicles for symbolic investments into claims of belonging to a place, both as a home and a family. As such, although space, place and time are critical variables in ritual performances, the levels of flexibility and rigidity in terms of negotiations differ. For example, the reference to a place in ritual performances is rigid in some rituals and flexible in others.

Thus, within families, rituals do not only symbolically express togetherness, amplify customs and values and create an awareness of valued and shared behaviour and beliefs, they are also expressions of power and belonging in relation to place. They are also a way through which family members engage and re-engage in proximate interaction within their families to celebrate and affirm belonging to a family both as a place and a social grouping (Núñez & Wheeler, 2012). Rituals also mediate identity formation for family members. As Gardner & Grillo put it, in the transnational context:

> *[…] the analysis at the household level of the performance of and meanings attributed to classic life-crisis rituals (births, marriages and deaths) should offer an important route to understanding relations between place, culture, ethnicity and gender among transnational migrants (2002, p. 180).*

Thus, rituals provide a productive landscape within which family members may creatively model meanings and map the transformations proffered by transnational migration (ibid). The dispersion of family members across vast geographical spaces through transnational migration can change, disrupt or challenge the performance of these rituals. Among transnational migrants, their participation in rituals performed in families back home reveals their everyday symbolic and emotional investments to affirm belonging (Kebede, 2010) that confirm their being part of the place called home and family. Thus, although being transnational in their everyday emplacement, transnational migrants confirm their roots through participation in rituals performed at home. And to this end, the home appears to be pivotal to rituals that confirm belonging to both a place and a family, these are rituals related to burial of both the umbilical cord at birth and of the burial of the deceased body. Within families, rituals affirm who belongs and is part of the exchanges through which people can prove belonging (Geschiere

& Gugler, 1998). In the next section I present the conceptual framework that weaves together different concepts from the theoretical perspectives presented in coming up with a systematic way of analysing the data presented to answer the questions in this study.

2.7 Conceptual framework

This study seeks to address the theoretical question on the nexus between transnational migration and families in the context of sustained migration. The influences of sustained migration and its continuities in contemporary transnational migration present an interesting complex of symbolic interaction within families. This interaction creates an opportunity to contribute to and broaden knowledge on transnational families. In the context of transnational migration (see figure 2.1), as migrants move from their families which are regarded as systems by Broderick (1993), Constantine (1986), they become simultaneously embedded within their home and host countries (Bilgili & Skeldon, 2014). They engage in transnational life through transnational social spaces which allow them to be here and there at the same time.

Although migrants are simultaneously embedded, their physical absence from their families left behind has a direct bearing on their left behind children's patterns of residence and authority over the left behind children. As the migrants move, their children may change residence, influencing the patterns of who has authority over them. Thus, these new patterns of residence and authority depict the care arrangements that are put in place for the families left behind. The care arrangements could either depict global care chains as propounded by Yeates (2004) or circulation of care as proffered by Baldassar & Merla (2013). These arrangement determine who takes care of the children while their parents live as emmigrants. As parents or spouses are simultaneously embedded, they are also able to exercise their authority on their families left behind, constituting families living-together-apart (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011b). In the same vein, as migrants are simultaneously embbeded, they engage in, perform and at times participate in family rituals transnationally. This and the other intercations that transnational family members engage in within transnational social spaces signifies their engagement in symbolic interactionism even across place and space.

Moreover, the simultaneous embeddedness of the migrants, coupled with a notable increase in feminisation of migration (Pillinger, 2007), has led to significant changes in the patterns of residence of those left behind.. This inevitably leads to new family formations that take

different structures and forms. These families are known as transnational families (Núñez, 2010; Zontini, 2007) and are characterised as transnational social spaces wherein families engage in transnational family lives. Within these family forms, there is a notable combination of circulation of care and care chains as well as symbolic interaction across place, space and time. As the families engage in their everyday lives, they create a web of notable changes and continuities that occur as migration is influenced by different processes, in this case, transnationalism. As such, questioning the historical continuities, current adaptations and transformations in family formations, patterns of residence and authority within families in Zimbabwe addresses a knowledge gap in migration scholarship on Zimbabwe.

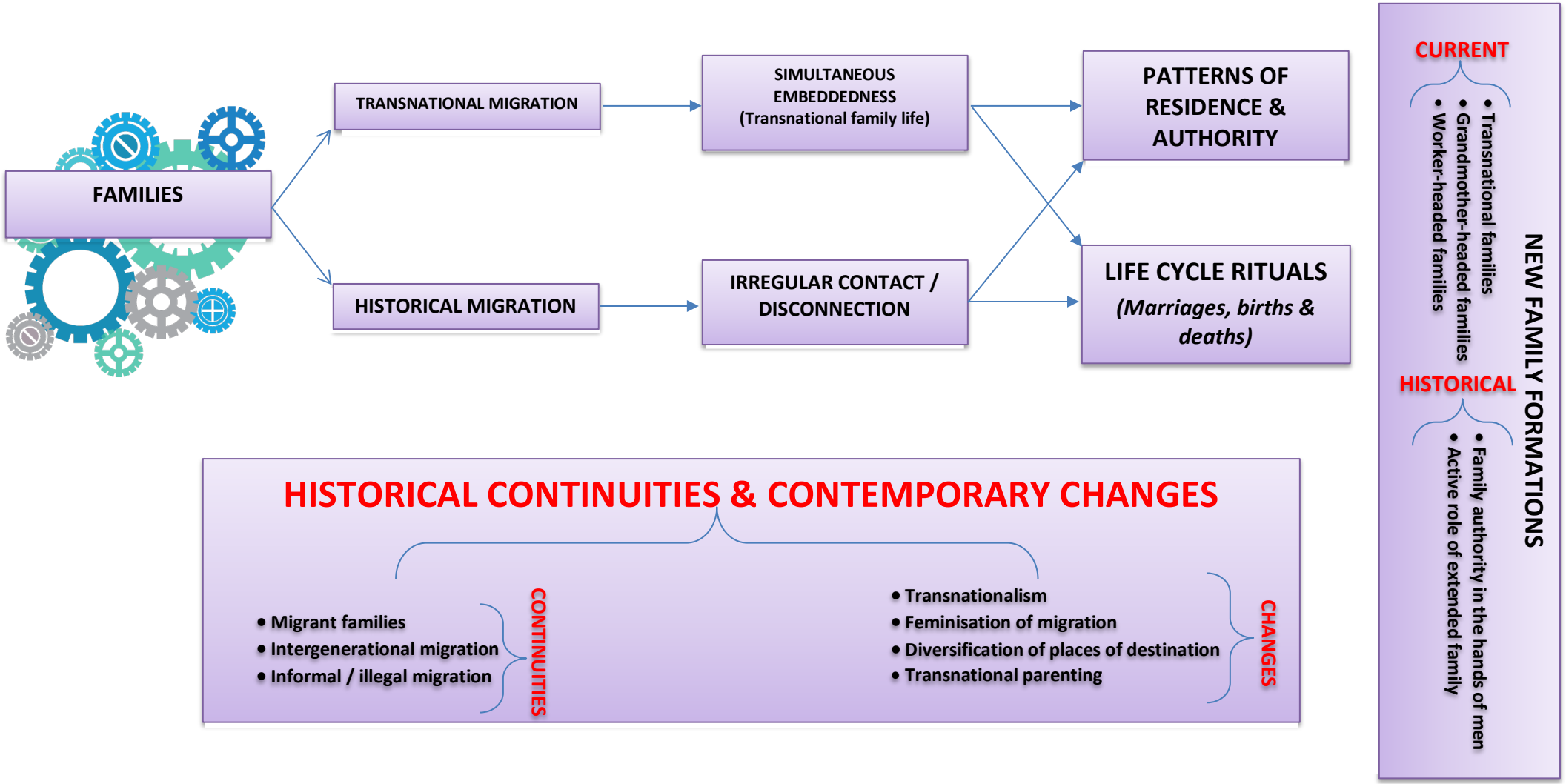


Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework

To unearth the dynamics indicated above, I will use a combination of concepts drawn from the theoretical perspectives on transnational families presented in the previous sections. As such, to fully appreciate the transnational family dimensions in this study, my approach will adopt a systemic approach as shown in figure 2.1 above. It will combine different concepts/theories to assess how the different dimensions are affected by transnational migration. The key family dimensions of this study will entail family formations, maintenance of membership, patterns of residence and authority and life cycle events related to births, marriages and deaths.

In transnational migration, family space is stretched across distance (Massey, 1994) leading to the creation of transnational social spaces. Within these spaces, transnational families engage in different aspects of family life. Thus, space emerges as a critical component in family interaction in transnational migration. Thus, to gain a fuller appreciation of the dynamics of transnational family interactions within transitional social spaces in general, I employ symbolic interactionism. Transnational social spaces provide important sites of interaction for transnational families where they can construct and reconstruct collective identities through interpretation of processes as individuals interact (Carter & Fuller, 2015) and navigate the complexities of separation and dispersion within these transnational social spaces. As such, through the lenses of symbolic interactionism, I assess whether transnational social spaces are enablers or disablers in the different family interactions that aid incorporation, identity creation and confirming belonging? In this regards, symbolic interactionism thus helps to further explore how social interactions, practices and events are accorded meaning and how social memory is constructed, performed and transmitted within transnational families (Sutton, 2004b). In that light, I pay attention to how transnational family members depict their everyday experiences and ascribe meaning to familyhood from physically distant places but connected through transnational social spaces. I assess how the families repeat, modify, adjust, forget or postpone family practices through their own interpretative processes within configured social practices and symbol systems across different geographic spaces (transnational social spaces). Symbolic interactionism will further aid the interrogation of the modes of communication they use to transfer meaning and practice of family practices among their members. It further aids the assessment of how families compensate for absence of members, for example, in ritual performances.

Over and above symbolic interactionism, I will also employ the circulation of care concept to assess other subtle nuances within transnational families. It has been proposed as a theoretical approach in studying care arrangements in the complex of transnational families and migration (Ahlin, 2015). Most studies on transnational families have employed the concept of care chains and most recently circulation of care to theoretically ground their work in challenging the ideal of members' proximity (Ahlin, 2015; Baldassar & Merla, 2013). The theoretical concept of circulation of care challenges this assumption. It advances the fact that transnational families have various ways in which they live their lives across vast geographic territories. As they do this, they retain a sense of collectivity and kinship as well as develop and engage in processes and practices of being family (Baldassar & Merla, 2013). This study will thus, employ the theoretical concept of circulation of care to analyse the shifts in patterns of residence and family formations, family structures as well as transnational migrants' maintenance of membership within their families left behind. The conceptual application of circulation of care to the analysis of transnational families allows examination of different family typologies that have emerged as a result of transnationalism in a systemic approach. Although this is the case, the concept of circulation of care addresses just a narrow component of these families – which is care. By typologies I mean family types derived from patterns of residence for the left behind children as well as patterns of authority and decision making within left behind families.

Moreover, although the concept of circulation of care takes up a systemic form that allows it to trace and retrace links and connections between members across distance and time (Baldassar & Merla, 2013), it still has some shortcomings. There are some elements of families that it cannot explain. For example, there are different other socio-cultural activities (family traditions and rituals) that are undertaken throughout the life course to sustain and maintain families which fall out of the coverage of the circulation of care concept. This is owing to the limitations of the notion that what circulates among transnational families is solely care. For example, patterns of residence may be analysed through the approach of the circulation of care, but the dynamics of patterns of authority and power remain inadequately explored. This emanates from the fact that the concept of circulation of care only focuses on the reciprocity of exchange of care within members. Moreover, the question on rituals as a way of maintaining familyhood and reinstating authority remains uncovered.

Thus, while useful, the theoretical perspectives presented (care chains and circulation of care) do not adequately cater for other central aspects of this study which are the lived realities of transnational family lives that allow for care to take place and families to thrive. Therefore, to compensate for the shortcomings of the circulation of care, some tenets of the family systems theory will be used in this study. The systemic perspective will inform the assessment of the extent to which authority over left behind children and their patterns of residence within families have been altered by the fact that women have migrated as well. It will help unearth whether there are new family typologies that have emerged with the associated changes in patterns of residence and authority as a result of feminisation of migration in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe. By so doing, this will expose the differentials in gender relations within families and how family forms largely depend on who migrates.

Furthermore, in the theoretical perspectives proffered in the forgone (care chains and circulation of care), not much has been mentioned on the lived realities of transnational family lives that allow for care to take place and families to thrive. There has not been a clear problematisation of space and place in terms of how people make themselves present while far. As such, I will look at rituals instead as lenses through which I can delve into family life within transnational families. One such critical aspect is on ritual performances. In traditional Ndebele families, life cycle rituals of marriage, births and deaths are valued and significant practices. At times they are viewed as sacred and performed under specific routines that should be followed religiously (Gardner & Grillo, 2002; Ndlovu et al., 1995; Nyathi, 2005). Timing and place are significant aspects in the performance of these rituals in light of beliefs that when not properly observed or done, families may attract bad luck or invoke the wrath of the ancestors (Nyathi, 2005). As discussed earlier, I use time and space to capture how participation in and the place where the rituals are performed is a significant marker of belonging among migrants (Geschiere, 2009). Space become a relevant aspect in performing rituals in that, while living transnationally, one's place of origin remains relevant to the migrants as a geographical reference to affirm belonging.

In the context of migration and later transnational migration, however the performance of ritual practices is compromised in a number of ways (Sutton, 2004b). The separation of family members and their simultaneous embeddedness calls for a reconceptualisation of the notions of space and place. It challenges family routines and more specifically the performance of these

rituals in transnational families. These scenarios present the need to trace how, within transnational families, cultural formations are conserved and thrive across and within multiple sites of residence. Questions such as which rituals are maintained, which are eliminated, how members of a family modify or adapt their rituals and through these, who participates and how they participate in these rituals across borders are questions that I pose in this research. In other words, rituals will highlight more about authority and power in families. They may even unearth the fact that authority and power is negotiated within families and rituals can be a lens to view authority and power dynamics within families.

Regardless of distance, transnational families devise different ways to overcome the spatial challenges of separation, ensuring continuous engagement in family activities through transnational social spaces. As families are dispersed across national boundaries, the major question that emerges is what it means to live spatially separated lives? How is family life experienced when adjusted to the realities of spatial separation wherein social media (powered by internet connectivity) and phone calls become the mediums through which families interact and negotiate their everyday lives (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010; Maphosa, 2010). Thus, transnational families present new structures and systems of relationship operationalised through new communication and transport technologies. Inevitably, these transform some socio-cultural belief systems among others (Vertovec, 1999). Using these different concepts/theories in the systemic analysis of the different family dimensions under study gives a holistic analytical approach that captures the intersections between and among different aspects of transnational family life.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed in my study. Notwithstanding the significance of the long history of migration in the study area, the upsurge of transnational migration poses an interesting phenomenon to be studied in Tsholotsho. The different character that migration has taken over the years emerges as an important factor inducing changes in families in the contemporary African landscape (Kufakurinani, Pasura, & McGregor, 2014; Madzivadondo, 2012). My study is an exploration of how families in such contexts negotiate their lives and how they have changed or adapted to the realities that have emerged facilitated by simultaneous embeddedness of their members over time. With the purpose of studying the dynamics associated with transnational migration, I made use of qualitative methods of data collection. The qualitative research paradigm is an approach that seeks to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this exploration, I combined the features of traditional ethnography based on close and informal engagement with people with those of multi-sited ethnography typical of transnational anthropology (Alexeyeff, 2013; Appadurai, 1991). According to Appadurai (1991), transnational anthropology entails researching in various sites across borders and locally. This methodological design responds to the reality of simultaneous embeddedness of family members in transnational settings. It tries to adapt in methodological terms, to the dynamics of migration and transnationalism. As such, in this chapter, I discuss the rationale for the chosen design, and I provide details on how the design was implemented in the research as well as the specific methods used to generate data. I also reflect on the practical challenges of doing research, firstly among Zimbabwean communities and secondly among migrant populations in the Johannesburg context. More specifically I do so in the context of high levels of informality within the migrant population. Given their informality, more often, migrants are hidden, posing challenges of access through orthodox probability sampling methods. I also explore other methodological particularities and complexities associated with the study of families in a transnational context.

3.1 Researching transnational migration

Given the huge amount of research on transnational communities within migration studies, there have been some criticisms to the methodologies used on these transnational groups. The major critiques have problematised the fact that research findings from these studies tend to rely more on the transnational migrants (those who move) and relegate those who remain behind (Vertovec, 2004). In essence, these methodologies have fallen into the long standing trap of social inquiry which has over time, been dominated by comparative research assignments that investigate subjects in bounded places (Ozkul, 2012). The research that has been done has mainly focused on one side of the transnational field (McHugh, 2000). Considering this censure, in this research I employ a qualitative ethnographic and transnational (multi-sited) approach spread over two different geographical locations (Zimbabwe and South Africa). This emanates from the fact that the methodology adopted needs to be sensitive to the fact that I am dealing with multiple locations. As such, ethnography, and in particular multi-sited ethnography, is best suited for the study.

3.2 Ethnographic approach

Ethnography refers to the methodical process of observing, describing, recording, and scrutinizing the life ways or particular patterns of a culture (or subculture) or the social world in order to grasp the patterns of the people in their familiar environment (Clough, Goodley, Lawthom, & Moore, 2004; Leininger, 1985; Tracy, 2012). It is "the study of social interactions, behaviours and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organizations and communities" (Reeves, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008, p. 512). It draws on a diversity of methods to understand the public and private, explicit and subtle cultural meanings of a social group (Clough et al., 2004). In this methodology, researchers are immersed into a specific social group with the intent to generate rich meanings from the actions and interactions of social actors and gaining a deep understanding of a variety of the group's cultural aspects like language use, rituals, ceremonies and artefacts among others (Clough et al., 2004; Tracy, 2012).

Although in its strict sense, ethnography involves an immersion into the studied society, there are ethnographic methods that allow for use of participant observation and field interviews without necessarily involving the deep immersion into the group or offering a holistic cultural analysis (Tracy, 2012). In this study, ethnography did not mean immersion into the community

under study. It however entailed an in-depth study of the community using ethnographic methods (in-depth interviews and observation) that allowed for a cross-sectional analysis of the phenomena under study. I spent three months in each of the study sites engaged in in-depth interviews and observations to understand the changes and continuities that have occurred within families. The changes and continuities were in relation to family formations, patterns of residence and authority, life cycle rituals (birth, marriage and death) as well as maintenance of membership by transnational migrants along a process of sustained migration. The adoption of the multi-sited approach allowed for the study of several sites simultaneously (i.e. families in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg) and this showed the ways in which different spaces (physical and transnational) are nested within each other (Ozkul, 2012) as explained in the ensuing.

3.2.1 Multi-sited ethnography

Multi-sited ethnography is defined as ethnography that moves away from its orthodox single-site location to compound sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the "local" and the "global", (Marcus, 1995). It came about as a response to the increased mobility of people globally. It is an antecedent of a trend in ethnographic inquiries that moves beyond a single locality to a multiplicity of localities reflecting the translocality of many people's lives (Berg, 2008; Moyo, 2017). This qualitative approach allows researchers to study social phenomena in their natural settings, albeit across multiple geo-spatial settings (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). In this study multi-sited ethnography provided breadth and depth in detailing the intricacies in the lives of transnational families in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg. In Tsholotsho, I visited different sites, i.e. respondents' homes, agricultural fields where women gathered their produce, burial events and local shops where men gathered to drink beer. These sites amplified the gendered divisions of places as women were found working in the fields while men sat and drank beer in the local shops. In Johannesburg, I attended two burial events, church services and weddings. On occasions of burial and weddings, families group together to express familyhood. Being part of these gatherings became a statement to confirm belonging. On the other hand, churches represented places where people expressed belonging to a greater group that eventually constituted enclave communities created by belonging to the same church from back home or originating from the same geo-location. In both occasions, these sites formed different nodes that connected to form the system of family life within transnational families.

Studies on transnational families often use a multi-sited ethnography research design, e.g. (Dávalos, 2012; Dreby, 2007; Schmalzbauer, 2004; Zontini, 2010). The main objective of multi-sited ethnography is studying social phenomenon that cannot be fully explored by focusing on a single site. As such it is rooted in following "people, connections, associations and relationships across space" (Falzon, 2009, p. 2). It stitches together the life-worlds of variously situated subjects (Berg, 2008; Boccagni, 2010; Marcus, 1995). It shuns boundaries and deals with limitations of methodological nationalism to reveal the interconnections between communities in different geospatial locations. As such, it helped reveal the intricate connections within families in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg as members on either side of the migration divide-maintained connections that culminated into family interactions albeit across borders. The migrants' involvement in family life back home (through regular communication, visits and remittances), helped in tracing the interlinkages between sites of origin and sites of destination. It allowed me to explore family formations, patterns of residence, life cycle rituals and maintenance of membership in both the home and destination sites, i.e. Tsholotsho and Johannesburg. Participant observation is one of the key components in ethnographic studies as detailed below.

i. Participant Observation

Observation is an essential part of ethnography. It is a research technique appropriate for studying processes, relationships, events, the organisation of people and the immediate socio-cultural contexts in which human existence unfolds (Jorgensen, 2015). It is "a method through which researchers generate understanding and knowledge by watching, interacting, asking questions, collecting documents' on fundamental aspects of human experience" (Tracy, 2012, p. 65). It gives access to the meanings, which participants assign to social situations (Burgess, 1984). Moreover, it enables researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in their natural setting through observing and participating in those activities (Kawulich, 2005). Although the observer may be an outsider, they oftentimes take the role of the studied. For example, living in the commune of the studied to allow the observer to be exposed to or involved in the day to day or routine activities of participants in their natural environment (Kawulich, 2005; Tracy, 2012). It is not a one way process only concerned about studying people but also entails learning from them by seeking to understand their cultural behaviour, knowledge and artefacts (Tracy, 2012). Moreover, participant observation is a desirable technique when the problem under study concerns human interactions and the phenomenon of investigation is observable in an everyday life situation or setting.

This was particularly true in this study because the problem under study involved the interactions of people as they dealt with life cycle rituals such as deaths, births and marriages. It also involved their patterns of residence in the context of transnational migration. This method was thus, found to be very useful as it yielded significant insights into how families have transformed and adapted to the effects of migration in relation to patterns of residence and in handling life cycle rituals in migrants sending communities. Accordingly, I spent three months in Tsholotsho District and three months in Johannesburg, socialising with communities and migrants respectively on a daily basis. I attended their social functions such as local meetings, bereavements, burials and weddings to gain trust of the people as well as understand their lives better. Given that I come from Tsholotsho, I attended these functions as a member of the community with no challenges. The leaders were aware of my presence as a researcher, both in Tsholotsho (village heads) and Johannesburg (burial society presidents). Thus, in Tsholotsho, I attended two funerals of people who had died in Johannesburg and had been repatriated to Zimbabwe and one for a person who had died in Tsholotsho. I also had an opportunity to attend *lobola* negotiations in one of the families that participated in the study.

In Johannesburg, I attended two funerals within the community of migrants from Tsholotsho, one was of a child that died and was buried in Johannesburg and another of an elderly person who died in Johannesburg and was repatriated to Zimbabwe. Again, gaining entry within these gatherings was easy as I attended as a member of the community. I also attended one wedding of two Zimbabweans, one of whom comes from Tsholotsho. I got to know about the funerals I attended through my social and family networks as the deceased and their families were people that I knew from Tsholotsho. I later interviewed some of the people I met within all these events (deaths and *lobola* negotiations).

Other methods (interviews and family history narratives) could not provide much information on various nuances, overt or covert, related to the lived experiences of the transnational families. For example, intimate ritual practices performed during funerals as well as the prevailing patterns of residence within the community under study. Jorgensen (2015) also noted that participant observation is appropriate when the phenomenon is somehow hidden or invisible from view and there are important differences between the views of outsiders and insiders. Newman (2013, p. 22) citing Becker and Geer (1957) summarises the importance of participant observation by noting that it "can provide us with a yardstick against which to measure the completeness of data gathered in other ways, a model which can serve to let us

know what orders of information escape us when we use other methods". Participating in these events gave me an opportunity to observe the practices and patterns adopted in life cycle rituals. It also helped me gain acceptance from the community members as they had interacted with me in some of their significant gatherings. My observations of these events helped me to interpret and to analyse the data gathered through other methods. Occasions such as community meetings and functions offer opportunities to observe interactions and relationships and may expose nuances, which cannot be discovered through face-to-face questioning (Sithole, 2016).

3.3 Research methods

In data collection, the selection of a particular method or approach is largely influenced by a number of variables. For example, the problem under study, the theoretical framework/s upon which the study is premised, the purpose of the study, the resources available and the skills of the researcher (Sithole, 2016). Moreover, the socio-demographic nature of the population under study can also influence the success or failure of the entire process of data collection. Grady (1998) thus notes that, when deciding on the type of data collection method to be used, the researcher must keep in mind the type of people being dealt with, the social situation, the mood of the social environment and the psychology of the people. In this study, data was collected through interviews (in-depth interviews with key informants (KII) and in-depth interviews to gather family history narratives – as will be defined in the ensuing), participant observation and secondary data review. Employing ethnographic methods, I built rapport with the communities under study through attending various functions such as funerals, community meetings and church services. Data collection was conducted in the respondent's language of choice (predominantly in Northern isiNdebele, and English), with the help of research assistants who were fluent in both languages. I enlisted the help of research assistants for logistical reasons as I had financial as well as time constraints. During my fieldwork, Zimbabwe was already facing economic challenges that impacted on my financial resources. Moreover, I was doing my study while in full time employment. I was given study leave on split-site basis, which meant that I also had to fulfil my duties at work. As such, if I had to do the fieldwork on my own, it was going to be costly and take a long time to finish, hence my use of research assistants.

3.3.1 Interviews

Interviews "are guided question and answer conversations or an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (Tracy, 2012, p. 131). These differ

from other conversations in that they have a structure and purpose. They offer opportunities for natural discovery, appreciation, reflection and illumination of intuitively lived experiences and opinions on social phenomena from the respondent's perspective (Tracy, 2012). As a result, interviews allow for examination of otherwise hidden or complex phenomena. They provide for generation of narrative data that affords researchers an opportunity to explore people's views in greater depth (Alshenqeeti, 2014). The common assumption is that interviews are dyadic one-on-one interactions yet in essence interviewing can take place through small groups – for example, focus group discussions (FGDs) – (Tracy, 2012). As such, whether one-on-one or through other mediated contexts, interviews take different forms. These include key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, structured or semi-structured interviews and FGDs. Of the aforementioned, this study used in-depth interviews as detailed in the ensuing section.

3.4 Designing of data gathering instruments and sampling

Prior to engaging in the actual fieldwork, I first of all designed my instruments in English. Given that the questions were going to be asked mainly in IsiNdebele, I had the instruments translated into IsiNdebele and back to English to ensure consistence, accuracy and no loss of meaning in the questions. After translation of the instruments, I then piloted the instruments in village 4 in Tsholotsho, a village with similar characteristics to those sampled to test the instruments' adequacy, feasibility and also train research assistants. For the KII guide for academics, I piloted the instrument on my colleagues from my workplace (at NUST Institute of Development Studies). The main objective of this phase was to improve the design of the research instruments, identify inconsistences and ambiguities in the formulation of questions. After finalising the instruments, I had to submit them together with other required documents to the University ethics committee to get an ethical clearance certificate as part of the university's ethical requirements. I was granted the clearance under clearance protocol number H16/11/22. After clearance was granted, I proceeded to the field for data generation.

3.5 Sampling transnational migrants and transnational families

The study did not aim for a representative sample or seek to generalize the findings to the rest of Matabeleland and Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg. Some migration scholars have questioned researchers' adequacy and technical prowess in generating representative samples of migrant populaces in the absence of complete and accurate sampling frames - see (Bloch,

2007; Moyo, 2017; Vigneswaran, 2009). In most instances, these populations are hidden and difficult to access due to issues of vulnerability and fear that are typical of migrants' lived realities (Bloch, 2007). In light of the foregone, this research utilised non-probability purposive sampling to identify the respondents for this study as detailed below.

Fieldwork for this study was carried out in two phases. Phase 1 was in ward 19 of Tsholotsho district located in the Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe. Phase 2 was in Johannesburg, South Africa. In phase 1, the study focused on rural households in Tsholotsho, a community characterised by long-term migration to South Africa (Maphosa, 2005, 2007; Ncube, 2010). Based on the Councillor for ward 19's records, a ward is made up of six villages and in those 6, I randomly selected villages 2 and 5 as the sample villages to be studied. Purposive snowball sampling was then used in the two selected villages to identify migrant families for in-depth interviews and family histories. My point of entry was the village head who referred me to some of the families that had emigrant members residing in South Africa. Further to the referrals from the village heads, I also got referrals from the families I would have interviewed. Based on interactions with local leaders, I learnt that almost all the families in the villages had emigrant members. However, some of these emigrants had gone for a long time without visiting or communicating. This meant that those who did not visit or communicate did not fulfil the transnational migrant status. As such, of all the families I was referred to, I screened the qualifying families by using a filter question on whether the emigrant members were in constant communication and visited them regularly. Those who answered no to the filter question were left out. Only families with migrant members who communicated and visited regularly were interviewed. I did this with every referral until I got the number I needed. A total of fifteen families were interviewed through in-depth interviews. From the fifteen families interviewed, 5 were selected for further enquiry on the history of migration in their families.

In phase 2, (Johannesburg, South Africa), purposive snowball sampling was also used to identify migrants from Tsholotsho. However, the migrants had to meet the conditions of having families in villages 2 or 5 of ward 19 in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe and reside in the Johannesburg area. Furthermore, the migrants were screened based on whether they were in constant communication and regularly visited their families in Tsholotsho. Only those who satisfied this criterion were selected to be part of the sample as they met the defining characteristics of a transnational migrant.

The study also included key informants. Key informants are individuals with expert knowledge, prominence and/ or communication skills on a given social issue and are willing to share their knowledge with the researcher (Sithole, 2016). In my study, these included traditional leaders, councillors, and officials from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM); academics and leaders of migrants' transnational associations like burial societies. They provided information on the transformations that have taken place within families as a result of transnational migration. In total, thirty in-depth interviews were conducted. Fifteen (15) were conducted with household heads in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe and another (fifteen) 15 with migrants from Tsholotsho resident in Johannesburg (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: List of Interview respondents

In-depth Interview Respondents	Number of respondents	Description of the participants' characteristics
Transnational families in Tsholotsho	10	Household heads in Tsholotsho over 18 years of age, most of whom were women.
Transnational migrants in Johannesburg	10	These were transnational migrants from Tsholotsho, have families in Tsholotsho while living in Johannesburg. There was a balanced gender and age mix.
Family history respondents	10[5]	These were generally the elderly who could remember and give a concise history of migration in their families. They were selected from the family heads in Tsholotsho and then migrants in Johannesburg with whom I had in-depth interviews.
Key Informant Interviews	20	These were constituted of academics, historians, authors of family literature, officials from local authorities, IOM officer, school heads, teachers, the member of parliament (MP) for Tsholotsho South constituency and burial society leaders in Johannesburg. 16 in Zimbabwe, and 4 in Johannesburg.

3.6 Gaining entry: The experience and politics of data generation among migrant communities

After piloting the instruments and making the necessary changes and corrections, I then proceeded to data generation with the respondents selected for the various methods in both sites as detailed in the ensuing.

[5] Five respondents were interviewed in Tsholotsho and the other 5 in Johannesburg.

3.6.1 Fieldwork in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe

Before commencing data generation, I had to observe ethical requirements. I needed to obtain permission from local authorities. I managed to get permission from the provincial (Matabeleland North) and district authorities in Tsholotsho. Respondents voluntarily consented to participating in my study and I commenced my fieldwork.

To circumvent some barriers to entry in the selected villages in Tsholotsho, (for example lack of trust and unwillingness to participate), I worked with a local assistant (whom I call Teeman). Teeman is a former migrant who returned back to Tsholotsho from South Africa to take care of his father's estate after his death in 2016. Teeman was very useful in establishing the initial rapport, gaining trust and obtaining consent as well as arranging interview times with the respondents in the locale and he made sure participation was voluntary. The fact that he was one of the local residents made it easy to create a rapport and gain acceptance with respondents and local authorities. I also engaged two (2) research assistants to help me with data collection as well and transcription and translation. I selected the assistants carefully and made sure they were familiar with the language and culture of the participants. I did this to ensure that the assistants would not miss out some critical culturally significant expressions from the recordings (Hennink et al., 2010). They were fluent in both the locally spoken IsiNdebele language and English, which made it easy for them to conduct some of the interviews and also transcribe and translate the recorded interviews.

In-depth interviews were the main data gathering method in the research. In-depth interviews are useful in obtaining exhaustive information on an individual's thoughts, knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, perspectives and behaviours towards a specific issue (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003; Mack, 2005). They gave me an opportunity to gain insight into the participants' interpretation of life course events and the accounts of their lived realities. In Tsholotsho, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants and respondents from the selected families (as has already been detailed in the previous section on sampling). Moyo (2017) defines key informant interviews as loosely structured conversations with people who have specialised knowledge about subjects one wish to understand.

Besides the key informants listed above, I identified additional key informants (school heads and teachers) during the data collection process in Tsholotsho. These had expert knowledge on

the effects of transnational migration on the children left behind and their general wellbeing. They also had valuable information on social relations in the communities in light of the realities of migration. The interviews sought to solicit information on family formations in Tsholotsho resulting from transnational migration; on the effects of transnational migration on patterns of residence and authority within transnational families and on the role of the extended family in communities with families in transnational settings.

The interviews with the selected family members provided information on the effects of transnational migration on families in the district. I probed on the care arrangements for the children left behind, which gave insights into their patterns of residence. I also, inquired on dynamics around decision making within the families in a bid to understand the authority and power dynamics within transnational families. Furthermore, I probed on how families perform rituals transnationally as this would help gain insights into how they practice and engage in familyhood and how transnational migrants maintain membership within their families.

The fieldwork commenced satisfactorily well. However, during the interviews, some of my respondents' accounts of the history of migration in their families pointed to and intersected with the infamous Gukurahundi, the post-independence civil disturbance in Midlands and Matabeleland provinces (which some scholars - see (Gusha, 2019; Ndlovu, 2019) - recognised as a genocide) that happened about 30 years ago. They became emotional when narrating issues around Gukurahundi as a cause for migration in their families. The Gukurahundi seems to have disturbed the lives and families of the participants, leaving permanent psychological and emotional scars which were evident in the conversation during the interviews. In preparing for my fieldwork, I did not anticipate such emotional reactions as interviewees recollected the unpleasant memories of situations they encountered in the Gukurahundi era. In seeking to understand historical phenomena, my research evoked traumatic memories in participants as part of the data collection process. This resonated with Seedat et al., (2004) who asserts that research interviews can potentially make participants recreate or relive visual or audio reminders of unpleasant events thus evoking feelings of fear, anger, shame, and other painful emotions. In my study, the data collection process triggered emotions of pain, anger and hatred in some of the respondents. Among the Ndebele people in the Matabeleland region, Gukurahundi is a trauma that has been passed from generation to generation, a process often referred to as trans-generational transmission of trauma (Frankish, 2009; Ndlovu, 2017). Some of the respondents had experienced the massacre of friends and relatives first-hand while other

participants who were either not yet born or too young when the genocide occurred related what they had heard as narratives about the atrocities from their parents and/ relatives. Their experiences could be described as second-generation trauma, (De Mendelssohn, 2008). Notably, both groups had strong emotions of anger towards Gukurahundi and its reported perpetrators. This traumatic experience has, over the years, given them a sense of collective identity as the victims of the massacre (Ndlovu, 2017). As noted by Volkan (2001), such traumas may become an ethnic marker and frame the identity of groups.

In Zimbabwe, Gukurahundi has remained a contentious and unresolved matter only acknowledged as 'a moment of madness' by the then President of the Zimbabwe (Robert G. Mugabe) (Ndlovu, 2017), without giving it the due attention it deserves. As a result, the memory has been passed on, influencing thoughts of retribution in the second generation (Ngwenya & Harris, 2015). In the process of the transmission of trauma from one generation to the next, future generations may have their identities framed by the trauma in what is called chosen trauma (Ndlovu, 2017; Volkan, 2001), which is what I encountered in my fieldwork.

Being someone who comes from Tsholotsho, it is expected that I anticipate such and prepare for it. Growing up, my grandfather used to narrate to us the atrocities of the Gukurahundi era. How he was among the people who were wanted dead and all the near misses he encountered escaping the perpetrators. This aroused a lot of hatred and anger in me and was emotionally taxing. I found myself harbouring intense and pronounced hatred towards the Shona people because they were portrayed as the perpetrators. In 2007, I moved from Matabeleland to Harare for my university studies. I found myself so angry and vengeful towards the Shona people, yet I had to daily live and interact with them. It was then that I made a personal decision to distance myself from ethnic hatred that came along with Gukurahundi. This was not because I condoned what happened in the past (I strongly feel there is need for justice and reconciliation for the victims). Rather, it was because I did not want to live everyday harbouring anger and hatred. For the sake of my peace as an individual, I took a passive stance, which I believe is what clouded my judgement and made me not to anticipate any emotional outbursts around the issue of Gukurahundi.

My ill-preparedness confirmed Melville and Hincks (2016) assertion that in most instances, researchers tend to focus on the technical details of their research like the methods, instruments, response rates and techniques for data collection and analysis. Instead of also discussing the

other methodological issues that include planning for and anticipating sensitivities and emotional experiences, I only focused on the how-to technicalities of my study. Ethically, I was supposed to have prepared for such eventualities and have a plan on how I was going to handle such. Cowles (1988) and Seedat, et al., (2004) assert that in an interview, it is possible that participants may experience strong emotions, become angry and at times cry.

Regardless of my insufficient preparedness, in the event of my respondents becoming emotional and venting sentiments of anger and hatred due to Gukurahundi, I took a cultural approach to dealing with the strong emotional outbursts. This was guided by Seedat, et al., (2004) who opined that researches that involve trauma should be culturally sensitive and appreciate the cultural variances in expressing symptoms and dealing with the effects. Culturally, among the Ndebele people of Tsholotsho, this means that if you are talking to people older than you, it is not expected that you, as the younger one, solve their problems (Ndlovu, 2017). In such instances, the best form of respect is to allow someone to vent their emotions without questioning or offering to help. I thus allowed them the express their emotions without any interjection. I also gave them space to calm down and regain control of their emotions. After that, if they were still willing to continue (Seedat et al., 2004), I expressed my sympathy and empathy in relation to their unpleasant experiences. I then requested that we continue with the interview, taking it from after the period in question and address other issues equally pertinent to the study.

Although Gukurahundi is something that happened many years ago, the scars were still fresh for some and they felt strongly about it. This is an indication that there is a need for conscious efforts to push the agenda of national healing and reconciliation in the region by giving the issue of Gukurahundi the attention it deserves. Over and above the need for reconciliation and national healing, traumatic experiences are intrinsic to the study of migration. Either as causes of migration (Ndlovu, 2017) or as a result of migration and separation from familiar territory (Idemudia, et al., 2013; Mazzetti, 2008). As such, studying migration leads one to encounter experiences of trauma both as a cause and an effect of migration. Regardless of the foregone, migration scholars tend to work in silos, where their interests are topical and specific. They do not attend to the underlying context of trauma, yet they are very critical to a holistic understanding of the realities of the research subjects and why they are who and what they are. Inevitably, I experienced some difficult moments during my fieldwork although in general, it turned out to be a success. My data generation period coincided with the time when

communities were working in their agricultural fields harvesting their produce for the season. Although I had chosen to visit the communities on Wednesdays, which is supposed to be their resting day and a day reserved for community meetings and such other, most of the villagers had resorted to working even on this day. They did this to make sure that they gather their produce on time before livestock was released into the fields. This posed a challenge of availability and accessibility of the respondents. In most instances, I had to follow them to their fields, some of which were far, to conduct the interviews with them while they worked. Most of them were very welcoming in such instances while some also expressed lack of interest.

3.6.2 Fieldwork in Johannesburg, South Africa

In Johannesburg, I had initially planned to use burial societies as my point of entry in identifying transnational migrants from Tsholotsho residing in the Johannesburg. The fact that burial societies are organised along geographical and, in some cases, familial lines was going to make it easier for me to access the respondents for the study. However, trust was an element that I had to address. Unlike in Zimbabwe, Johannesburg was a completely new environment among emigrants who do not like being asked about their migration experience and feel vulnerable. Most of them fear being identified as they may have fraudulent South African documents and as such do not want to be exposed that they are Zimbabwean (Moyo, 2017).

During the initial stages of my fieldwork, it became apparent that accessing the migrants through their burial societies was going to be difficult. Being a person from Tsholotsho and also a Zimbabwean immigrant researching other Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa placed me as an insider in both scenarios, but this migrant community did not regard me as one of their own, belonging and sharing in their struggles as migrants in South Africa. As such, I could not depict myself as completely embroiled in the lived realities of Zimbabweans in South Africa. Rather, my professional position as a researcher put me in the position of an outsider. To then try and ease the grip of this sensitised position, I had to depend on personal networks and connections to gain access to the migrant community in South Africa. As such, I had to ask my Uncle (whom I call Uncle Jay) to help me in identifying respondents. I depended on Uncle Jay to also gain credibility and trust in the eyes of my respondents. He is resident in South Africa, in the area of Yeoville and has a permanent residence status that identifies him as a Zimbabwean-born person residing in South Africa. He is my maternal uncle with whom I have always maintained contact while I was in Zimbabwe and him in South Africa.

Traditionally, a maternal Uncle is the 'best friend' to his sister's children. In instances where the mother is not around and able to help, he steps in and plays that role. As for Uncle Jay, he has been a significant family member in my life from a young age. His migration status was very critical because it had a bearing on how far he could go to assist me without fear of being caught or compromising his position. Uncle Jay moved to South Africa in 1995 as a young father with one son and a then very young wife, both of whom he left in Zimbabwe. Initially, he travelled using his passport and when he got to South Africa, he became an illegal migrant as he had overstayed beyond the days provisioned for in his visa. In December of 1995, his wife followed him to South Africa with their second born son, leaving the first born behind with Uncle Jay's sister (my maternal Aunt). He used to tell me that he was among the first few men to bring their wives to South Africa as it was common practice that women remained in Zimbabwe while men migrated. In 1996, there was a special call for Zimbabweans to apply for permanent residence. He applied and in 1997 Uncle Jay got his permanent residence in South Africa and now qualifies for citizenship. A few years later, when they had settled well after his wife joined him, he travelled back to Zimbabwe to take his first-born son to join the rest of the family in South Africa.

Currently, over and above him being an Operations Manager, he is also the deputy president of one of the burial societies made up of migrants from Tsholotsho and is also a Pastor. Uncle Jay was very instrumental in helping me access the migrants and neutralise their resistance to be part of this research and entering the *politics of trust.* Politics of trust in this instance is a phrase I coined guided by the notions that in qualitative research, it is critical to create a relationship of trust and mutual responsiveness with the respondents (Churches & Terry, 2007; Turgo, 2012; Zakaria & Musta'amal, 2014). As such, the politics of trust here refers to the dynamics and controversies around gaining the trust of the people being researched ('Yotti'Kingsley, et al., 2010; Zakaria & Musta'amal, 2014).

As in Tsholotsho, in-depth interviews were also the main data gathering method in Johannesburg. I held in-depth interviews with transnational migrants and key informants. Prior to interviewing the respondents, I ensured that there was informed consent from them in compliance with the research ethics principles. Moreover, I also made a deliberate choice not to link families interviewed in Zimbabwe with their members in Johannesburg, South Africa due to ethical concerns. This was because the subject under study touched on sensitive issues

that respondents may not have wished to have exposed to their families. There could be cases where transnational migrants had disconnected themselves from their families or were leading lives unknown to their families of origin. For example, they could have had children in South Africa or be engaged in relationships (e.g. homosexual) or any other situation that they are not willing to disclose to their families of origin.

To help me get respondents for my study, Uncle Jay acquired the migrants' contacts from his connections, burial society records and personal contacts. After getting the contacts, he would call the specific respondent and explain to them that he had a child who was at school (Wits University) and as part of her studies was required to carry out research with people from Tsholotsho. If he got a positive response from the person, he would then ask them to talk to me on the phone so that I could explain the finer details of the research. It was then that I would talk to the potential respondent and explain my objectives. Given the fact that most of these people knew Uncle Jay to be a respectable man, most of them agreed to participate and we would then agree on a date, time and place suitable for the respondent to meet. Uncle Jay would then drive me to the places of appointment with the respondents. As a woman, I decided not to meet with male interview respondents in their homes, unless their family members were around. As such, l met most of them in public places, for example in the public sitting areas in malls, some in their workplaces. When I interviewed women, I met them wherever they felt comfortable, some in their churches, some in their children's schools.

There were instances where some people would agree to participate in principle but thereafter avoid committing to a meeting at a specific place and time until we let them go. This went on until I got the number of respondents that I needed. Most of the appointments were scheduled for evenings because a significant number of the respondents were working during the day. There were, however, some who were flexible to talk to me during their working time. I also managed to get some respondents at a funeral where one of my Uncle's burial society members lost a 2-year-old child. This also gave an opportunity to do some observations on how migrants handled deaths in South Africa.

For those respondents who did not belong to the same burial society as my Uncle, I got referrals to the society leaders with whom I held key informant interviews. After the interviews, I then requested to be referred to some of their members. The leaders gladly assisted me with these and called the referred members to notify them that I would call. After calling, I then made

appointments to meet them on the day they held their monthly burial society meetings which was the first Sunday of the month of July. However, this became a challenge because all the burial societies whose members formed part of the targeted population met on this same day and at the same time. As such balancing out appointments and meetings with all of them was a challenge. To deal with the challenge, I relied more on individual appointments with different respondents that were held at a convenient time.

Interviews with transnational migrants in Johannesburg focused on the mechanisms they used to maintain membership in their families and communities of origin in Tsholotsho and the challenges faced by the trans-migrants in maintaining relationships across borders. This information allowed an understanding of the extent of involvement of the trans-migrants in their families back home. Also, I inquired about everyday experiences and meaning of familyhood. This allowed me to understand how these families carry out cultural rituals (related to births, marriages and deaths) and ascribe meaning to them within transnational social spaces. Also, it helped me understand how they formed family cultural rituals through their own interpretative processes within already pre-configured social practices and symbol systems within transnational spaces. I also assessed the modes of communication they used to transfer meaning of cultural rituals to their members. Furthermore, I examined how they compensated for absence of members during ritual performances.

In both sites, the interviews were held in places convenient for the respondents. In Tsholotsho, some interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes, others in their agricultural fields as they were gathering their produce, hence spending the whole day in the fields, while others were conducted from the local shops with men who spent the day drinking beer there. The interviews were conducted in Ndebele and recorded with the help of research assistants. The recordings were later transcribed and translated to English for analysis. On average, the interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes depending on the pace of the interviewee. In Johannesburg, some interviews were conducted in the migrants' homes, some at their workplaces while others in public spaces across the city. Most of the interviews were conducted in Ndebele/Zulu, with a few exceptions being conducted in English. The few exceptions were in cases where the respondents preferred English. The interviews lasted between 40 to 50 minutes.

From the transnational family respondents in Tsholotsho and transnational migrants in Johannesburg, I selected five (5) members on each side for further in-depth interviews to gather their family histories. The selected respondents gave detailed accounts of the history of their family life in relation to migration as detailed in the ensuing.

i. Family histories

Family history is a biographical research approach wherein the history of families is explored through the narratives of one or more family members. The narratives trace their lineages and provide a perspective on the transitions and continuities that have occurred over time within specific sociocultural contexts regarding various family phenomena (Clough, Goodley, Lawthom, & Moore, 2004). It is thus an approach that proffers portrayals of collective family identities and experiences through narratives of individual members across time and within the complex social networks that support them (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Miller, 1999). In this study, I used an intergenerational perspective to narratives of migration within families through the approach of family histories. The narratives were obtained from family members in both Tsholotsho and Johannesburg. This method buttresses the depth of the data gathered through other methods by appealing to the historical processes that have shaped and reshaped families over time.

In the transnational context, family histories allowed for the exploration of the role of historical context through people's narratives in understanding the subtleties within and processes involved in the formation of transnational families (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004). Furthermore, family histories helped in understanding how individuals from such families use their memories to create coherent narratives of their families' lived realities across space, place and time. Often gathered through individual members, family histories yield significant insights into the processes that shape identities and meanings ascribed to families over space and time (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004). As such, through life histories, individuals discuss broader family issues that are beyond the individuals and their lives (Bird & Ojermark, 2011). They capture processes of change and communicate the intersections between structure and agency to produce given circumstances within individuals' lives, families and societies (Miller, 1999).

In this study, I used family histories gathered from individual family members to gain an appreciation of historical accounts of migration within families. The broader historical dimensions explored in this regard included how families were structured in the past; how these structures were affected by migration, and whether or not –and if so, how- members (before and now) became disconnected or stayed connected with their families despite migration. In light of the foregone, I posed the following questions: what changes and continuities can be seen in family life over the last fifty years (across three generations) and in contemporary transnational contexts? Within the same time frame, I also ask the question: what were the dominant patterns of residence for those left behind and how has migration influenced these? I also explored how migrants, at different times, maintained membership within their families and how the current transnational era has shaped and reshaped the historical ways and forms of maintenance of membership within families. Also, within families, rituals are critical practices that mark family cycles, confirm membership, among others. As such, I interrogated these stories from the following questions: How cultural rituals were handled historically within migrant families; and what changes and continuities have been observed in the performances of rituals within the current form of transnational family. In all the families studied these explorations were made in the context of the last three generations.

In deploying the family history method, I selected ten (10) respondents from the families with which I had already conducted in-depth interviews. From those selected, I enquired further on the history of migration in their families. I chose these from both study sites; 5 from Tsholotsho and 5 from Johannesburg. I gathered their life history in relation to migration in their families. To establish family membership, I used Chamberlain and Leydesdorf (2004)'s inclusive delineation, which recognises descent from both lines and other ties made through a variety of social circumstances and interactions. Consequently, in the selected families, family membership was defined through the interviewee's relationship with transnational migrants. Furthermore, I also allowed the interviewees to choose the migrant members that they viewed as part of their family.

In Tsholotsho, the household head was the targeted respondent for family history narratives. In the context of migration, the head of the household could be the father, mother, grandparent, among others. In the event that these were not available, any 30 years and above family member willing to participate was selected to give a detailed account of their family histories in relation to migration. In Johannesburg, respondents were selected based on the condition that they have

a family in Tsholotsho, are 30 years of age and above and are willing to participate. I chose the age 30years and above as a qualifying criterion for participants because I considered these were old enough to give meaningful accounts of the history of migration in their families.

Notably, there are relatively few migration studies that are methodologically anchored on tracing the historical interactions and dynamics of migrant families (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004). Most migration studies have been criticised for failing to trace processes of intergenerational flows within migrant communities over multiple generations (Güveli, Spierings, & Bayrakdar, 2014). As such, they have failed to incorporate and also account for family migration trajectories in their methodologies. However, although the family history method emphasises the individual as a unique entity, the individual becomes a source of information about the family as a complex network of generational associations that change over time (Miller, 1999).

Again, in the few instances that it has been used some criticisms have been levelled against the approach. Family histories have been criticised for proffering situational realities based on individuals' narratives whose standpoints or point of views are fluid and actively shaped as continuing contextual transformations and developments (Miller, 1999). This has further raised questions on the adequacy, authenticity and epistemological validity of the reality presented (Roberts, 2002). As I gathered family histories in the study areas, I encountered new ways of conceptualising families that deviated from the normative approaches to the study of families. This emanated from the fact that respondents in Tsholotsho were predominantly women that had been married into the families selected in the study. These women had moved from their maiden to their husbands' families after marriage. Traditionally, they are supposed to become members of their husband's family. However, in the accounts of their life histories, there were overlaps of the histories from their maiden families and the families they were married into. Their histories were significant accounts of what constituted their family histories as they viewed their families as extended to both sides of the families involved.

In the case of migrant members in Johannesburg, their lived realities/histories were constituted by their reminiscences of their birthplaces, their homelands and those left behind. They were also characterised by the disruptions in their life narratives through migration that then required re-sequencing, remodelling and reinterpretation as the new experiences overshadowed the past (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004). These disruptions in time, place and space posed a

challenge where migrants were drawn to tell more of their history as migrants, overshadowing the accounts of their history as those left behind. Notably, for both transnational migrants and those left behind, both the historical and contemporary epochs intersected to form a singular account of what constitutes their family history. Thus, family history is not just an account of one history but many histories emanating from intersections of different families all conglomerated to form one family through the eyes of the history teller. Furthermore, the criticisms proffered are based on a normative approach to families that restricts the exploration of family dynamics to certain preconceived standards. These pre-determined standards blind us to the diverse definitions and conceptualisations of families as shaped by the life's realities of the respondents.

Notably, from a normative perspective, these intersections and crossroads in histories told by the respondents would render family history problematic and as challenging the standard conceptions of and approaches to family. However, in my study, it became clear that the definition and framing of family boundaries largely depends on who is reconstructing the family history. I gathered two sides of family histories, one told by women left behind whose histories interweave two families to make one account of their family histories. The other one told by the migrants, these are also a construction based on their own distance idealisations, nostalgia, memories and fantasies.

I allowed the narratives gathered from the respondents to guide the understanding and conceptualisation of families without super-imposing predetermined standards on who and what family is. In this regard, my study challenges normative methodologies and conceptions by questioning what a family is, illuminating the politics of identity, gender, place, space and time in shaping familyhood as viewed by different members of supposedly one family. This demonstrates the richness offered by family history through tapping directly to people's experiences. Moreover, appealing to their memories and past aspects of their lives to reveal the nuances which otherwise might be overlooked through normative approaches to the study of families (Miller, 1999; Roberts, 2002). Thus, deploying the life history method to gather family histories afforded me opportunities to not only trace the migration trajectories within different historical epochs in families, but also to unearth other new conceptualisations of family. These are new conceptualisations as shaped by gender, identity, space, place and time, which is my contribution to the study of families in the context of migration.

3.7 Data processing

After generating data through fieldwork, I then moved to data processing in preparation for interpretation and analysis. Data processing is the process through which the data generated through fieldwork is assigned meaning through transformation or conversion into usable formats (Tracy, 2012, 2013). In my study, I started off the process by coding all the audio interview files for ease of identification and also for anonymity. I assigned codes to these files according to the category of respondents. For example, the first respondent for in-depth interviews (not in any order of priority) was TSHII1; TSHFH1 for family histories and TSHKII1 for key informants until I reached the last number. After this first level of coding of all the respondent's audio files, I then started the process of transcription and translation, which I discuss in the next section.

3.7.1 Transcription and translation

Transcription is the complex process through which audio or visual qualitative research data is converted or transferred to written mode (Kowal & O'Connell, 2014). Translation, on the other hand refers to the process of converting text from one language to another (Bailey, 2008; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2010) and transferring meaning and reconstructing value of a text (Bashiruddin, 2013). These two processes are inevitable yet problematic phases in the process of qualitative data analysis. Problematic in the sense that they cannot give a precise and comprehensive account of the original recording (Chafe, 1995). For example, Hennink, et al., (2010) note that when a translator listens to a recorded interview and contemplates a suitable conversion and writes it down, they may in the process lose some detail and colloquial nuances and flavours of the original expression. As such, there has been an undisputed acknowledgement that transcribed narratives may not be a dependable source for data analysis that gives correct reflections of the research subjects mental, social and cultural elements (Kowal & O'Connell, 2014). Instead they offer selective accounts that entail the unavoidable risk of systematic bias and as such should be approached with a critical eye and ear (Chafe, 1995; Kowal & O'Connell, 2014).

Given these intrinsic methodological limitations, I approached this stage of data processing with care and caution. I transcribed and translated the audio files I had recorded during in-depth interviews, family histories and key informant interviews. I conducted transcription and translation from the language of the interview to English simultaneously. Most of my

interviews were done in IsiNdebele while a few others were either a mix of IsiNdebele and English or entirely in English. Key informant interviews with academics were done in English and thus there was only need for transcription. Personally, I transcribed the key informant interviews and family histories while the rest were transcribed and translated by my research assistants.

Being a person from Tsholotsho who grew up in Tsholotsho, I am fluent in both IsiNdebele and English. This helped me to understand the narratives of the participants better and in context. I could go beyond the literal meanings of the text to bring out the intended meaning and effect of certain words and phrases used in the interviews. Ndlovu (2017) proffers that translation is a form of interpretation that at times may lead to the loss of the foreignness of the text if not properly tackled. There is need to have a translator who understands the local realities and cultural meanings of language (Temple & Young, 2004). For example, in my study, the usage of the word *imuli* literally translated would mean family in English, which does not specify whether nuclear or extended. Yet in the context of the people from Tsholotsho, the word could mean kin/extended family or a household. However, because I understood the context in which the word was used, I was able to translate it differently in different contexts of its usage.

Another example is the word *abafowethu* which when literally translated would mean siblings in English, yet, depending on usage the word could also include cousins and peers. In this case I also used the contextual meaning based on usage than the literal meaning of the word. Although I am bilingual, fluent in both IsiNdebele and English, which is regarded as rare in researches including two different languages (Temple & Young, 2004), I am not perfect in any. Thus, I cannot claim total accuracy in all the translations done. In instances where I encountered challenges with translation from IsiNdebele to English, I consulted an academic colleague who is conversant with the context of the study and also an IsiNdebele linguist at the University of Zimbabwe. I also consulted my aunt who is a General Certificate of Education Advanced Level IsiNdebele teacher in Zimbabwe to assist with the translation process.

For those transcriptions and translations done by my research assistants, I ensured that there were quality checks for precision and appropriateness in relation to the language and the culture of the study participants (Hennink et al., 2010). For validity and quality checks, I also kept the audio recordings so that I could use them for verifying the content in the transcripts and the

validity of the claims recorded as recommended by Chafe (1995) and Kowal & O'Connell (2014). After transcription and translation, I then coded the data into themes, as detailed in the ensuing.

3.8 Data analysis

In my study, data analysis followed qualitative analysis techniques in the form of thematic and content analysis. According to Stemler (2001, p. 137), content analysis refers to "a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories/ themes based on explicit rules of coding" For Leedy and Ormrod (2001, p. 155), content analysis is "a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases". This technique entails objective and systemic identification of specific themes or characteristics of the messages in the data gathered. For Guest, et al., (2012), content analysis involves data winnowing, which basically refers to focusing on some of the data and ignoring components of it.

I started off with the coding process. Coding is a strategy used to categorise data in qualitative research (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2013). In this process, the researcher basically looks for distinct concepts and themes in the data and these themes form master headings which will become the basic units of analysis (Flick, 2013; Gibbs, 2007). The main aim of coding is to come up with a comprehensive summary of the data arranged in emerging critical themes which may be suggested by literature or the researcher's research questions or objectives (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

I first worked on KII transcripts. These were for academic key informants in Zimbabwe. From these key informant interviews, I did the first round of coding. I scanned the data for common words and phrases that the respondents used in answering the questions to identified common themes, patterns and relationships. I grouped all the similar ones under one theme. I identified the themes guided by my objectives and produced a comprehensive summary of the data generated and presented in a table. These themes guided the coding and analysis of the rest of the interviews conducted. All the other transcripts that I received thereafter were entered into this table. Although I was guided by my objectives, I was however open to identifying any other emergent codes or themes in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). In the event that I found one sentence for example belonging to more than one

theme, I would put it under both themes to ensure that there are no nuances that are lost in the data through the coding process. This process formed the basis of developing my analysis of the data generated.

After identifying the common themes, patterns and, I then analysed the data in each of the themes by drawing comparison between it and the theoretical frameworks identified in the literature reviewed and discussed any notable differences and points of convergence. Given that I come from the study area and had spent a significant part of my life living there, and that I had also done some observations during fieldwork, I also added my own voice in the analysis of data gathered. This helped me in dealing with some idealised scenarios where respondents may have presented the ideal scenario instead of what is obtaining on the ground. In my study, data analysis did not form a distinct stage. Rather, it was a continuous and cyclical process of engagement with the data generated throughout the course of the research. This was done in line with Bryman and Burgess (2002) who assert that in a qualitative study, data generation and analysis are a constant feature. In my study therefore, data generation and transcription of already collected data happened simultaneously.

Although all interviews were generally significant for this study, those conducted with members of the transnational families on both sites provided rich data on the actual experiences of families in the area under study. The rest of the interviews with key informants like academic, historians, among others allowed me a higher level of generalisation of findings to broader Zimbabwe. In collecting family histories, I took the viewpoint of the narrator in terms of defining those that the respondents recognised as family members. These allowed for different family formations to emerge as members of families were defined by the narrator based on his or her memory and perception of who their families are.

Patterns in the data emerged from the on-going analysis of the data that was being generated in the interviews and observations. Given that I did not link families on both study sites for ethical reasons, one may argue that the stories told are incomplete as the other side is missing. However, in my analysis, this was not the case because families in Tsholotsho and those of their migrant families in Johannesburg exhibited generic similarities. This made analysis interesting. Mainly because the stories on either site interweaved with the other giving a holistic picture of what families in the area have gone through and how families have been reconfigured in the process. Similarities in terms of social and cultural values were visible in the

respondent's views, both sides of the border. This is largely due to the fact that they all came from the same area. Thus, through these emerging patterns, I was then able to isolate the current changes and historical continuities that had occurred within families in Tsholotsho as a result of migration and currently transnational migration. The flexibility of thematic analysis as proffered by Braun and Clarke (2006), allowed me freedom to interpret the respondents' experiences, their subjectivities and context in drawing conclusions on the data gathered.

CHAPTER 4: HISTORY OF ZIMBABWE'S MIGRATION: MAPPING THE CONTEXT

This chapter offers accounts of Zimbabwe's historical and contemporary experiences with migration as a way of mapping the context to show the sustained nature of migration in the country. It focuses on the movement of Zimbabweans from pre-independence epochs to present day Zimbabwe. The chapter brings together both background literature as well as findings from my fieldwork. This allows me to trace some of the similarities between the historical and contemporary migration flows in Zimbabwe at large and Tsholotsho in particular. By combining these epochs, I want to expose the sustained trends of migration and map out the changes and continuities in communication and travel technologies and well as legality of migrants and their effect on the relationship between migration and family formations, structures and dynamics in the selected region.

For most of its history, Zimbabwe has been primarily a migrant destination (Mlambo, 2010)[6]. This started as early as the 19th century when the country, then Rhodesia, received groups of black migrants fleeing the disturbances in Zululand, South Africa during the Mfecane wars between 1815 and 1840 (Hungwe, 2012; Mabhena, 2010). However, with different socio-economic and political developments in the 21st century, the country moved from a migrant destination status to a significant migrant sender (Ncube, 2010; Tevera & Zinyama, 2002). To date, Zimbabwe has remained a major source of migrant labour to South Africa (Tevera & Zinyama, 2002).

Some studies done on Zimbabwe's migration have shown that a significant proportion of the Zimbabwean adult population has been to South Africa, while if not themselves, they have parents or grandparents who have been to South Africa (Crush, 2003; Moyo, 2017). Although for most of its history, Zimbabwe's migration has been a preserve for men, there have been notable changes that have shown substantial feminisation of migration in the country. For example, in 2005, the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) conducted a survey in Cape Town and Johannesburg to consolidate data on the then latest wave of Zimbabwean migrants

[6] https://www.academia.edu/9424465/History_of_Zimbabwe_Migration?auto=download Accessed on 08/0716

in South Africa. In that study, they focused on urban migrants who had gone to South Africa in 2005 and later. A total of 493 migrants were interviewed. Statistical evidence from the survey showed that Zimbabwean women in 2005 made up 44 % of the total immigrants into South Africa alone, which was a significant increase from the previous 39 % recorded in a similar SAMP survey conducted in 1997 (Crush, Chikanda, & Tawodzera, 2012).

Despite the importance of migration between the two countries, there seems to be a dearth of statistics that depict dependable and current numbers of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. In 2010, however, estimates indicated that there could be as many as 1.5 million regular and irregular Zimbabwean migrants living in South Africa (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2010). Although this data provides estimations of the migration flows from Zimbabwe, there are some key characteristics of this migration that have remained unexplored. For example, the circularity and informality of Zimbabwean migration, thus giving a distorted picture of Zimbabwean emigration patterns (ibid).

Furthermore, although the spatial coverage of emigrants in contemporary Zimbabwe spans across vast geographic locations in the country, historically, most of the emigrants to South Africa, whether legal or illegal, originated from the Matabeleland region (Maphosa, 2007, 2010). To augment this notion, Sisulu (2007, p. 555) opined that:

> *There is a significant change in the ethnic composition of the Zimbabwean community in South Africa. As was pointed out, historically Zimbabwean migrants or refugees came mainly from Ndebele communities in Zimbabwe. However, in the past five years there has been a massive increase in Zimbabweans of Shona ethnicity. A few years ago, it was not common to hear Shona being spoken in Johannesburg or any other South African city. Nowadays it is rare to move around without hearing snatches of conversation in Shona, especially in restaurants and shopping centres.*

Besides migration to the neighbouring country, a significant proportion of the emigrants also moved to the country's colonial masters in the United Kingdom in search for the proverbial greener pastures (Bloch, 2008; Pasura, 2008, 2009). Although there are no precise figures in relation to the exact number of Zimbabweans living in the United Kingdom, the 2001 census indicated that there were 49, 303 Zimbabweans in the UK. This marked a 130 % increase in 10 years as compared to the 1991 census which recorded 21, 427 (Humphris, 2010).

4.1 Pre-independence migrations of Zimbabweans into South Africa: Contract labour and the WNLA era

Before independence, the Ndebele people migrated to South Africa to work in diamond mines in Kimberly and also in the gold mines in the Witwatersrand (Mlambo, 2010). This happened under the provisions of the administrative arrangements between the then Rhodesian government and the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) of 1974. It was popularly known as WENELA in isiNdebele (Mabhena, 2010; Wentzel, 2003).

However, there were contentions that, notwithstanding Zimbabwean labourers being recruited to work in South African mines by the WNLA, they did not have a prominent presence in South Africa until the late 1970s (Mlambo, 2010; Moyo, 2017). This was mainly because at that time, Rhodesia had a booming manufacturing and mining industry, making it a net importer of labour. As such, this restrained it from signing contract labour deals with South Africa like what other neighbouring countries were doing (Mlambo, 2010; Moyo, 2017; Wilson, 1976). Rhodesia had its own labour recruitment agency that was known as the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) and this supplied approximately 13, 000 workers a year to the different Rhodesian industries (Mlambo, 2010; Wilson, 1976).

Although this was the case, a few Zimbabweans still made their way to work in the mines under the WNLA arrangements. Thus, this placed Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, in a position of being both a migrant receiving and sending country (Crush & Tevera, 2010; Mlambo, 2010; Tevera & Zinyama, 2002). The Rhodesian government only allowed South Africa to recruit labour formally in 1974. This was after a fallout between South Africa and Malawi following a plane crash in April 1974 in Francistown, Botswana. The plane crash killed 74 new Malawian recruits leading to Mr Banda, the then president of Malawi, prohibiting further recruitment of Malawian labour for three years (Crush, Jeeves, & Yudelman, 1991; Zinyama, 1990). This arrangement between the two governments (Zimbabwe and South Africa) only allowed WNLA to recruit a maximum of 20,000 labourers per year and this led to an unprecedented increase of Zimbabwean labour migration to South Africa (Crush et al., 1991). According to Mlambo (2010), the number of Rhodesians employed under the WNLA contract labour agreement reached 37,900 in 1977 which was a significant increase from approximately 7,000 in 1975.

At independence, the government of Zimbabwe discontinued the contract labour system as a protest against the apartheid government in South Africa (Mabhena, 2010). Despite the discontinuation of the contract labour system, Zimbabwe remained a major source of migrant labour to South Africa (Beremauro, 2014; Tevera & Zinyama, 2002). Wentzel (2003, p. 8) noted that "neighbouring countries accounted for an estimated 30 – 40 % of all skilled and legal immigration to South Africa between 1982 and 1988, with Zimbabwe contributing 90 % of South Africa's immigrants from Africa during the early 1980s as a result of post-independence white emigration". During this period, the migrants moved to work in the South African Mines for a minimum of two years before they could travel back to see families (Mlambo, 2010). This was similar to what is described by Hunter (2010) about South African man who were forced by economic conditions to leave their rural areas and work in the distant urban areas for most of the year. At that time, the men were faced with significant challenges that affected the ability to move back and forth. These were lack of money, as they worked in low paying jobs, inability to travel due to work commitments as well as unavailability of transport to facilitate ease of movement between the host urban centres and their rural areas. This was even worse for the Zimbabwean men who had to travel across borders. The next section presents the migration waves between Zimbabwe and South Africa post-independence, detailing some of the infrastructural changes that occurred along the way, shaping the nature of movement.

4.2 Waves of migration post-independence: Zimbabweans moving to South Africa

Mabhena (2010) posited that since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, there have been three distinct waves of migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa. Firstly, white settlers leaving Zimbabwe after the establishment of black majority rule marked by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)'s victory in the 1980 elections. Secondly, Ndebele refugees who were fleeing the post-independence government massacres popularly referred to as the *Gukurahundi* in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces between 1983 and 1987. Thirdly, massive emigration by both professionals and non-professionals due to the effects of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and the ensuing economic meltdown and political instability. All the three waves could be labelled as traumatic movements driven by economic, political and structural challenges that befell Zimbabweans. As such, much of the emigration from Zimbabwe since

independence could be categorised under forced migration as opposed to the seasonal/episodic/circular migration that occurred during the pre-colonial/colonial times. This was characterised by men who migrated to work in the mines and farms in South Africa (Mlambo, 2010; Tevera & Crush, 2003). The three waves are detailed in the ensuing sections.

4.2.1 Zimbabwe's independence and the emigration of the descendants of the white colonial settlers

In the 20th century, following Rhodesia's colonialisation by the British, immigrants from Europe flocked into Zimbabwe to occupy and confiscate land belonging to the local black majority; and also, as part of their evangelism duties (Crush & Tevera, 2010; Mabhena, 2010; Sisulu, Moyo, & Tshuma, 2007). The European immigrants "established farms and plantations and mines where they employed black migrants from neighbouring countries such as Malawi and Mozambique" (Mlambo, 2010, p. 53). As a result of this regional movement of migrants, circular migration was also dominant as Rhodesia relied on labour from surrounding countries, notably Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia (Crush & Tevera, 2010). After Rhodesia, present day Zimbabwe, attained its independence from the white colonial rulers in 1980, a significant number (181, 112) of the white Rhodesian citizens and permanent residents moved to South Africa (Moyo, 2017). They left Zimbabwe after ZANU-PF's victory in the 1980 elections (Mabhena, 2010) after they had believed that the Muzorewa faction was going to win the elections (Moyo, 2017).

The Muzorewa faction was a nationalist party that called for peace and unity among the whites and the blacks and called for an amicable way to settle the differences between the whites and the blacks after the liberation struggle (Moyo, 2017; Simon, 1988). This would have translated into a smooth transitioning from white colonial rule to a black leadership that advocated a mutual and peaceful existence between the two races. However, Robert Mugabe's win and ascendancy into leadership, a former guerrilla leader during the liberation struggle, came as a surprise that they could not live with (Moyo, 2017; Sisulu et al., 2007). These were the descendants of the white colonial settlers who had migrated into Zimbabwe to be part of their families' commercial agricultural activities on the farms (Mabhena, 2010; Simon, 1988). Their leaving was not much a result of hatred but more of suspicion with each side (blacks and whites) not sure of what the other would do (Fisher, 2010). Thus, those whites who failed to allay their suspicions left the country. Initially, their movements soon after 1980 were en masse

and then gradual in the subsequent years. The movement was exacerbated by the fact that a lot of the whites were not prepared to co-exist with a communist former guerrilla government and on the other hand, some of them were not prepared to live under a black government (Harold-Barry, 2004). During this time, most of the white people sold their properties in towns and the countryside, at give-away prices. Although their numbers were significant, in the South African statistics they were not noticeable mainly because most of them were integrated into the South African white population (Moyo, 2017). These were elites who had the resources to enable them to use the then modern transport systems to travel from Zimbabwe to their preferred destinations.

4.2.2 Escaping from the moment of madness: Gukurahundi and the Ndebeles' en masse migration.

The second wave was that of Ndebele refugees who were fleeing Gukurahundi in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in the south-western areas of Zimbabwe between 1983 and 1987 (Mabhena, 2010). The term Gukurahundi refers to the *early rain that washes away chaff before the spring rains* (Cameron, 2017; Moyo, 2017). This term was a name that was coined by Robert Mugabe, the first President of Zimbabwe after independence, to the Korean trained unit of the Zimbabwean army called the Fifth Brigade (Cameron, 2017; Teuten, 2015). The term did not only refer to the Fifth Brigade. It also referred to the period of post-colonial, state sanctioned political and ethnical violence enacted against the Ndebele ethnics in the Matabeleland and Midlands regions by the Fifth Brigade (Cameron, 2017; Eppel, 2008; Murambadoro, 2015; Ndlovu, 2017). According to Cameron (2017, p. 1), "members of the unit [Fifth Brigade] told locals that they had been ordered to 'wipe out the people [Ndebele] in the area' and to kill anything that was human". This resulted in massive massacres of the Ndebele people in Matabeleland and part of Midlands regions.

According to Eppel (2004), the fifth brigade massacred thousands of civilians and tortured many just within a few weeks of its deployment, leaving trails of trauma, dispossession and depression in the affected areas. From these atrocities, it is estimated that about 20, 000 civilians died in Matabeleland and Midlands (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2004). This was later brushed away by Mugabe calling it *a moment of madness*. In response to this atrocity, a significant number of the Ndebele people emigrated to South Africa and other neighbouring countries like Botswana in search for safety (Moyo, 2017;

Ndlovu, 2017). For detailed accounts on Gukurahundi – see also (Muchemwa, Ngwerume, & Hove, 2013; Murambadoro, 2015b; Ncube & Siziba, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012; Ngwenya, 2017; Ngwenya & Harris, 2015).

Most of the victims of this massacre illegally entered South Africa and there was no proper documentation of their numbers. Sisulu et al (2007, p. 534) posited that "their cultural and linguistic affinity with the Zulu community enabled them to settle largely unnoticed in South Africa and many took South African identities, some of them through unlawful means". Emanating from these atrocities, there is a strong belief that the Matabeleland region has always been marginalised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003). As a result of this marginalisation, many young Ndebele people moved down South to seek employment because of frustrations from the prevailing nepotism and regionalism in employment opportunities in Zimbabwe (Mabhena, 2010; Teuten, 2015). Notably, some of the emigrants were combatants who had been previously in the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) – army of the PF ZAPU party. These had not been incorporated into the newly established Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and were fleeing the possibilities of imprisonment for treason charges (Sisulu et al., 2007). Detailing the plight of some of the ZIPRA soldiers who had come to be known as dissidents, Alexander (1998, p. 160) stated that:

> *"the vast majority of former ZIPRAs did not react to 'the situation' by taking up arms again: a great many simply fled the country, along with many civilians, to Dukwe refugee camp in Botswana, or to South Africa, where they looked for work or stayed with relatives".*

To augment this, from my findings, I present to you Bab' uNyathi (see Box 4.1). He is an ex-soldier and now a transnational migrant in South Africa. He was recruited into the army in

Box 4.1: Gukurahundi and Migration to South Africa

When my father migrated, I thought that he would support my academic endeavors, but life had other plans. I was recruited to go and fight in the war in 1977. I returned home in 1981 and in 1982 I was dismissed from the army, and then sent to prison. This happened because of my last name (a Ndebele surname) and the political situation then. After I was released from prison, I expected my father to take me to school. I was accepted for admission at Cyrene Boys High School. However, I ended up not attending school because my ex-army friends who were already attending school there were tortured as it was believed that the presence of ex-soldiers in a school would wrongly influence school children to revolt. So, I stayed in Bulawayo for quite some time and then one beautiful morning we woke to the sounds of helicopters in the air. On the streets, people were shouting that everyone had to stay indoors. For everyone in Bulawayo, it was mandatory to have an identity card and a letter of employment and personally I did not have these because of my ex-army status. Those who did not work and had a national identity card but did not have a letter of employment were regarded as the enemy of the state and were arrested. Some of the people that were arrested were never seen again. As a result of all these complications, I ended up migrating to South Africa in 1984 towards the end of Gukurahundi because if I had stayed, I would have risked being killed. My dreams were shattered, and I can say that I blame Gukurahundi. I was only 19 years old at that time.

Except from an interview with Bab' uNyathi in Johannesburg, 2017

1977 and returned home in 1981 after independence. In 1982, he was dismissed and then sent to prison due to his Ndebele surname. His dismal highlighted the deep-seated tribalism and inherent hatred of the Ndebele people by the powers that be leading to the drive to marginalise them by whichever means possible. It is a demonstration of what Mdlongwa, Moyo and Ncube (2015) alluded to when noting that this period was characterised by domination and tyranny in politics and ethnicity where state apparatus establish patterns of marginalisation, violence and hegemony to exclude the Ndebele and establish ethnic domination still manifesting to this day. This failure to be incorporated into the Zimbabwe National Army pushed him to migrate due to fear of being killed. The instilled fear robbed many of their citizenship and other opportunities that could have given them a 'better life' in their own country. In this case, Bab' uNyathi had to forego his desire to attain an education and flee to South Africa in 1984 where he was relegated to the margins as the other both as a result of being a foreigner and lack of qualifications. Given that most of the people who emigrated from Zimbabwe at this time were poor rural dwellers, they fled on foot through the forests. Although there had been notable developments in terms of transport systems, they did not have the means to allow them access to and use of the transport systems. Similar research has been done focusing on Zimbabwean ex-soldiers who deserted the ZNA and migrated to South Africa and led underground lives without disclosing their identities as soldiers – see (Maringira, 2015; Maringira, Gibson, & Richters, 2015).

4.2.3 The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and massive unemployment

The introduction of the World-Bank Group/ International Monetary Fund's Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP) were an additional factor that pushed people to migrate. In Zimbabwe, the structural adjustment programme was implemented between 1991 and 1995 as a policy reform that was anchored on the capitalist model of development (Crush, et al., 2012; Mhone, 1995; Ranga, 2004). The programme was set to promote "medium to long term economic growth, attract more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), reduce poverty, improve living conditions and address burgeoning unemployment" (Crush et al., 2012, p. 7). As part of the dictates of ESAP, the Zimbabwean government was obliged to shrink public spending through a number of strategies that included a reduction of the public service (Kawewe & Dibie, 2000; Ranga, 2004). However, like any other country that implemented these SAPs, Zimbabwe's economy lurched into a crisis. This was mainly due to the impractical

prescriptions of the SAPs that called for domestic deregulation and liberalisation of trade and markets (Ranga, 2004) which was contrary to what the prescribing countries had done to attain their developed status.

Kawewe and Dibie (2000) critiqued the SAPs as exploitation and a form of recolonization of African countries by the West. Inevitably, ESAP did not deliver on its objectives leading to enormous economic hardships for the country. Ranga (2004) proffered that the implementation of ESAP led to factory closures, immense retrenchments, a decline in wages, increases in commodity prices and a substantial decrease in the formal economy. Statistics show that between 1991 and 1997 about 23, 000 jobs were lost in public service while approximately 50, 000 workers were retrenched in private sector companies (Crush et al., 2012). Due to the resultant economic turmoil, a significant number of households resorted to migration to South Africa in search of alternative livelihood options (Crush et al., 2012; Crush & Tevera, 2010). Some moved in search of employment while others embarked on cross border trade as a survival strategy. This was the period prior to the (in)famous land reform programme that was implemented by Robert Mugabe`s government in 1999[7]. The land reform escalated Zimbabwean migration to unprecedented levels (from 200, 000 emigrants between 1990 and 1998 to between 3 to 4 million emigrants between 1999 and 2012) – (van Vuuren, 2012). This is round about the same time that transnationalism gained prominence in the study of migration - see - (Basch et al., 1994; Schiller et al., 1992, 1995). During this time, there were marked improvements in transport and communication technologies that facilitated migrant' ease of movement between their countries of origin and the host countries. As such, in this wave of migration, migrants had access to faster and more efficient means of modern transport like buses, private cars and *omalayitsha*. It is this crop of migrants that Basch, et al., (1994) termed the transnational migrants. Although there was ease of movement, access to legal travel documents still remained a challenge, thus most of the emigrants were illegal. Resultantly, there were diverse streams of migrants as is discussed in the sections below.

[7] Robert Mugabe reigned as Zimbabwe's Prime Minister between 1980 and 1987 and then as President from 1987 to 2017.

4.2.4 Zimbabwe's Fast track Land Reform and the mass exodus of Zimbabweans

Another wave of migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa is that of the massive emigration by both professionals and non-professionals who left Zimbabwe since 2000 as a result of the implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRRP) (Mabhena, 2010). This government cascaded programme entailed a haphazard takeover of white owned farms in the name of distributive justice (Crush & Tevera, 2010). Consequently, it culminated into political instability and severe economic meltdown that bedevilled the country in the following years (Mabhena, 2010; Moyo, 2017; Ncube & Gómez, 2011). As a result, the period between the year 2000 and 2010 (known as Zimbabwe's decade of migration) saw the country experience extensive economic and political instability. The volatile political environment and the economic meltdown culminated into a plethora of ill conditions. These incapacitated both the central and local governments' ability to deliver services to its populace (Ncube & Gómez, 2011). There were severe shortages of many basic commodities, including medical drugs, food, fuel, and industrial and consumer goods (Ncube, 2010; Zanamwe & Devillard, 2010). Further, de-industrialisation as a result of the economic meltdown, political instability and climate change exacerbated the drive to migrate among the general populace of Zimbabwe (over and above the Ndebeles who had already been on the move). These adverse conditions heightened the already significantly high exodus of Zimbabweans into neighbouring and other countries of the world, changing the migration terrain that had predominated (Tevera & Zinyama, 2002). This re-alignment of migratory patterns transformed Zimbabwe to:

> *"increasingly become a country of origin and, to a limited extent, a transit and destination country for migrants, yet during colonial times, it was a major destination country, with migrants from the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe settling permanently in the country" (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2010, p. 13).*

The family realities of those who moved to South Africa and those who moved to the United Kingdom differ greatly as the distances and the legal status of immigrants pose as a barrier to regular visits for many, especially those in the United Kingdom (Bloch, 2005). Most of the emigrants maintain strong ties with their families and communities of origin in Zimbabwe through phone calls, internet-based methods and frequent visits (Bloch 2008). However, those with irregular migration statuses abroad could not visit their families although they could communicate regularly. These links sustained across national borders then qualify the movement by Zimbabweans into other countries of the world as transnational migration.

Due to the porosity of borders between Zimbabwe and its neighbouring countries as well as the improvements in transport technologies, back and forth movements – both legal and illegal- happens often (Maphosa, 2010, 2011; Ncube et al., 2014). As such, this movement has been the subject of a significant amount of research (Leslie, 2008). A number of studies (Maphosa, 2010; McGregor & Primorac, 2010; Ncube et al., 2014) and the media in general revealed that the informal movements through places other than the formal border controls exposes migrants to violence and abuse. This is usually at the hands of armed robbers and rapists known as *amagumaguma*. In the past, the a*magumaguma* used to ambush those migrants crossing in the bush to rob and mug them and in most instances rape the women (Tshabalala, 2017). In attempts to counter the attacks by *amagumaguma*, *omalayitsha*[8] worked together with *izimpisi* (literal translation – hyenas) to help the migrants to cross successfully and provide protection to the migrants (McGregor & Primorac, 2010; Tshabalala, 2017).

Izimpisi were informal self-organised groups who were paid by *omalayitsha* – which I will refer to in detail later - to make sure that the migrants crossed safely to South Africa. Although this does not occur on the same scale it used to in the early 2000s, it shows the risks that transnational migrants take to achieve their goals. Currently, illegal cross border has become an institutionalised practice that involves a syndicate of border officials and the ground transporters. Instead of the undocumented migrants going through the bush, they now cross on the designated border points. Their transporters offer bribes to the border officials and give the migrants other people's passports to show as a formality when passports are demanded (Ncube et al., 2014). Before going further, I present accounts of two transnational migrants as examples highlighting the operations of the border syndicates at the Beitbridge border post in perpetuating illegal crossing. Firstly, Petunia, is a 41-year-old qualified teacher trained in Zimbabwe and now teaching in South Africa. She moved to South Africa in 2007, at the beginning of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown that saw inflation reaching unprecedented levels. Civil servants were the hardest hit and she decided to emigrate. She left her son in the care of her mother in Tsholotsho. Her initial travel was by bus, legal and hustle free. Petunia describes how these border syndicates work:

> *Nowadays travelling to South Africa is so easy even if you do not have a passport. I have witnessed it several times, either travelling through omalayitsha or these long-distance buses. When you get to the border, the people without passports will roam*

[8] Omalayitsha is the IsiNdebele word for private transporters or courier-service providers, which literally means 'those who carry'.

> *around and then go back to the car. When we get to the last check point from stamping the passport, the driver will give these people passports that belong to others and then put money inside. When the police officers see this, they take the money and let the person get into the bus. It is a solid syndicate (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Secondly, Bab' uNdiweni is a 60-year-old husband and father who moved to South Africa in 1982 when he was 23 years old, fleeing the Gukurahundi atrocities. His father had been a migrant before him. Bab' uNdiweni's daughters later followed him to South Africa after completing their education in Zimbabwe. They live in South Africa with their spouses. He stays in South Africa alone while his wife is in Tsholotsho. His initial travel was fraught with challenges as travelled on foot for days before he could get to his intended destination. He offered the following reflections:

> *Unlike during our time, crossing at the border without a passport is very easy. These transporters know how to navigate the security features. When they get to the police, they would have already put aside a specific amount known to them and the police and give the money to the police and you just pass. Some transporters use other people's passports that they would have been given to get them stamped at the border and then return them to their owners in SA. They give to these illegal immigrants to just show them as a formality (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Although both scenarios describe the border syndicates that facilitate illegal crossing, it also reveals the differences in the forms of travel within the migration waves in the country. Petunia is a good example of a migrant that experienced a hustle free movement while witnessing some of the underhanded dealings that happen when people move. On the other hand, Bab' uNdiweni is a typical example of a migrant that has experienced both worlds. First, the rough migration escapades in the past when transport and access to travel documents was a challenge and the current movement facilitated by improved transport technologies and access to travel documents. His opening statement reveals a comparison of then and now scenarios that are characterised by notable differences, part of which is attributed to developments in transport and travel systems.

Within these waves of migration elaborated in this study, there was a mix of both circular and permanent migration. Mostly, the politically driven migrations were permanent movements with no return. For example, the white Rhodesians fleeing the rule of Mugabe as well as the people from Matabeleland fleeing the Gukurahundi atrocities. However, for the economic migrants, their migration was is a bit complex to classify in that it fits into both circular and long-term migration. Circular in the sense that the migrants return to their home countries often

and long term in that some of the migrants stay in South Africa for more than twelve months and South Africa has become their country of usual residence (UNICEF, 2016).

I have given the broad overview and background of the case of migration in Zimbabwe. However, it still remains critical to give a contextual account of the specific geographic area under study, which in this case is Matabeleland North.

4.3 The case of Matabeleland North: Mapping the context

Matabeleland North is one of the 10 administrative provinces of Zimbabwe. It shares borders with the Midlands and Mashonaland West provinces to the east and northeast respectively, and the Matabeleland South province and the city of Bulawayo to the south. To the north, the province is separated from Zambia by the Zambezi River, while it shares its western border with Botswana. The Province comprises 7 districts, namely, Lupane (the Provincial capital), Tsholotsho, Nkayi, Hwange, Binga, Bubi and Umguza. A significant extent of its spatial coverage is rural except for parts of Hwange, Lupane and Victoria Falls, parts of which have an urban/town status (Maphosa et al., 2014). Matabeleland North has a total of 193 wards distributed as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Wards by Districts in Matabeleland North

District	Number of Wards
Binga	25
Lupane-Kusile	28
Nkayi	30
Tsholotsho	22
Hwange	35
Bubi	23
Umguza	19
Victoria Falls	11

Source: (Maphosa et al., 2014)

Figure 4.1 is a map of Tsholotsho district showing the distribution of the wards in the district.

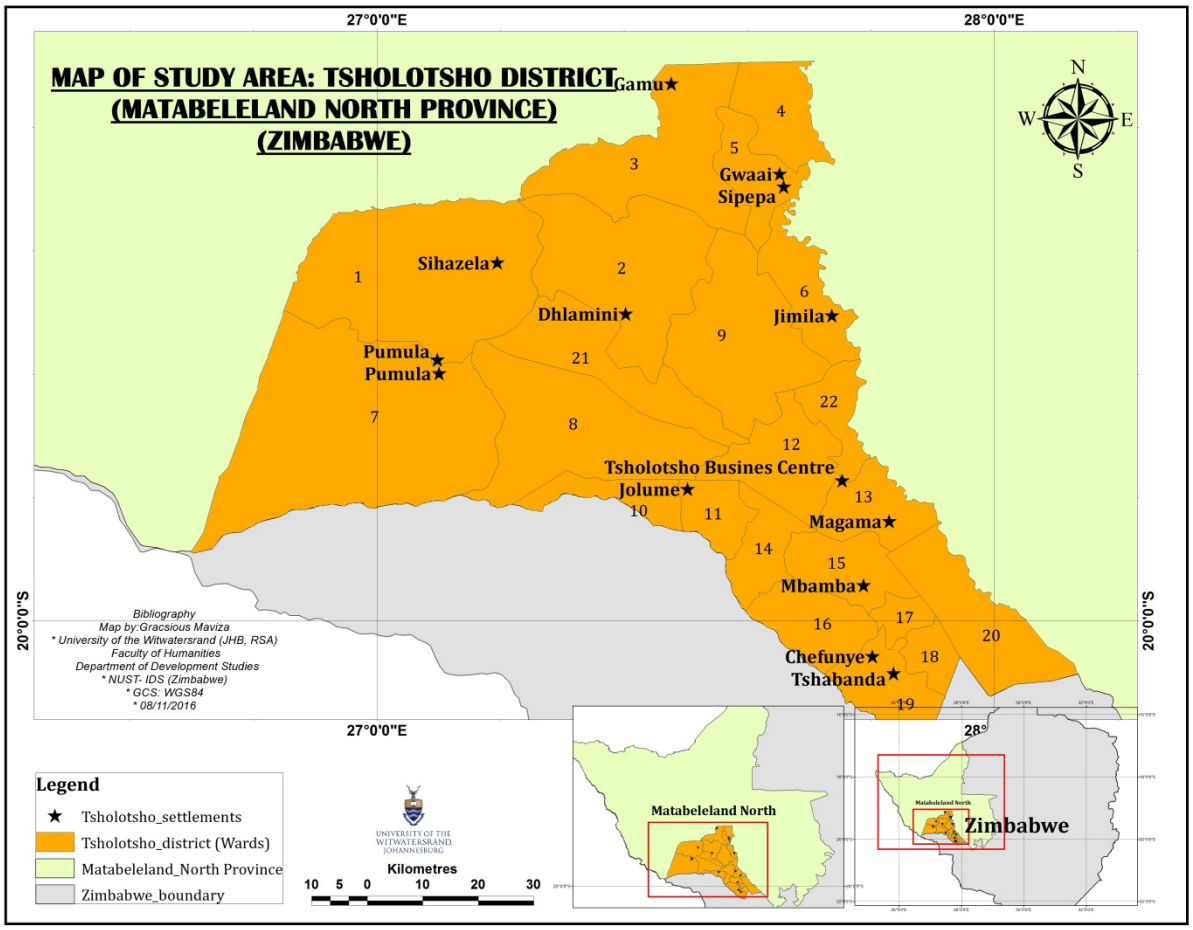


Figure 4.1: Map of Tsholotsho District in Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe

In the following sections, I give a detailed overview of the demographic, ethnic cultural, socio-economic, ecological and infrastructural dynamics of the province.

4.3.1 Demographic characteristics

According to the Zimstats (2012) census report, Matabeleland North Province has a total population of 749, 017 people. Of the 749, 017, 51 % are females, marginally more than males who make the remaining 49 % of the population. This was evident in Tsholotsho where most of the people present in the homes were women whose husbands are immigrants in South Africa. In terms of age, the Province is made up of a relatively young population with 44 % aged below 15 years while 5 % is 65 years and above (Maphosa et al., 2014; ZimStats, 2012). Interestingly, from my fieldwork findings in Tsholotsho, it emerged that children of primary and secondary school going age made up the majority of the population who remained behind. These were followed by women, most of whom were grandmothers to these children. Although the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, (2014) report indicated that 64 % of the

total number of households in the province is male headed, in Tsholotsho, it was the opposite. Of the 15 households that participated in my study, 14 (93 %) of them were female headed and the men were migrants. This is contrary to the general provincial demographics. Tsholotsho is among a few districts that have significant outbound migration especially to South Africa. This distribution shows that although current migration trends depict that women are now active players in migration, in Tsholotsho, there is a certain group of women in the ages of 40 and above who constitute a significant percentage of those left behind while men have been migrants for years. From interviews with key informants on both sites, it emerged that a significant number of the women who were migrants from Tsholotsho were young. These are in their mid-twenties to early thirties. Most of them travelled as single and got married in South Africa.

4.3.2 Ethnicity and cultural diversity

Matabeleland North is a culturally diverse province with a number of ethnic groups that make up what has been popularly known as the Ndebele people. These include the Ndebele, Tonga, Kalanga, Khoi-San, Nambya, Chewa and Xhosa (Maphosa et al., 2014). The San are found in Tsholotsho and are the only non-Bantu group found in the Province with their population estimated at 1, 700[9]. Like the San, the Kalanga are also mostly found in Tsholotsho in the areas bordering Plumtree in Matabeleland South. The Ndebele (though a contested and at times all-encompassing term for all these ethnic groups) are found in all the districts. The Nambya are found in Hwange, some parts of Tsholotsho, Nyamandlovu and Victoria Falls, while the Tonga are in Binga, and the Chewa largely in mining areas such as Hwange and Kamativi (Ndhlovu, 2009).

The history of the Ndebele people in general can be traced to the historical times of the Mfecane (a Zulu word which means crushing, forced dispersal, forced migration in the nineteenth century (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1995; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008). The violent clashes that led to the demise of the political formations of the Nguni kingdom led to the rise of other regimes which led to the fragmentation of the Nguni kingdom (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008). Due to this violent revolution, some of the Nguni and Sotho people migrated from Zululand, fleeing the

[9]A little more love for the San community
https://www.newsday.co.zw/2012/01/2012-01-13-a-little-more-love-for-the-san-community/

ruthless rule of Shaka (the then king of the Zulu people). The Ndebele, under the leadership of Mzilikazi Khumalo are among those who fled North, settling along the way until they reached the present day Matabeleland (Bozongwana, 1983; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008).

According to Bozongwana (1983), all the ethnic groups that were conquered by the Ndebele under Mzilikazi were incorporated into the Ndebele kingdom. This led to it being constituted of what was known as *AbeZansi, AbeNhla* and *Amahole*. *AbeZansi* referred to all those of Nguni origin that fled from Natal with Mzilikazi. *AbeNhl*a referred to all the ethnic groups that Mzilikazi and his people conquered along the way south of the Limpopo river while *Amahole* referred to all those he conquered north of the Limpopo river (Bozongwana, 1983). Although Mzilikazi incorporated his spoils into the Ndebele Kingdom, the conquered groups did not give up their own socio-cultural and religious practices. Rather, they were expected to submit under Mzilikazi's administrative authority as the King of the loose confederation he formed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008, 2009). This is contrary to the claims by Bozongwana (1983) that the newcomers or those conquered had to give up their customs and cultures and adopt those of the Ndebele. Thus, the Ndebele became a hegemonic group under Mzilikazi yet made up of "a mosaic of ethnic groups such as the people of Sotho, Kalanga, Venda and Tonga origin" (Dube, 2016, p. 2).

In light of this, Ndlovu-Gatsheni proffers that to best understand the Ndebele ethnic identity, one has to look at them as a heterogeneous group whose identity is a socially constructed phenomenon and not a permanent ancient identity (2009). As such, the Ndebele should not be narrowly interpreted as only those people of Nguni origins. Rather, they should be treated as a conglomeration of different groups with diverse socio-cultural and religious beliefs. Among these groups, the common thread which binds the groups together is the IsiNdebele language that is spoken by all the ethnicities that fall under the big banner of the Ndebele people.

Furthermore, another critical element that further hybridised the Ndebele people was the influence of the Anglo-Saxon culture. This influenced Zimbabwe's culture during the colonial period when the Great Britain colonised Zimbabwe. The Anglo-Saxon culture had a profound effect on the Ndebele's religion as well as religious and ritual practices, diet and identity (Richards et al., 2005). These effects have perpetually hybridised the culture of the Ndebele people. This Anglo-Saxon influence has been further reinforced through modernisation and globalisation. Modernisation has called for a shift from the traditional ways of being and doing

to more western ideologies that render the traditional "barbaric". At the same time, globalisation on the other hand continues to corrode national boundaries and opening nation states to external influences on local culture (Tembo, 2009; Yankuzo, 2013).

The case of the Ndebele families in the Tsholotsho district of Zimbabwe that participated in this study aptly demonstrates the issues raised in the foregoing. Although families in Tsholotsho are generally refered to as Ndebele, they are a hybrid of ethnic groups. In the district, there are three ethnic languages, namely, IsiNdebele making up 96 %, Kalanga 3 % and San 1 % (Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, 2017). However, the principal language of communication is IsiNdebele. Interestingly, although the families that were interviewed were speaking IsiNdebele, there was a notable influence of the Kalanga culture especially in the rituals performed and some of the names given to these rituals. Again, owing to the hybridity of their nature, mainly between the Ndebele and Kalanga, their diction and intonnation as they speak the IsiNdebele language has a heavy Kalanga accent.

According to Msindo (2012), Tsholotsho was one of the areas in Matatbeleland region that housed a significant proportion of the Kalanga speaking people who eventually adopted IsiNdebele as a necesity. This was because Ndebele was the official language of instruction and for some a sign of modernity. This resulted in most Kalanga people adopting the IsiNdebele language to help ensure a smooth regional integration and interaction with other people of Matabeleland. As a result, as Dube (2016) proffers, the Kalanga people became regarded as amaNdebele by virtue of the language spoken. Notably, this is also true for a number of other ethnic groups in Zimbabwe such as the people of Sotho, Kalanga, Venda and Tonga origin, who have all been grouped as Ndebele.

It is crucial to note that although the Ndebele were made up of various ethnic groups, there have been instances where the term Ndebele has been used to strictly refer to people of Nguni origin. This has been evidenced in the works by some scholars such as Bozongwana (1983) and Ndlovu, et al., (1995). These scholars write about the Ndebele religion, customs, culture and traditions as if the customs are homogenous and uniform across all the groups that make up the Ndebele. Yet in essence, they are writing about Nguni cultural customs, traditions and religion. For Dube (2016, p. 2), such an approach when dealing with the Ndebele "is problematic and has been called exclusive and xenophobic as it excludes all other groups that constituted the Ndebele nation". Notably, there is a huge descrepancy between what these

scholars write as customs, traditions and religion of the Ndebele and what the Ndebele people in Tsholotsho articulate as their own cultural practices.

In light of the foregone, although the people of Tsholotsho speak IsiNdebele on a day to day basis, I noted a strong influence of the Kalanga language and traditions on their traditional life practices. Owing to this dynamic, no generalisations can be made to other Ndebele speaking communities based on the findings from this district. This is because their reality is unique and perculiar to their locality. The ethnic hybridity between Ndebele and Kalanga in the study area has resulted in cultural hybridisation and polarisation. This is especially in the southern part of Tsholotsho which shares boundaries with Plumtree district that houses a significant number of the Kalanga people. As a result, the traditional rituals practiced are a hybrid of Ndebele and Kalanga cultures, which is evidenced in the rituals detailed in chapter 6. Fieldwork findings revealed that there was a significant influence of the Kalanga ethnic identities in the ritual practices done within the 'Ndebele' families in Tsholotsho. Having clarified the origins of the ethnic hybridity of the Ndebele people and their cultural practices, it is clear that the cultural practices and rituals of the Ndebele in Tsholotsho cannot be generalised to the overall Ndebele group. They have pockets of localised/contextual nuances that make them perculiar only to the Ndebele people in Tsholotsho.

4.3.3 Socio-economic characteristics

Matabeleland North is endowed with a wide range of natural resources that range from gold, coal bed methane gas, coal, silver, forestry resources, fisheries and wildlife (Maphosa et al., 2014). However, despite its rich natural capital base, a number of human development indicators condemn the province, relegating it to the status of being host to the poorest people in the country (Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, 2014). The extent of its poverty is evidenced by various socio-economic indicators, namely, sanitation, education, food security, health, among others. Sanitation for example, is a major challenge with 69 % of the population in the province still practicing open defecation, the highest in the country (ibid). Moreover, access to water is also a major challenge with more than 50 % of the population accessing water from water points that are more than 500 metres from their residential premises (Maphosa et al., 2014).

Nationally, the province has the least average household monthly income of $83 with most of the income (60 %) spent on food items, which is the highest in the country (Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, 2014). It has the highest proportion of food insecure households (9 %), with Tsholotsho and Nkayi districts ranking highest in food insecurity prevalence in the Province (13.9 %), (Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, 2014). Communities in Matabeleland North largely survive on a combination of agriculture and use of natural resources (Hill & Katarere, 2002; Sibanda, 2013). Some districts like Tsholotsho, Nkayi and Lupane, have reserved timber forests that are harvested and exported from the districts for processing (Zikhali, Ncube, & Tshuma, 2014). Moreover, Lupane (the provincial capital of the province) has significant deposits of coal bed methane gas, which has potential to form part of the backbone for economic undertakings in the Province (Maphosa et al., 2014). It has been reported that a huge resource of over 370, 000, 000 km^3, with a purity of 95 % methane, exists within the District (Mpofu, 2014). Furthermore, there is also notable potential for tourism including Safaris and Hotels given the fact that the Province houses the internationally acclaimed tourist attraction i.e. Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park and the Crocodile Farm, among others. In light of the foregone, it is evident that natural resources form the mainstay of the province's economic activities. This is despite the fact that most of the productive capacity of these natural endowments is said to have been overexploited or misappropriated, resulting in less benefit to the locales in question (Maphosa et al., 2014; Zikhali et al., 2014). As such, the abundance of these resources in the province does not translate to tangible benefits for the indigenes of the province. This is because most of them cannot access these resources because of corruption, nepotism, lack of financial capital, limited education and political differences (Zikhali et al., 2014). For women and youth, further impediments lie in the traditional and cultural norms that discriminate them where issues of resource access are concerned (Maphosa et al., 2014). As a result, a significant population of the province has over the years resorted to migration in search for better economic and livelihood opportunities.

4.3.4 Ecological conditions and livelihood practices

The province is classified under agro-ecological and/or Natural Region IV which is semi-arid, with an annual rainfall range of 450-mm to 650-mm. This is with the exception of Binga and pockets of Hwange which fall under Region V with 350-mm-500-mm of rain (World Food Programme, 2014). Agro-ecological region V is characterised by low and periodic rainfall,

with crop production limited to drought resistant crops. Region VI has very low and erratic rainfall which is not reliable even for the production of drought resistant fodder and grain crops (Maphosa et al., 2014; Vincent, Thomas, & Staples, 1960). Notably, the regions are unsuitable for crop production, but livestock production has tended to thrive in some of the districts. Although this is the case, there is still considerable crop production with the focus on maize and small grain crops in some districts. Many households in the province depend on subsistence agricultural production and other labour-intensive artisan strategies for a living (Dube, 2016).

Due to the prevailing climatic conditions, drought has always been a chronic threat in the province. On the other extreme, areas like Tsholotsho district are prone to flooding due to their low-lying nature (Maphosa et al., 2014). Given the adverse effects of climate change and variability in rainfall patterns, economic meltdown and political instability in the country, many households have resorted to engaging in migration as a livelihood diversification strategy (Ncube & Gómez, 2011). As a result, most families in the province now depend more on remittances from emigrant members than on other livelihood capitals (Dube, 2016; Ncube & Gómez, 2015). To augment this notion, Nzima, et al., (2016) in their study in Tsholotsho further revealed that 65% of the families that participated depended on remittances for their livelihoods while practicing subsistence agriculture on the side. As such, despite the dominance of migration as a livelihood strategy over other strategies in the study area, households still pursue an array of livelihood strategies to realise sustainable livelihoods (Dube, 2016).

4.3.5 Infrastructure and technology

There is a general view that the Matabeleland and Midlands regions are neglected by the central government which does not show much care/concern about the development and economic growth of the regions[10] (Eppel, 2008; Murambadoro & Wielenga, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003). Some of the sentiments are rooted in the historically perpetuated inequalities that have been created over the years. Amongst some of the frequently highlighted issues that epitomise these challenges and inequalities are (1) the Gukurahundi episode (Sibanda, 2013) and (2) the de-industrialisation in Bulawayo (Maphosa et al., 2014). These curtailed infrastructural improvements in the province when other parts of the country were developing during the first decade of independence (Sibanda, 2013). For Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2011), the mainstay of

[10] http://www.southerneye.co.zw/2015/03/31/govt-looting-matabeleland/

Matabeleland North province's historical and contemporary challenges is characterised by the realities and perceptions of exclusion, marginalisation and confinement to second class citizenship of Ndebele-speaking people that began in 1980. These have rendered the region less of a development priority with poor public accountability platforms and failures of attempted efforts due to the volatile political backdrop of the province. The Province lacks adequate infrastructure which impedes development. Its road, education, health and water services infrastructure is in a dire state (Eppel, 2008; Murambadoro & Wielenga, 2015). Furthermore, the province is poorly served by ICT services, with some areas barely accessing them (Sibanda, 2013, p. 29). For example, some of the marginal areas in Matabeleland North such as Victoria Falls, Hwange, Tsholotsho, Lupane and Nkayi have poor or non-existent public broadcasting infrastructure such as transmitters. Resultantly, these areas have no radio or television reception and are consequently cut off from meaningfully participation in their governance since they lack access to information.

However, although the province has very poor infrastructure, in the study area in Tsholotsho district, some improvements were noted. Respondents indicated that they now have improved access to mobile phone networks compared to about 10 years ago (around 2007) where a few families had cellular phones that were operated using television aerials to catch the signal. The phone was supposed to be kept in one spot where there was network, just like landline telephones. Other families requested to be called by their relatives on that line and the migrant relatives would call and request that their family member be called to come and receive the phone call at a specified time. Even then, the network could be so bad that the phone call could not be fruitful. However, in the recent years (around 2010), there has been great improvements in that there is now excellent mobile network coverage from Econet Wireless, the country's biggest telecoms mobile network provider in Zimbabwe. All the families that participated in the study indicated that they had their own cellular phones and their relatives can call them anytime. Furthermore, the families also indicated that they now have access to internet service that allows them to use social networks such as WhatsApp and Facebook to link 'real time' with their family members who are away.

4.4 Migration trends from Matabeleland

The Matabeleland region has experienced significant sustained migration for decades. The migration trends have evolved with time as will be discussed in the ensuing subsections.

4.4.1 Characteristics of the migration from Matabeleland to South Africa

The Matabeleland region has always had high levels of migration in Zimbabwe even prior to the economic meltdown and the political unrests in the early 2000s, (Leslie, 2008; Mlambo, 2010). This has been due to the unfavourable conditions that characterise the region discussed in the foregone. As a result, people from this region have been moving to South Africa and Botswana for a long time but their movement has mainly been illegal (Moyo, 2017). This was evident in the narratives of the respondents both in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg. As shown in some of the preceding chapters, historically, men (fathers, uncles, husbands, sons, brothers) are the ones who migrated. Women, (wives, mothers, aunts, daughters, sisters) constituted a large contingent of the left behind. The women remained behind looking after children and livestock with the help of the extended family. As a result, the most common pattern was the husband migrated leaving his wife and children behind because women could not migrate due to the hardships associated with migration expeditions. All the historical accounts of migration from families in Tsholotsho indicated that historically, all migrants migrated illegally to South Africa. They entered the country through undesignated points. A good example is provided by Bab' uNyathi, a 54-year-old transnational migrant who migrated to South Africa in 1995, leaving his wife and children behind. His family remained in Zimbabwe living with his sister in Bulawayo while his mother lived in Tsholotsho. Narrating his family history, he offers an account of his father's experiences of migration as a first-generation migrant. His father migrated during the contract migration era where men moved to work in the mines. However, his own migration was independent of the arrangements of the two governments at that time:

> *My father used to tell me that they travelled by foot for about twenty-one days. They usually avoided the rainy season so that they could cross the Limpopo River while it had little water and reduce the risk of drowning. He said that they carried knobkerries with them which served as a compass. When they slept, they would place the largest part (the head) of the knobkerrie in the direction they were travelling to avoid taking the wrong direction in the morning. He also indicated that to avoid being attacked by wild animals such as lions, they made big fires in the bush and slept around the fire. My father told us that he was very lucky not to be caught by the border patrollers because those that were caught were taken back to Zimbabwe (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Interestingly, a significant number of the current (second and third generation) migrants from my respondents also indicated that their initial entry into South Africa was illegal. All of them applied for different types of documentation while already in South Africa.

Moreover, respondents highlighted that in the late 1980s to the early 1990s, *omalayitsha* became popular transporters of these illegal migrants from Tsholotsho using single cab pick-up vans with canopies. They indicated that families paid for the cross-border services through beasts (cattle), wherein one passenger paid one beast. These transporters picked up the border jumpers from Tsholotsho and transported them to Beitbridge, the Zimbabwean side of the border, where they were dropped at designated points.

From there, the emigrants then walked through the bush with a guide. Meanwhile the driver, who had proper travelling documents, would have his passport stamped and car cleared at the designated border post and thereafter drove to the agreed meeting point with his clients (illegal border jumpers). The border jumpers were expected to walk as fast as possible after being dropped and, in some instances, they even had to run to reduce chances of being caught or delay getting to the agreed upon meeting point with their driver.

Box 4.1: Migration expeditions

It was in 1999 when I also migrated from Tsholotsho to South Africa. I travelled by *Umalayitsha* from Tsholotsho to Beitbridge. He dropped us at some place in Beitbridge and we spent the whole day hiding in the forest, waiting for nightfall. I ate bread and drank water which the *Umalayitsha* gave us. We stayed there till nightfall because we were hiding from the soldiers that were patrolling. At night we continued with our journey. Amongst us was a gentleman who knew the trail very well and he led through the bush. We then border jumped and found a house nearby where they allowed us to bath and gave us some food to eat. We then walked from that house to the main road; where we were going to meet up with the driver. The driver had specifically instructed us that at if we arrived before him, we should put a branch on the roadside so he could see that we had arrived. We arrived first and the gentlemen we were with then jumped over the fence and put a branch on the roadside as we had initially agreed with the driver. The first car drove past and it wasn't our driver, ours had said he was going to flash his hazard warning lights for us to see it was him. He finally came around nine or ten in the evening and we jumped into the car, not knowing that the police had unfortunately seen us. They chased after us but thankfully they could not catch up with us. We then parked the car near a dam that was close by and hid there. We proceeded with the journey after a long wait into the early hours of the morning, taking precaution not to be seen by the police. We set off for our journey to Johannesburg and we found ourselves being followed by the police, again! We then decided to sleep in the forest, close to the farms and left the next morning, arriving in Johannesburg later that same day. Roughly, the trip took two days.

Excerpt from an in-depth interview with Patricia Johannesburg, South Africa – 2017

Although the journey was equally fraught with challenges, the challenges were lesser compared to those weathered by the older crop of migrants from the area (i.e. those who travelled on foot throughout). For the migrants that travelled during this period, although still illegal, the travelling experience was a lot better as the time they spent walking in the bush was not as prolonged. It was during this period (early 1990s) when travelling had become a bit bearable that women began to migrate and a process of feminisation was observed in Tsholotsho - (see

Box 4.1), albeit the journey was still fraught with challenges in navigating the way in the bush - (see Box 4.2). In Box 4.1 and 4.2, I present excerpts from my interviews with Patricia and Nkazi respectively. Patricia moved to South Africa in 1999 at the age of 22. She later got married to a Zimbabwean man in South Africa and had a child and later divorced. Patricia and her siblings, also migrants, left their children with their mother in Tsholotsho. Nkazi left Tsholotsho in 1993 at the age of 25 after divorcing her husband and returning to her family. She left her children with her late mother. All her other siblings are also migrants. Her father had been a migrant for a long time until the time of his death. He had gone to South Africa and stayed there for many years without returning and had been nicknamed *Mgewu*. Currently, her older children have also migrated to South Africa and her younger children back in Tsholotsho stay alone during the day and go to neighbouring relatives at night to sleep. Their accounts are a testament of feminisation of migration in Tsholotsho. Furthermore, their migration ordeals narrated reveal the fact that although improvements in transport and travel systems had made travelling easier, state demands and controls at border posts still complicated the scene for travellers. This demonstrates how the nation-states still have the power to curtail movement (Dunn, 2005) regardless of transnationalism. It is a reflection of one of the criticisms of transnationalism that it portrays a glamorous picture of a free flow of people overlooking the costs of mobility. Patricia's reality shows how moving between countries remains challenging as countries continue to reinforce their border control and security regardless of possibilities of regular movement between countries.

Box 4.2: Tales of female migrants

I travelled to South Africa from Tsholotsho in 1993 soon after the 1992 drought. Things were difficult and I had no option but to join others. I remember we were packed into a van and there was no space to even move my leg. We were mixed with man and for me and other few women it was tough especially because we wore skirts. Sitting became difficult because we had to sit one into the other, meaning we had to separate our legs so that those sitting on the opposite end of the cabin could put their legs in between ours. Initially we had issues but as we moved, we did not care. It became even more difficult when we were in the bush because there were no clear paths, we had to jump over bushes and walk through thick trees. I remember when we finally arrived, our skirts were torn, and we did not even care. Though we used a car, the journey was tough.

Excerpt from an interview with Nkazi Johannesburg, 2017)

Narratives from family histories and in-depth interviews with respondents in both sites indicated that from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, the migration landscape changed and travelling became easier. This marked the advent of the era of transnational migration. More developments emerged in the transport technologies such as buses and fast cars and it became easier for migrants to travel back and forth with ease between the two countries. During the same period, it also became easier for individuals to apply for and get travelling documents in Zimbabwe. Thus, travelling between Zimbabwe and South Africa became easy – see (Ncube

et al., 2014). As such, a significant number of migrants from Tsholotsho started using proper Zimbabwean travel documents or legitimate South African travel documents albeit acquired fraudulently. To date, a majority of migrants from Tsholotsho travel through buses or private transport (some are even driving their own cars) while others still cross illegally through the help of *omalayitsha* (see Box 4.3). Of cause most migrants reflects upon their migration journeys and the changes that have occurred along the time continuum. For example, consider Newman's reflections, a 37-year-old young migrant that moved to South Africa in 2002 after finishing his GCE Ordinary level of studies. His grandfather had been a migrant long back in Tsholotsho. His uncles called him to South Africa as all of them and some of his aunts were already migrants. Initially, when he travelled to South Africa, he crossed the Limpopo river on foot through undesignated crossing points because he did not have a passport. However, he now recounts how circumstances have become better as access to documentation has improved. His account reveals similar nuances like that of Patricia and Nkazi on the effects of border controls in transnational migration.

Box 4.3: Present day illegal migration

Unlike my first travel to South Africa, now travelling there is very easy, it is like going to Bulawayo from Tsholotsho. Getting passports is now easier than before. Yet, even if I do not have documents, I can just pay *umalayitsha* and he will take care of the rest. I do not even go down to cross the Limpopo River on foot, I cross right through the bridge and past the police with no hustle. These omalayitsha know their business

Excerpt from an in-depth interview with Newman in Johannesburg, 2017

Furthermore, Matabeleland provinces of Zimbabwe present an interesting case of sustained cross border migration particularly to South Africa. A number of explanations for this trend have been put forward. For many, migrating to South Africa was the only way to escape poverty from Matabeleland, the most arid and drought-prone lands in the country (Hungwe, 2012; Moyo, 2017). Migration has also been driven by marginalisation and confinement to second class citizenship of Ndebele-speaking people in Matabeleland that began in 1980 (Maphosa et al., 2014; Ndlovu, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011) and by the political violence against people in Matabeleland stemming right from the *Gukurahundi* era (1982 - 1987) to present day atrocities plaguing the country – as present earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, Matabeleland as a region shares borders with South Africa and Botswana and the people of Matabeleland usually move to these two countries in search for greener pastures (Ncube, 2010). Again, cultures and languages are shared among people living both sides of the borders of these two neighbouring countries. These similarities have been cited as part of the explanations for the migratory tendencies that exist (Ncube et al., 2014). Reflecting back on Bab' uNdiweni the migrant who fled Gukurahundi atrocities in Zimbabwe in 1982. He narrated that:

> *I chose to migrate to South Africa because it is close to where I come from and it is easy to communicate when in South Africa because there is not much difference between Zulu and Ndebele languages. This is mainly because of the shared history and identity between the Ndebele and the Zulu because we believe we came from the Zulu. Therefore, it is easy to blend and not be discriminated, it feels like home (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Consider Bab' uNyathi, the ex-soldier who left Tsholotsho in 1984 after he was expelled from the army. He proffered that:

> *Historically, the Ndebele people are South African; this pushes them towards that direction (Johannesburg, 2017).*

To further augment the aforementioned notions, Maphosa (2005, p. 2) posited that:

> *a large number of the people in Matabeleland share historical, kinship and linguistic ties with people in South Africa and Botswana; with languages such as Venda, Sotho and Ndebele being spoken on both the Zimbabwean and South African sides of the Limpopo River while Tswana and Kalanga are also two languages that are spoken on both the Zimbabwean and Botswana sides of the Ramogkwebane River.*

This migration is only comparable to that of Mexicans to the United States- which has been deemed the largest in the world (Rosenblum, Kandel, Seelke, & Wasem, 2012). As with Zimbabwe and South Africa, Mexico and the United States share a long porous border and their economies and societies are intricately interwoven, with a high likelihood of people crossing back and forth through formal border posts or throughout any point illegally. For many people from this province, migrating to South Africa provided the only means to escape poverty as the region has some of the most arid and drought-prone lands in the country (Hungwe, 2012; Moyo, 2017) as alluded to in the foregone. This coupled with the general lack of meaningful economic opportunities in the southwestern parts of Zimbabwe (Maphosa, 2010), has given the people in this region the impetus to migrate. Fieldwork findings from respondents in both Tsholotsho and Johannesburg indicated that all respondents migrated for economic reasons. However, although this was the case, a significant number of migrants indicated that over and above economic reasons, they also migrated as a way of escaping the dire effects of Gukurahundi.

Notably, most of the migrants from Matabeleland North and the greater Matabeleland region form the non-professional band of the immigrants in South Africa. Most of them work in the informal sector jobs where employment does not require any qualification such as security, waitressing, construction, domestic work, groundwork, farm labouring, among others (Ncube, 2010; Ncube & Gómez, 2011). This emerged in my interviews in Johannesburg as 9 (60 %) of

the respondents indicated that they work in the informal sector and only 6 (40 %) are in the formal sector. In terms of places of residence, previous studies have shown that larger populations of migrants from Zimbabwe in general and Matabeleland in particular are concentrated in areas as Hilbrow, Berea, Yeoville and the Central business district in Johannesburg (Crush, 2005; Greenburg, 2010; Moyo, 2017). Although this is different to how it was in the past, as migrants indicated, they stayed in the low-density suburbs, it resonates with the findings from current transnational migrants as the majority of those interviewed stayed in Hilbrow, Berea, Yeoville and the CBD.

4.4.2 Gender and migration: The feminisation of migration in Tsholotsho

Tsholotsho's emigration was in the past, dominated by men migrating to South Africa (Crush & Tevera, 2010). This has been the general trend in Zimbabwe as a whole. While there has been feminisation of migration, migration is still male dominated as confirmed by Makina and Kanyenze (2010)'s assertion that, in terms of gender, males comparatively comprised larger constituents of migrants, accounting for 61.2 % of the migrant population. Thus, although women in Zimbabwe and in Tsholotsho particularly also migrate, historically, patriarchal factors coupled with employment and earning opportunities favoured male migration at the expense of female migration (Crush & Tevera, 2010; Kufakurinani, 2013). Women were left behind to take care of the children, livestock and farm (Crush & Tevera, 2010). However, currently, there has been a notable increase in women as active players. This has been due to improvements in women's emancipation and equality, availability of opportunities for women in industrial and services sectors and other various factors spanning from economic hardships, conflict and effects of climate variation (ibid). As such, there have been opportunities for women to work as caregivers or domestic workers in other countries which has acted as a major pull factor (Baldassar & Merla, 2013; Ncube, 2010). This has led to what has become known as the feminisation of migration (Jolly, Reeves, & Piper, 2005; Lee, 2009). Inevitably, this has had further implications on families.

In light of the growing involvement of women in migration, (Pedraza, 1991), significant migration scholarship has focused on how the integration of women into the migration flows has further impacted families. Some scholars have argued that women's migration has boosted families' household income as women are perceived to remit more than men (Dodson et al., 2008; Niimi & Reilly, 2011; Ukwatta, 2008). This has been seen to have a ripple effect on the

left behind children's well-being as well as access to education and health. Notwithstanding, there are some scholars who have suggested that women's migration, especially mothers, tends to have more disruptive impacts on families. For example, Antman (2018) noted that mother's migration has detrimental effects on children left behind as children are more dependent on their mothers for day to day care as well as emotional support. In Tsholotsho, most of the key informants expressed disapproval of women's migration. It was seen to deprive children of their mother's love and care which is very critical for the child's development. The major concern has been that instead of children growing under the care of at least one parent, if both parents migrate, the children are left under the care of hired workers or grandmothers who may not have a stern hand in socialising and grooming the children.

4.5 The migrants' City of Johannesburg

After the discovery of gold in Johannesburg, the city attracted many people who came from different countries and regions within South Africa seeking employment in its mines, industries and the emergent service sector (Kihato, 2013). The early strands of immigrants included sojourners and fortune hunters from as far as England, Australia, USA, Germany, France, Poland and Italy, amongst other places. They all settled in the emergent city of Johannesburg (Hart, 1975). Thereafter, there were strict and selective immigration systems (espoused partly by apartheid policies) that were aimed at facilitating the entry of desirable white immigrants and exclude those deemed undesirable (Glaser, 2010; Moyo, 2017; Weisbord, 1967). Since the city was established as a mining city in 1886, the need for cheap labour necessitated the influx of black African migrants from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Botswana and Malawi to work in the mines (Adepoju, 2003; Crush, 1997; Crush et al., 2005; Solomon, 2003; Wilson, 1976). The city thus, earned its status of being 'a migrant city' shortly after its inception as a mining hub (Crush, Chikanda, Tawodzera, & Southern African Migration Project, 2012; Moyo, 2017; Ngobeni, 2014). The city has, both historically and currently, hosted a significant contingent of migrants pre, during and post-apartheid. Notably, migrants have always been the city's workhorse but none of them could or can claim it as home (Kihato, 2013).

Currently, in Southern Africa, South Africa is a major migrant destination of international migration due to its middle-income status and economic development relative to other African countries (Jacobsen, 2007; Klotz, 1997). Within South Africa, the Gauteng province hosts most

of the country's internal and international migrants due to its leading economic position in the country and the Southern African region at large (Kihato, 2013). However, in Gauteng, the city of Johannesburg, affectionately known as *eGoli*[11] (meaning a place of gold), has always had the largest contingent of the migrants due to its mining activities (Moyo, 2017). The city of Johannesburg has a population density of 4, 949, 347 people[12], representing about half a million more people compared to 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2016). As a result, Johannesburg has been deemed the fastest growing city in South Africa and this has been largely due to internal and international migration flows over and above natural population growth. Although there have been significant socio-economic and political changes since the end of the apartheid era in South Africa, present day migrants no longer face the same racial segregation but continue to find themselves living between 'home' and Johannesburg without fully being comfortable in the city of gold (Kihato, 2013).

4.5.1 Life in Johannesburg: the city as it is lived

Due to the ever-increasing migrant flows into Johannesburg, the city has come to be known as a gateway and transitional city (Moyo, 2017). This has mainly been attributed to the fact that most migrants transit through Johannesburg on their way to other South African provinces/ the rest of South Africa (Kihato, 2013; Ngobeni, 2014). The city is divided into seven regions as shown in Figure 4.2. For those living in its northern affluent suburbs, they view the inner city as puzzling, impervious and dangerous (Kihato, 2013; Moyo, 2017; Ngobeni, 2014).

[11] https://africanlanguages.com/south_africa/place_names.html
[12] https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/2/city-of-johannesburg-metropolitan-municipality

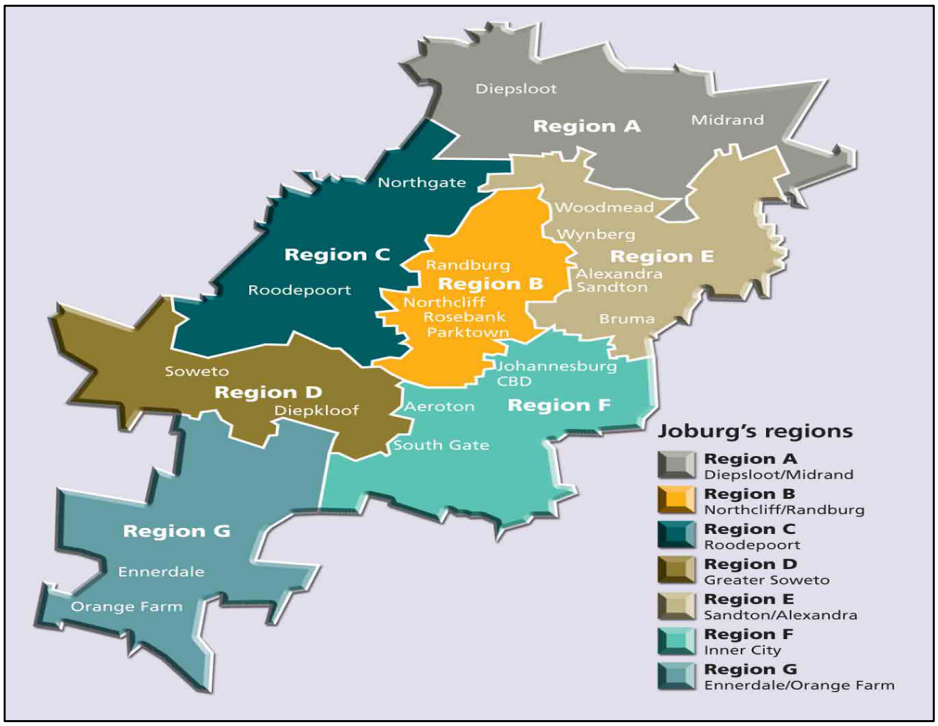


Figure 3.2: Map of Johannesburg showing the regions in the city
Source: Google Maps (2018)

Although the city was once the symbol of South Africa's gold, wealth and prosperity, the nerve wrecking stories of crime, poverty, drug abuse and overbearing surge in numbers of illegal foreigners have led to its degeneration (Kihato, 2013). The inner city is an ambivalent place, offering both opportunities and lack as well as hope and despair (ibid). For some migrants, it has offered better life while for others it has been a place of pain and distress related to violent crime and xenophobia that has robbed them of their loved ones. Furthermore, the ever-increasing population in the city has resulted in increased pressure on its infrastructure, decreasing investor confidence, absentee landlords and poor maintenance of buildings as well as overcrowding. This has led to physical dilapidation of a number of residential blocks in the city (Kihato, 2013). This has been most evident in areas such as Hillbrow, Johannesburg Central Business District, Berea, Joubert Park, Newtown and Yeoville, among others.

These inner-city areas have the highest concentration of migrants because they have high-rise apartments that offer rental accommodation (Crush, 2005; Moyo, 2017). In these rented apartments, migrants share space e.g. a single room can be partitioned and several tenants rent a section of the space where they live and accommodate their few belongings (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2004). Thus, although these areas present unsafe living conditions due to crime and hazardous, dilapidating infrastructure, migrants still prefer to live in them. This is because of

the low rental prices and also the strong presence of their fellow countrymen in these areas which provides some comfort in numbers (Crush, 2005; Greenburg, 2010; Moyo, 2017; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2004). In this regard, migrants live in Johannesburg as sojourners whose primary quest is not physical comfort associated with exclusive, high-class accommodation, but by the economic gains from savings envisaged from the daily hustles in the city of gold.

For Zimbabwean migrants, Johannesburg has been their destination of choice for a long time. Like the rest of the migrants, Zimbabweans are also concentrated in the inner city. Their migration has been driven by the historical interlinkages between the two countries and later the persistent economic and political instabilities that have characterised Zimbabwe in the past decades (Ncube, 2010; Ncube et al., 2014). For most of the Zimbabwean immigrants to South Africa, Johannesburg has been their primary/preferred destination, their home away from home. It is in this light that Moyo (2017) has proposed that migration research, especially of Zimbabweans in Johannesburg, should move away from approaching the study of migrants as temporary residents of the city. It should treat migrants as residents (regardless of legal status) and actors in the city, and not just as guests with no permanency. His argument is premised on the notion that the presence of Zimbabweans as a national category in South Africa has endured for a long time. As such, it warrants attention to its different forms of spatial permanency (ibid). However, given the transnational nature of present-day migration on one hand and the permanency of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg, it is important to understand the lived realities of these migrants as simultaneously embedded beings between their home and host countries.

The respondents for my study lived within the confines of the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. Within the metropolis, 6 of the respondents (40 %) resided in Hillbrow, while 5 (33 %) resided in Yeoville and the rest were in the CBD, Soweto and Observatory. All of them lived in rented apartments and within these apartments some had the whole apartment to themselves while others shared with other families. As they live in the city, the respondents did not view themselves as at home and permanent residents of Johannesburg, but rather as economic sojourners. Although Johannesburg is home by virtue of everyday residence, in terms of belonging and permanency they all noted that home was back in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe where they belong permanently. As such, they viewed themselves as temporary dwellers of the city and would eventually go back to their communities of origin either upon retirement or death.

CHAPTER 5: MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN FAMILY LIFE

In this chapter I present the changes in family life within migrant families in Tsholotsho as a result of infrastructural changes - legal, transport and communication – inherent in and definitive of transnationalism and subsequently, transnational migration. I do this guided by the theoretical framework developed and discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis. In the analysis, attention is paid to the changes and continuities that have occurred in family life – mainly in relation to how migrants then and transnational migrants now do family life and (have) perform(ed) their caring obligations and exert(ed) their rights, authority as well as power while away. I do this to assess if there have been any changes that have occurred in relation to family formations and maintenance of membership in the context of transnationalism and the resultant migrant simultaneous embeddedness.

Migration in Tsholotsho has a long-standing history and has profoundly altered family structures and practices over the years. Historically, it had become a norm that men migrated while women remained behind with the children. However, with continued improvements in transport and communication technologies, a new transnational paradigm emerged which allowed for a novel analysis of the increasing multidirectional engagements forming migrants' realities (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). This transnationalism inevitably leads to the restructuring of families. The emergent transformations in these migrant families calls for an appreciation of the orchestrations of their family lives as they present new dynamics of being and doing family life in the transnational domain.

It is therefore against this backdrop that this chapter seeks to unearth the historical and contemporary trends within migrant families in the context of improved communication and transport technologies and how these have impacted family formations, caring practices as well as power rights and authority within families. I explore the differences in how historical migrants and current transnational migrants maintain membership to and participate in family life within their families left behind (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995b). Currently, although transnational migrants can be simultaneously embedded and thus virtually present, their physical absence impedes, to some degree, their membership and engagement in family life.

5.1 Migration, simultaneous embeddedness and family formations: Historical and contemporary trends

Migration and the subsequent transnationalism that has become prevalent in the recent past have significant effects on the types of families that are formed both in the sending and receiving areas. Families as systems have their forms and structures reconfigured in response to the removal of some of their members through migration. In the migration era, members were completely removed from their families only to be reintegrated upon their return. However, with transnationalism, transnational migrants remain virtually present through fluid transnational social spaces. As a result, they devise some ways and mechanisms of being there that will ensure their continued presence within their families and allow them to participate in family life, albeit from a distance. Within these transnational families, migrants remain simultaneously embedded thus maintaining family relationships that transcend national borders.

Over a period of six months in 2017, I spent time conduction fieldwork in my study sites (i.e. April - June in Tsholotsho and July - September in Johannesburg). In Tsholotsho, I conducted in-depth interviews with 10 left-behind women in Tsholotsho (between the ages 38 and 70) about the history of migration in their families and how it had, in the long term, affected family formations and their family life in general. In Johannesburg, I also conducted in-depth interviews with 10 migrants (men and women) on the same issues. Although my focus was on families in Tsholotsho, I extended my probe to include family formations in Johannesburg and how the migrants managed the organised their family lives both on Johannesburg and Tsholotsho. In the following subsections I present the different family formations dominant in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg as members migrate and settle in the receiving areas.

5.1.1 Family formations in Tsholotsho

In Tsholotsho, two dominant forms of family formations that resulted from migration emerged. These were 1) families where the husband/father is a migrant while wife and children are left behind and 2) families where both parents are migrants and the children are left under the care of grandparents and/ hired workers. These are presented in the ensuing sub-section.

i. Families where the husband/father is a migrant while wife and children are left behind

This family formation was the most common form that emerged from family histories and has continued to present times. it Within this family formation, there was an older and younger variation. In the older variation, which emerged from family histories (both historically and contemporarily), the husband or father migrated and left the wife and children behind with the help of the extended family. As times changed and the children grew, the sons also became emigrants and left their wives with the children. In this instance, the wife of the migrant son remained with the children, the mother-in-law and other members of the extended family while the husband and father-in-law were migrants in Johannesburg. Notably, this variation comprised of old couples that had been married for 30 years and above and the husbands had been migrants for at least four decades. On the other hand, the younger variation comprised younger men (now adults and also emigrants) who were children to the older migrants. Their minimum age is 25years and they have their own families and small children. They left their wives and children back in Tsholotsho while they immigrated to South Africa. This variation was the least prevalent in comparison to the previous one. This is because, unlike in the old variation where husbands migrated alone, most young couples currently migrate together.

Within this broad family type, regardless of the variations alluded to above, the wife had authority and autonomy to make day to day decisions pertaining to the children and the day to day family issues and inform the spouse later. Although the wife had some covert power, decisions pertaining capital goods, with a direct bearing on authority, rights and power were delegated to other male members of the extended family.

While the husbands were away, the wives left behind were expected to remain celibate and wait for the husband to return. If the woman had an affair, it was frowned upon. Remember Bab' uNyathi, the ex-soldier in Johannesburg. During the course of my fieldwork, I had another discussion with him, and he stated that:

> *There is a case that happened in my family about 30 years ago. My brother, son to my father's brother, migrated around the same time with me and left his wife with two children, both girls. While he was away, his younger brother slept with his wife and a son was born. When the husband came back, he was angry and wanted revenge. However, the elders sat him down and told him that he should accept the child as his own since he did not even have a boy. He was also told that he had been gone for long and this was an accident, so he should forgive his wife. He forgave his wife and accepted the child as his. It is only the elders and those who were old enough to*

> *understand what was going that knew the story. Otherwise even the children did not know that the boy was their half-brother (Johannesburg, 2017).*

The family elders handled the matter. When the husband finally returned, the elders sat him down and explained to him the case and negotiated with him as well as admonished him not to cause a scene. They cited reasons that he had been gone for long and the wife also had feelings and as such, she fell into the temptation. Bab' uNyathi even highlighted how the elders consoled the husband in that the child was his own flesh and blood as he carried his surname. However, ordinarily, a woman's infidelity and practice of witchcraft were the two most justifiable grounds for divorce. This was mainly due to the patriarchal nature of the communities in Tsholotsho. Bab' uNyathi's narration, however, brings yet another dimension that the migrant husband was asked to accept the child because he was a boy. This is because a boy child in Ndebele families in Tsholotsho is seen as an heir who will carry the family's name forward after the father. Thus, for this husband, this was a blessing in disguise for him as his brother had given him a son to keep the family name.

Findings further revealed that in Tsholotsho, elders played a significant stabilizing role in migrant families. For example, if the husband had been gone for long, the elders would discuss how the left wife could be assisted seeing she was deprived sexually yet she was young. The elders then secretly arranged for the absent husband's brother or uncle (maternal) to be sexually involved with his brother's or nephew's wife as a way of 'helping' her. By 'helping', the elders meant preserving his brother's family by making sure that the wife does not seek sexual satisfaction from outside the family that may end up messing the marriage and family. In the process, children were born. Gogo MaNdlovu in Tsholotsho, retelling the experiences of families in the past narrated that:

> *In the past, families were so united and secretive about their matters. Almost all families in this village have secrets that have remained like that till today. I remember when I got married into this family, I found a sister wife who had been married to the family for a while before me. Her husband was a migrant and had been gone for years. After about five years of the husband's absence, the family elders caucused and agreed that the husband's brother be sexually involved with her so that she could also be relieved of sexual pressures. Two children were born out of this arrangement and when the husband eventually came home, the matter was addressed behind closed doors in the family and life continued as normal (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Mr. Ngwenya, the Councillor put it this way:

> *Migration shook a lot of families right from the times past. If things were left to play out on their own, a lot of families would have been destroyed. But elders were very clever people. They had to come up with means and ways to try and preserve families*

> *in the face of separation. My grandfather used to tell us how elders negotiated within families to have young brothers or maternal uncles to migrant husbands help the left behind wife sexually while the husband was away. Actually, many families survived because of this arrangement (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

As in the case above, when the husband came back, he was not supposed to question anything because he had been gone for too long. The children belonged to him as they had the same surname as the rest and as such, were part of the family.

However, on the other hand, migrant men had affairs (some secret and some public) in South Africa. The most common trend was that the affairs were known by the left behind wives. The few who hid their affairs did so because they feared their wives would cause trouble if they knew about the other women. As such, the men had children unknown to the wives and/or family back in Tsholotsho. The majority who openly declared their relationships and introduced their 'second wives' to the first wives and the family back in Tsholotsho established families with other spouses and children and had homes either in the city or in South African rural areas.

MaSiwela, a family history respondent in Tsholotsho explained it this way:

> *When I was a child, my father migrated to South Africa and he will be gone for two or more years before we could see him again. As years went by, I remember him coming back with pictures of a woman and two children. We were told that the children were our siblings and the family used to joke that Sithabile, the girl child in the picture looked like me. Everyone was just happy and looked forward to meeting them one day (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Lillian, commenting on emerging affairs when spouses are separated by migration, reflected that:

> *My mum knew that dad was with someone in SA. Somehow, I am still trying to understand how she was ok with it. She was not bitter or anything. It's funny because when I look back, not even once did I hear her talk badly about the other woman. I even remember when I was preparing to come to South Africa, she told me not to be alarmed when I find dad living with someone else, (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Notably, MaSiwela and Lillian's accounts demonstrate acceptance that husbands/fathers had other wives and families in South Africa, which was a typical reaction by most families in the same situation. This degree of tolerance could be reflective of the culture and existence of polygamy on the community which made the women accept existence of a second wife with ease.

Petunia, reminiscing on her experience as a child when her father was a transnational migrant offered these reflections:

> *Migration distanced us from our father, and I felt that is why he married another woman and his marriage to his second wife destabilized the family. Although my mother was not happy, when he had a son with his second wife, my mother accepted the child and raised him together with us as her own, (Johannesburg, 2017)*.

If the husband had children from an affair, the wife was supposed to welcome the child as a legitimate member in the home because 'they bear the same surname' as the other children in the home. Mr Nyathi, a key informant who is a historian in Zimbabwe narrated that:

> *When a migrant man had a child out of wedlock, there was no issue, but when a woman did, it was one of those reasons to justify divorce. The burden is heavier on the woman. What a man does, a woman is not expected to do. It's because of patriarchal arrangements. It's a men's world (Zimbabwe, 2017).*

Reflecting on the same, Bab' uHungwa, a headman in Tsholotsho indicated that:

> *It was different for women. A man could have a child with another woman while he was away in South Africa and the issue would be downplayed and the woman told to accept the child, after all he had the same surname as the rest in the family. However, if a wife had a child while the husband was away, it was regarded as an embarrassment to the family. She could even be sent back to her family for infidelity. However, in the context of migration, the family elders tried to negotiate for peace and plead with the husband to forgive his wife and also take the child as his. He was also reminded that he had also been gone for long (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

The foregone are a reflection of the glaring inequalities between men and women. Men are accorded positions of privilege and can have as many extra-marital affairs as they want and have children out of wedlock without consequences. However, for the women, findings highlight how patriarchy suppresses women by relegating them to subservience within families. The findings thus also reveal how patriarchal practices give men control over female sexuality. As such, patriarchy amplifies gender inequality and the subordination of women such that women lose control over their sexuality as also highlighted by Kambarami (2006). As such, within families in Tsholotsho, men have the liberty to engage sexually freely while women should preserve their sexuality for their husbands.

ii. Families where both parents are migrants and the children are left under the care of grandparents and/ hired workers

This is a contemporary and dominant family form where women (wives, sisters, aunts, and mothers) are now active players in migration. In this family type, I gathered that the emigrant parents leave the children mainly under the care of grandmothers. The grandmother has authority to make day to day decisions concerning the children under her care. Although this is the case, decisions that have financial implications are made in consultation with the emigrant parents. However, in some of these families, as key informants reported, the children are left under the care of hired labour (domestic workers and at times together with livestock attendants), who are total strangers. According to Mr Ngwenya, a councillor with the Tsholotsho Rural District Council representing the local authority and interviewed as a key informant:

> *[…] the husband will be in South Africa and calls his wife to come and join him. The wife will be leaving young children with someone from Nkayi [one of the districts in Matabeleland North]. The caregiver is from Nkayi, the boy that herds the cattle is also from Nkayi and both are left with these young children to whom they are not biologically related (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Within this family set-up, where children are left under the care of workers, it emerged that some of the domestic workers were autonomous. They were not accountable to anyone in Tsholotsho but directly controlled from South Africa by the migrant parents. In some instances, however, while living in a separate homestead with the children, the worker was entirely under the authority of grandparents. The grandparents had some level of autonomy and authority in decision-making but ultimately, they were accountable to the emigrant parents. Notably, more and more families in Tsholotsho are revolving to the second type of family where both spouses migrate leaving children behind. With modernisation and the subsequent weakening of the extended family, there were notable changes in homestead patterns in Tsholotsho. Unlike in the past where families lived in one big homestead, currently, nuclear families have independent homesteads. As such, there are some children left under the care of hired workers living in the separate homesteads. The grandmothers would occasionally go there to check if everything was in order.

This separation of children from their parents has negative effects on the relationship between the parent and the child. For example, Patricia had a child while in South Africa and later

divorced her husband and sent her child to her mother back in Tsholotsho. She stated that the separation from her child strained their relationship, noting that:

> *Considering that I used to stay with her here and she attended a private school, when I transferred her Zimbabwe, she thought I did not care about her anymore, she saw it as neglect, and she was unhappy. I transferred her because the school fee was too high, I could not afford it. Now she is in Zimbabwe our relationship is strained. She gets extremely unhappy if I have to come back to South Africa after visiting for the holidays, she even cries. She does the same when she visits this side, (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Petunia, who also left her child in Zimbabwe stated that:

> *My son relates to my mother as his mother, he sees me as a provider, nothing else and it affects me so much and our relationship (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Thus, despite the positive derivatives left-behind children may enjoy from remittances, parental absence appears to be a double-edged sword. While on one end, for example, remittances improve left behind children's educational status and their living conditions (Lu and Treiman, 2006), on the other end, the left-behind children have to deal with feelings of anxiety, loneliness and other psychological problems emanating from parental absence on their own. In the next section I present different family formations in Johannesburg.

5.1.2 Family formations in Johannesburg

The dynamics of family formations in Johannesburg had four variations i.e. (1) the lone men (where historically the husband migrated alone), (2) the duo - husband and wife migrating together, (3) cohabiting - *masihlalisane* and (4) the single mother form.

i. The lone man – where the husband emigrated alone

Findings from key informants, in-depth interviews and family history accounts indicated that in the past, men were the only active migrants and left their wives and children behind. Women did not migrate because of the difficulty associated with the migration process. All respondents stated that the migration journey was fraught with hardships which made it a no-go area for women. They indicated that those who migrated had to walk long distances to get to Johannesburg, encountering wild animals, harsh weather, bad terrain and police along the way. This rendered it a dangerous expedition that only the men braved to undertake. Returning to Bab' uNyathi, the ex-soldier and now transnational migrant's lived experience. Responding to family history interview, he recounts what his father used to tell them about his migration experience back in 1951:

> *Migration was difficult to undertake in the past. My father used to tell us that they used to travel by foot for approximately twenty-one days, crossing the Limpopo River. He said they carried knobkerries with them which served as a compass. When they slept, they would place the head of the knobkerrie facing the direction they were travelling towards. It was a difficult journey and neither my mum nor we the children could visit him while he was in South Africa (Johannesburg, 2017).*

As a result of the foregoing, men were the ones who braved the challenges to demonstrate their machismo and live up to the demands of masculinity to ensure their families were provided for. Back in Tsholotsho, the wife and children remained under the care of the extended family which played a very critical role in the smooth running of the family. Men stayed in South Africa for a long time (minimum 2 years) before they could return to their families. Although these men were expected to be staying alone, they had affairs with South African women.

Responding to the question of whether there were new relationships that emerge – women/men finding new spouses (whether made public or left private), the key informants and a majority of the transnational migrants affirmed the prevalence of such. They noted that the affairs were meant to help the migrants satisfy their sexual desires. The majority of the migrant men interviewed indicated that it was difficult for men to abstain from sexual activities for a long time due to their biological make-up. They also state that it was a way to have free accommodation and evade arrest by state security authorities as when seen with South African women, they could easily be regarded as South African thereby escaping arrest. To expound on this, I introduce Bab' uDewa, a 67-year-old man who left Zimbabwe in 1975, at a time when the Zimbabwe liberation war was at its peak. He has been a migrant since then. He participated in this study as a key informant leading one of one of the burial societies in Johannesburg. Commenting on migration dynamics in the 1970s, he stated that:

> *Back then, accommodation was a problem, the only way to survive was to date a South African woman who worked as a domestic worker in the suburbs, this was the way out because the workers at the suburbs were offered accommodation at the cottages and when one dated them, it meant free accommodation. When one was seen walking with these South Africans, the police would not suspect that they were a 'Kwerekwere*[13]*' (Johannesburg, 2017).*

From these affairs, children were born. Some of the children became known to the family back in Zimbabwe while in some instances, they forever remained a secret. However, more often than not, affairs and out-of-wedlock children became known to the families back in Zimbabwe and the husband established another family with the woman in South Africa.

[13] A word popularly used in South Africa by natives when referring to foreigners.

ii. The duo – husband and wife emigrating together

In the contemporary case of transnational migrants in Johannesburg, the participants were mixed in terms of gender and age. The transnational migrants comprised of elderly men - husbands to most of the women left behind in Tsholotsho doubling up as grandmothers to the left behind children, young men, and women. The general trend was that younger men (young adults), who were in the child-bearing stage immigrated with their wives. Most of these left their children under the care of grandmothers and hired workers. While in South Africa, they supported and provided for their children materially. This included sending monetary remittances for education and health as well as in-kind remittances in the form of food and clothing. They visited the children regularly and kept in constant communication with the children and the caregivers. In some instances, the children also visited the parents on South Africa during school holidays. Within this group, some had children in South Africa and stayed with them there. However, the most common practice was that when the child was a little bit older, he/she was sent back to Tsholotsho to live with the grandmother. Mostly, this was done because the parents needed to go to work and for the majority, day care services for the children was too expensive. Although not in a more pronounced way, here we also see the extended family in the form of grandparents playing a central role in family life and organisation back in Tsholotsho.

iii. Cohabitating - 'masihlalisane'[14]

Although there were some who left their wives and children in Tsholotsho and presumably live alone in Johannesburg. However, like the historical migrants, the men lone immigrants have affairs in Johannesburg. From my observations, I noted that the only difference with the historical migrants is that the current migrants have affairs with both Zimbabwean and South African women. They meet Zimbabwean women because women are now active migrants. Two of the younger transnational migrant men interviewed who left their wives in Tsholotsho indicated that the sole purpose of the affairs is for sexual gratification. Unlike historically, where accommodation was a challenge and migrants were illegal, the current transnational migrants have access to accommodation and most of them have documents to allow them to be in South Africa (whether legitimate or fraudulently obtained).

[14] *Masihlalisane* describes informal semi-permanent sexual relationships that develop between migrants and locals as well as among migrants (Maphosa, 2012, p. 131)

Although sexual gratification is the major motivation, the majority of the transnational migrants interviewed indicated that most of the affairs resulted in children being born. The men however stated that they were not sure whether the 'girlfriends' got pregnant because of contraceptive failure or because they intentionally wanted to 'trap' the men to marry them. When probed further, it emerged that for some, the birth of children led to new families being formed while for others the man just took care of his child without living with the mother and child. During my fieldwork, I met Thabo, a 40-year-old young transnational migrant who is in such a situation. He migrated to South Africa in 2004 leaving his wife and son back in Tsholotsho. His father and older siblings had migrated some time ago. His grandfather, also a migrant, had returned to stay at home. Thabo got to South Africa and courted a Zimbabwean woman and in the process got her pregnant. After that he cohabited with a second one, also a Zimbabwean, and she also got pregnant. He took responsibility of his children and let the women go. He finally brought his wife to South Africa and they are staying together with their one child. She accepted the other children; however, they were sent to stay with Thabo's mother in Tsholotsho. In my interview with him, he indicated that:

> *Whether I like it or not, when my child is born, I am forced to live with him or her. I cannot let my child suffer while I am alive. My wife will understand, I am a man, these things are difficult to control for us men (Johannesburg, 2017).*

The above notion indicated that for present day migrants, there are no new families that are formed as such. Rather there is widespread prevalence of cohabitation that may end abruptly. This demonstrates a concept that Maphosa (2012) refers to as *'masihlalisane'*. These are semi-permanent sexual relationships usually formed among migrants or between migrants and locals. In most instances, they are a result of male immigrants taking advantage of new female immigrants by offering them food, accommodation and at times work in exchange for sex (Maphosa, 2012). This was done even by married men who had wives back home, leading to "cross-border concurrent multiple sexual partnerships" which are conducive ground for the spread of HIV and AIDS. For some, these relationships may eventually be formalised into marriage through payment of lobola. Writing on a similar practice by Mozambican immigrant men in South Africa, Lubkemann (2002) uses that phrase 'transnationalised polygamy' to refer to these sexual relationships that the men develop in South Africa while their wives are back home. As a result, the family back in Tsholotsho may be compromised as the man's attention and resources are diverted to the new living arrangement sustained in Johannesburg.

Within the transnational migrants interviewed, most of the young migrants emigrated from Tsholotsho single and had found spouses in South Africa. All of them started with cohabitation before their relationships were formalised and recognized as marriage. There were also some that were still cohabiting without the knowledge of the respective families. As such, in the current era, although the most Tsholotsho.

iv. The single mother

Lastly, the other significant form of family noted was that of single mothers who left their children back in Zimbabwe in the care of grandparents and hired workers. From key informants' assertions, it became apparent that most of the older migrant women (40 years and above) from Tsholotsho are single parents and they left their children back in Tsholotsho. Although married women were also present, the most dominant strand is that of women who are single parents and, in most instances, emigrated from Tsholotsho to find employment in Johannesburg so that they may provide for their children. Unlike in the past where women formed a big chunk of those left behind, currently, women from Tsholotsho are active and leading participants in migration processes. Most of these were women who had either divorced and returned to their families (remember Nkazi in chapter 4) or adult single women who got pregnant while in their natal homes and did not get married to the fathers of their children. For many, the fathers of their children were not able to provide for the children's needs and the women ended up migrating to fend for their children. Their migration was a way of escaping patriarchal order where women had to depend on men to provide for them. With the men often not able to provide and thus failing in their masculine roles, the women stepped up and shouldered the double burden of affective care and being the provider. However, with migration, these women gave up the affective role and supplanted it with the material provider role.

In South Africa, they work mainly as domestic workers for educated women in formal employment. This is illustrative of global care chains as the women from Tsholotsho migrate for employment as domestic workers in South Africa. in South Africa, they cover up for educated and formally employed women by looking after their children see - (Murphy, 2014). Most of the employers are white, Indians and affluent black South African families as well as other affluent foreign nationals permanently residing in South Africa. The women from Tsholotsho leave their own children behind under the care of hired labour or extended family members -see (Hochschild, 2000, 2003). The migrant women become reproductive labour as

they provide domestic and care work for the affluent women in South Africa who are pursuing their professional occupations -see (Yeates, 2004). These privileged women in South Africa buy the low-wage services of migrant women. In turn, the migrant women purchase even lower services of poorer women or even relegate the reproductive duties to their female relatives residing in the migrants' countries of origin to look after their children.

In both sites, I gathered a clear sense of how traditionally, the father was the head of the family and responsible for the breadwinning role. Their migration was driven by changes in the economic systems and processes from agrarian to monetary economies. As the breadwinners, they engaged in migration to complement the monetary family needs. They also did this assert their masculinity and retain their positions as the heads and authority figures of the family (Donaldson & Howson, 2009; Mathews, 2014). I also gathered that while migrating, their left behind wives played the reproductive and nurturing role with the children, supported by the paternal grandparents and other members of the extended family. This symbolised the inherent gendered division of labour within families as men pursued masculine breadwinning tasks and women performed the feminine roles of being home carers (Crossley & Pease, 2009; Donaldson & Howson, 2009).

However, over and above the home caring roles, the left behind women engaged in subsistence agriculture to ensure the family had food while the men migrated and settled in South Africa. In South Africa, migrant women also transgressed into the male role when they started engaging in paid work and doing breadwinner duties. In both sites, women eventually became active players in the breadwinning role. According to Crossley and Pease (2009) and Masanja (2012), the women's rise to this breadwinning positions often weighed heavily on the men as some of them felt they were failures. Equally for the women, taking up the provider role also exerted pressure on them as it is much easily constructed as failure in their feminine role of affective care. This is evidenced in Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila (1997)'s assertion that when the women migrate, they attract a stigma and criticism from society as they are seen as failures for leaving their homes and children behind. Hence, most of them end up spoiling their children to make up for their absence. For men on the other hand, I gathered that some men were overwhelmed by this feeling of failure to provide for their families. As a result, they ended up staying in South Africa forever without making efforts to provide for their families while others resorted to alcoholism.

From the interviews, sentiments emerged that along the way, there were changes in family formations and organisation as new developments emerged. In both sites, with advances in travel and communication infrastructure, the prevailing family forms changed owing to feminisation of migration. In South Africa, the prevalence of *masihlalisane* among immigrants is a demonstration of such. Hunter (2007) refers to it as the changing political economy of sex in the context of migration and it has notable impacts on family formations. By and large, it emanates from the inability by young men to work and raise money to pay *lobola* and the vulnerabilities of women as economic migrants. The young women mostly, find themselves vulnerable in South Africa with no accommodation or food while the men have accommodation but are not able to raise money to marry. The compromised position of cohabitation leads to the significant prevalence of *masihlalisane* as a family form in Johannesburg, albeit an informal one. This is common practice even by married men from Tsholotsho who left their wives back home.

Although, there are claims that the extended family has weakened in most Southern African countries due to modernisation and urbanisation (Chimbiri, 2006), globalisation (Tembo, 2009) and migration (Charrad & Goeken, 2006; Nzira, 2011), which saw families gradually shifting to a more nuclear form (Chimbiri, 2006), in Tsholotsho it has been different. To the contrary, my findings demonstrate a significant prominence of the extended family in the context of migration in Tsholotsho through grandparents taking care of left behind children. The extended family network is indeed a source of effective social security to members (Mushunje, 2016) in Tsholotsho. Although there is a notable move towards nucleation through separation of homesteads, the nuclear family in its pure sense remains an abstract concept and never really a reality. Thus for families in Tsholotsho, just like most families of African descent, members still esteem communal ethos (Amoateng & Heaton, 2015; Casimir & Tobi, 2011), hence in the face of sustained migration, the extended family is seen as a constant and prominent feature.

5.1.3 Engagement in family life and organisation in the different migration epochs: continuities and changes

The different epochs of migration (migration and transnational migration) within the families in Tsholotsho presented different realities and abilities in relation to family and organisation among migrant families. These dynamics are presented in the following sections.

i. Totally uprooted: Historical migrants and family life

Within scenarios of family formations presented in the foregoing, the study findings revealed that in the past, migrants did not maintain constant contact with their families due to challenges presented by distance. The limitations impacted on the migrants' ability to remit, visit and communicate with their families. This emerged on various family history accounts and in-depth interviews both in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg. Respondents retold what their fathers used to tell them about their migration experiences in the past. To give an example of this notion, let me return to Bab' uNdiweni, the man who migrated because of Gukurahundi presented in chapter 4. He reminisced on his childhood experiences of when his father was a migrant and recalled the stories his father used to tell them of his migration venture. He stated that:

> *In the past, I gather it was difficult to be a migrant. In trying to fend for their families, our fathers sacrificed their families. My father travelled on foot to South Africa and when he got there, would stay for a minimum of two years without visiting. If ever he communicated, it would be through a letter that would take more than two months to get to my mother. We missed our father, but there was nothing we could do. Slowly we made peace with the fact that he is not there, it was like we were strangers (Johannesburg, 2017).*

His narration is similar to that of MaSiwela, a 61-year-old grandmother and also a left behind wife to a migrant. She narrated her family history recalling how her father migrated when she was very young. Her brothers also moved when they grew older. The rest of them stayed with their mother back home. MaSiwela recalls how she then got married to a migrant in the absence of her father and moved to stay with her husband's family. She fell pregnant and soon after, her husband returned back to South Africa. From there on, that became the order of her life as after every two to three years the husband visited and always left her pregnant until they had their four children. When her children (both boys and girls) grew older, they also emigrated. By the time I held the interviews, MaSiwela's husband was still in South Africa and she was staying with some of her grandchildren with the help of hired workers. She narrated that:

> *I do not know when my father left initially. I only got to know that my father was a migrant in 1961 when he returned to visit. I was 5 years old. After that, it took him forever to come back again for us to see him. We ploughed and harvested twice in the fields before he came back again. Before he came back, we would only hear from other people's fathers who visited that he was fine. He brought us a lot of nice clothes when he finally came. But before that, we just kept waiting in anticipation that one day, like others' fathers, he would also come (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Also consider MaNdebele's case, a 63-year-old grandmother who also gave some interesting insights. She lives in Tsholotsho while her husband and their children are in Johannesburg. Her father had been a migrant from well before she was born. She and her siblings stayed with their

mother back in Tsholotsho together with the rest of the extended family. She got married along the way and her husband also migrated to South Africa in 1980. At some point she also immigrated to South Africa to help raise money to send their children to school. She worked in South Africa for over ten years and returned around 2011 to stay at home. Now adults, their children have also emigrated and initially cohabited with suiters in South Africa and got married after they had children. Her husband is still a migrant and she stays at home with her grandchildren, with the help of hired workers. She put it this way:

> *Now things are better, these guys can come home as they wish. They can even send groceries and money anytime through omalayitsha, it is that easy. During my father's time, it was difficult. There was a time it took him five years to come back and at some point, we thought he was dead. It was only when he came back that he told us that he was arrested and spent two years in prison. After his release, he had to find his way around and get a job at least so that he could come home with something. When he finally visited, he told us that they travelled by foot and train, though challenging (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

From the accounts above, it is clear that in the past (precolonial and colonial era) migrants spent years in South Africa before visiting their families or remitting. These are migrants who would have left their wives and children behind. For the majority of the accounts given, it emerged that on average, the minimum time it took them before they could visit was two years and a maximum of five years. In between, communication was difficult and only possible through letters. Initially, the letters were sent through other fellow village men who would be visiting home and then with newer developments that came along with time, the letters were sent through postal mail. The letters sent through mail took a long time to reach the intended recipients back home and the migrant back in Johannesburg when they were replied. When the family back home wanted to communicate urgent issues such as death, the leters were written in red ink. This emerged from MaNdebele's account of her family history indicating that use of red ink as a way of stressing the urgency of the message contained in the letter. MaNdebele's account of how her father was released from prison and had to look for a job before returning home demonstrates the breadwinning burden that migrant men carry while away. Although he was released to go back home, he could not risk returning home empty handed as this would have been a sign of failure. This emanates from the gendered divisions of labour within families where the masculine roles placed the burden of material provision/ breadwinning on men and this was the motivation to migrate (Crossley & Pease, 2009; Donaldson & Howson, 2009).

Over and above demonstrating frequencies of communication and visits, MaSiwela and MaNdebele's narrations of the history of migration in their families presents overlaps of their

maiden/natal families and the families they are married into. They viewed their families as extending to both sides of the families involved. Nonetheless, traditionally in patriarchal families, the wife was expected to gradually assimilate into and become part of her husband's family (Gwenzi, 2020; Trask, 2009), leading to assumptions that women will tell the migration history of their marital families. The hybridity of their narrations reveals untold frictions in the construction of women's identity and belonging within complex social relations. It demonstrates how the concept of what and who is family is situational and largely depends on the lived realities of the individuals who make them (Nelson & Fivush, 2020). The women's narratives are also demonstrations of symbolic interactionism as it highlights their agency in determining the meaning of family as well as who qualifies to be part of their family story. Moreover, their narrations show how, over the course of their lives, women have been constantly creating and recreate meanings of what and who is part of their families through interpreting processes in their lived realities as they grow. They also expose how the definition of family is dependent on the individual's view, in this case, the woman, hence contextual, fluid, subjective and is imbued with symbolic meaning and lived realities of the individual involved (Gwenzi, 2020; Trask, 2009).

Returning to the past experiences of migration, clearly (from the narrations given above), when the father/ husband migrated, he was totally removed from the family and only managed to link up after prolonged periods through letters and eventually when he visited. This lack of or limited communication resulted in estranged and strained relationships within migrant families (parent-child as well as spousal). Main reason being that physical presence is very critical in developing healthy family relationships. This estrangement between fathers and their children and wives is a clear demonstration of how physical contact and "shared daily experiences are the bedrock of intimate relationships" within families. When these are missing, they put a strain on relations. This was evidenced in Bab' uKhanye's experience as told in an in-depth interview in Tsholotsho. Bab' uKhanye is a 63-year-old return-migrant in Tsholotsho. His father had been a migrant for many years. During that time, him and his siblings remained with their mother and uncles in Tsholotsho. During my interview with him, he reminisced that:

> *Well, fathers were not friends with children, but their presence was critical. Although they were harsh with us at times, when they left, we felt the gap. We missed his scolding at times, more so as male children. Given the period he would have spent away, he became a stranger to us, at times it felt like he did not exist. When he eventually returned, it took a lot of effort to adjust to his presence. It felt like a stranger had invaded our space. Thinking about it now, I can tell that my mother also struggled. We had to adjust, but it was not easy, and it was never the same. Sleeping arrangements*

> *changed, suddenly his presence ruffled our comfortable routine. More often than not, we so looked forward to his departure. We could tell that it was not easy for either. But he would not say, rather, he played tough, he was the father. Sometimes too harsh for no reason, just to be felt. Just when we had warmed up to his presence, he had to leave again… (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

The same feeling of fathers being strangers was echoed by all family history respondents in the study. This demonstrates that, in migration, intimate and intergenerational relationships suffered. The father did not have a connection with his children and was reduced to a stranger that played the role of material provider. The experiences highlighted by respondents in Tsholotsho reveal similar trends in South Africa. In a book edited by Richter and Morrell (2006) on the man and fatherhood in South Africa, a number of studies are presented on definitions and experiences of fatherhood in the country. It emerged that in South Africa, just like in Zimbabwe, the issue of absent fathers is a common occurrence. It emanates from the drive by men to provide for their families which pushes them to migrate. While physically absent, their greatest contribution is financial support (Rabe, 2006). Inevitably, their absence leads to strained relationships with their children (Denis & Ntsimane, 2006). In Tsholotsho, the trend repeats itself with three generations of fathers that left and leave their children behind.

In the same vein, wives did not have the companionship that a husband should offer in a marriage. This demonstrates the silent frictions that exist within migrant families. As fathers sought to uphold their masculine roles, they lost out on building strong relationships with their children. Instead, from Bab' uKhanye's narrative, we pick nuances of negative compensatory behaviour that manifests itself in being harsh. This also demonstrates the frictions in a man's world as he grapples with the demands of being a man and father. Thus, to assert his presence as a father, he demands recognition by being harsh and strict.

These findings are also in congruence with those of a study by UNICEF (2008) on the impact of parental deprivation on Moldovan left behind children. The study highlights how when parents migrate, children gradually get used to their parents absence and learn to live without them. As the parent returns and attempts to take back their position, there is friction. In some instances, the children resent their parents as they would have become complete strangers who no longer represent authority. In the case of my study, given that the fathers travelled for years without returning or any form of contact, the prolonged separation led to the strain in relationships because in families, regular contact of the glue that sustains relationships.

According to the family systems theory, the ability by the left behind family to adjust to the removal of the father demonstrates the inherent ability by the system to change to accommodate transformations. Even when the father returned, although there may be frictions as he tries to incorporate himself back into the system, eventually the norms governing the system will aid the family to self-organise and self-stabilise. The children will gradually accept that the man is their father and afford him his place, although the transition is not smooth. The challenge with the family systems theory in this case is that it fails to cater for the frictions that may arise within the system and at times the chaos that may emanate from that. On the contrary, it presents a superficial reality where, in the face of change, the family system smoothly adapts and stabilises. The emotions and individual reactions of members are not granted enough attention, a glaring flaw in the lack of balance between structure and agency.

Moreover, in the past, there were occurrences of migrants leaving Tsholotsho and staying for decades in South Africa before they could return to their families. In most cases, they returned with nothing (no money, no groceries or provisions for the family). These were popularly known in the IsiNdebele language spoken in Tsholotsho as *imigewu*[15]*,* meaning those who migrated and never returned to or communicated with their families back home or took very long to do so. Within the family history narratives that were gathered, this emerged in two families, Nkazi (the migrant single mother) and MaNkiwane's family. MaNkiwane is a 39-year-old left behind wife in Tsholotsho. Her father migrated in 1951, way before she was born. She recalled how she only got to know her father when she was around five years old, when she could relate to the world around her. Family to her was her mother, siblings and many cousins, uncles and aunts as well as grandparents. In the later years, she married a migrant man. As young as they were and given that during their time most young couples migrated together, she stayed behind. They now have three children and the husband comes to visit two to three times a year and she also visits in South Africa during off-farming seasons.

MaNkiwane indicated that when she was growing up, she had an uncle, her father's young brother, who migrated and stayed for over twenty years in South Africa without communicating. When he left, he had not yet married. However, his parents (MaNkiwane's grandparents) were troubled. They tried to trace his whereabouts through other migrant men

[15] This term is derived from the verb *gewuka* which means being gone for a long time without communicating or coming back. In the context of migration therefore, the name *imigewu* refers to people who went to South Africa for over 10 years without communicating with or returning to their people.

from the village when they visited. Initially, they could hear of his whereabouts but after some years, there was no trace of him. The parents even went to the extent of consulting with *Isanuse*[16]*,* who could throw bones for divination purposes in order to read and predict situations. All these efforts were, however, not fruitful. After about ten years, MaNkiwane indicated that the grandparents started to make peace with the fact that they may not see their son again. She stated that he only returned after about twenty years, '*empty handed'*. He then narrated how he had found a Zulu woman that took him to the rural areas in South Africa where they had settled as husband and wife, however, they could not have children. The frustrations of not having children pushed him to return to his family in Zimbabwe with the hope that his case could be addressed from the land of his ancestors and perhaps find a solution for his problem.

Such emigrants were without honour and dignity in their families and seen as colossal failures. They were regarded as colossal failures because they returned home with nothing, which is contrary to the expectations held of migrants in general and men in particular. Donaldson and Howson (2009) writing on '*men, migration and hegemonic masculinity'* indicated that the major expectation from migrant men is that when they return, they 'bring back the bacon'. Meaning they were expected to put food on the table for their families. Returning empty-handed was seen as failure by a man to perform his masculine role of material provision for his family. Expectations from families include remitting money, food, clothes and other goods as evidenced in Worby (2010) who also noted that Zimbabwean immigrants in Johannesburg are faced with these demands from their families. Thus, when they fail to meet this demand, they are labelled as failures. When I probed this further with one of the key informants who is a historian, Mr. Nyathi, on issues around *imigewu* and how they were handled, he indicated that:

> *Imigewu is a common occurrence among emigrants. Some people just decide to go forever and remove themselves from their families back in Zimbabwe. Historically, if this happened and the man was married and after the average time would have lapsed that the man was expected to be back, the elders made a decision. They caucused and agreed to release the woman to marry whoever she wanted. In most instances, she married within the husband's family and remained part of the family. However, before they could reach this decision, the elders would have tried to communicate with him through fellow village men who would have travelled back. There was very little the family could do other than to wait with the hope that time would bring answers to their questions (Zimbabwe, 2017).*

In the case of MaNkiwane's uncle, it becomes clear that he voluntarily disconnected from his family hoping he had secured a good life for himself in South Africa and also evade law

[16] Isanuse is a traditional diviner

enforcers. Elaborating on such issues, Worby (2010) proffered that migrants engaged in a number of ways to get a place within which they could evade legal scrutiny and at the same time detach themselves from claims of relatives. Just as discussed above from a family systems perspective, the family seemingly adjusted to MaNkiwane's uncle's absence and it was life as usual. The system may stabilise and function but for individual members, there may be emotional undercurrents that will always magnify the gap left by the member who disappeared without communication.

ii. Simultaneity: Transnational migrants and family life

Unlike in the past, in the contemporary context of transnationalism, migrants in Johannesburg indicated that they maintain constant contact with their families back in Tsholotsho. They attributed this to the technological developments that have happened over the past decades. This ability to keep in constant contact with their families back home qualifies them as transnational migrants as compared to the traditional migrants as alluded to also by Schiller et al., (1995b). I asked the migrants how they maintained contact with their families back home. They stated that they mainly maintained contact with their families through regular communication, visits and remittances. Migrants also indicated that they linked with their families in Tsholotsho through participation in family rituals whether in person or virtually. They participate in ritual performances as one of the ways to remain connected with their families, affirm belonging and avert risks (this is discussed at length in chapter 6). These responses demonstrate an unhindered ability to link/ communicate regularly with families back in Tsholotsho. This is objectionable given some of my observations in the study area as well as my experiences communicating with my own mother back in Tsholotsho while in South Africa which is typical of most families in the study area (as presented in detail further down in this section).

Let's go back to Nkazi, the divorced single mother presented in chapter 4 who travelled to South Africa illegally leaving her children behind. She stated that:

> *These days life has become easy in terms of linking with my mother and children back in Tsholotsho. There are cell phones now Econet [the leading telecoms service provider in Zimbabwe]is readily available in my home area. Now there is even WhatsApp where we can talk real time with my family. So, I bought them a phone that can go on the internet and we communicate easily on that. Again, I can travel home anytime if I so choose. I may be here today and wake up in Tsholotsho tomorrow (Johannesburg, 2017).*

A majority of the transnational migrants interviewed in Johannesburg also shared the same sentiment of ease of communication and travel with Nkazi. Thus, contemporarily, transnational migrants are simultaneously embedded as they keep in touch with their families regularly while engaging with their other social milieu in Johannesburg. Also consider Newman, the 37-year-old migrant that left Tsholotsho soon after finishing his 'O' levels. When asked the kind of communication he receives from his family back home, he noted that:

> *We talk more often with my grandmother. My mother passed away a long time ago and I was raised by my grandmother. She can talk to me on WhatsApp anytime and tell me what she needs. But when I see her calling, I get scared at times because I would know that what she wants to communicate is important. This is because important messages like deaths for example, cannot be communicated via WhatsApp, she calls. I also send her money, food and clothes, I take care of her (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Remember Patricia, one of the female migrants that crossed illegally to South Africa in 1999. Reiterating the same sentiments about communication on WhatsApp, she had tis to say:

> *Although WhatsApp is a good thing that helps us link with our families, people are now abusing it. You see, if a relative dies, some people will be quick to update statuses with rest in peace messages and pictures of the deceased. More often than not, this will be way before all close relatives get the news and some end up learning about the painful news on statuses. This is wrong. As a people we should know that there are some life events that cannot be communicated on WhatsApp. In most instances, such messages should be communicated face to face or in a respectful manner (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Patricia's sentiments remind me of two painful experiences I had. The first one, is when I woke up to dozens of rest-in-peace messages on a church WhatsApp group only to discover that it was my uncle who had been shot dead in South Africa. The second one was when my Aunt (young sister to my mother) lost her husband in South Africa and I was back in Zimbabwe. Before arrangements could be made to properly communicate the sad news to her, one of the late husband's brothers picked the phone and called her directly to deliver the message. After that, he went on to update his status before my cousin sister could be told of her father's passing and she had to get the news through a status.

Again, regular visits and remittances were other prominent forms of linking with families back home among transnational migrants. This also emerged from interviews with the left behind in Tsholotsho. Consider MaNkiwane's narration for example:

> *These days it is different, it is no longer like in the past. When I was a child, my father left us with our mother and the extended family, and he used to communicate occasionally through letters sent via postal services. These took time to reach us. When I got married, the same obtained for my father-in-law who was a migrant. However, over the years, things have changed, with the ability to make phone calls, communicate*

> *on WhatsApp and travel regularly, it is very easy for me to communicate with my husband and discuss family matters and even make decisions instantly as a family as though he is physically present (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Bab' uNdlela also put it this way:

> *In my family, migration has been ongoing for a long time. My father migrated before I was born. I have been a migrant for too long also. My wife and children remained back in Tsholotsho. My wife visits often When I left home, the migration experience was very difficult unlike when my children later moved. Now it is easy, we talk to those left-behind almost every day through regular phone calls or on social media. It is now so easy to travel back unlike in the past. We can now visit home as many times as one wants, resources allowing (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Furthermore, Bab' uNdiweni, also reminisced on his current experience of migration. He narrated that:

> *My experience now is better compared to my father. My communication with my family is a lot more frequent, and I can visit every year. We missed our father, but there was nothing we could do. Slowly we made peace with the fact that he is not there, it was like we were strangers. I feared being a stranger to my children too, so I tried all I could to keep in touch, it was lonely in South Africa, I needed them. (Johannesburg, 2017).*

In light of the foregoing, clearly transnational migrants linked with their families through regular phone calls and social media, powered by the internet, in this case WhatsApp; visits and remittance. However, although WhatsApp is a positive development that facilitates real time connections and promote virtual presence of members, it cannot be used to communicate some sensitive messages within families like death. In some instances, it has been improperly used, in the process contravening traditional ways of handling sensitive life events like deaths for example. Thus, in transnational migration, family life takes place in transnational social spaces. These virtual spaces within which transnational migrants and their families negotiate their existence and continue to be significant and viable social entities regardless of separation of members by distance, dispersal and translocality and (Vanotti, 2014; Yeoh et al., 2005). Within the transnational social spaces, the transnational families engage in a number of socio-cultural and economic activities facilitated by space shrinking technologies. These activities enable them to function as families albeit separated by place and distance.

Although they communicate regularly, it also emerged that some migrants preferred to communicate with specific family members and not all of them. All the interviewees in Johannesburg, indicated the people they communicate with always by order of priority. For married men who left their wives in Tsholotsho, for example, the trend was that they

communicated with their wives on a regular basis. They would also communicate with their children and grandchildren once in a while resources permitting. For the rest of the extended family members, they just sent a word of greeting through the wife. Bab' uNdiweni's narrative of who he communicates with most back in Tsholotsho is typical of families where the husband is a migrant and the wife is left behind:

> *My wife is my top priority. Resources allowing, I can talk to her every day. I need to know how things are back home and how she is. As for my grandchildren, I can talk to them here and there when I call but not always, as long as my wife tells me they are fine, then all is good. For the rest of the extended family, honestly, I can only send a word of greeting. To say I can talk to them frequently is not sustainable (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Also consider Petunia, the single mother teaching in Johannesburg. She explained it this way:

> *As much as I may wish to talk to everyone back home, it is practically impossible. Calling Zimbabwe is expensive. So, when I call, I call my mother and talk to her and hear what she needs. I hardly talk to my father, just once in while I just greet and ask how he is. Then I call my son and I try to have as much time talking to him as is possible seeing I am not physically there to parent him (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Her narration is archetypal of the communication priorities of most single mothers whose children and parents are back in Zimbabwe. These virtual exchanges through active interaction depict new ways of enforcing elements of familyhood within transnational families powered by transnational social spaces. Instead of purely physical relations and exchanges like in proximate families, in transnational families, much of family life exchanges are done virtually, within transnational social spaces with some episodes of physical presence.

Although the scenarios presented by the migrants may be true, they are rather idealistic. On their side, it may be easy to initiate communication with their members left behind. I lived with some migrants and mingled with most on several occasions and I gathered that most of them do sacrifice their other needs to buy airtime so that they can link with their families back home. Although this is the case, the process is never a smooth one. Most left behind families in Tsholotsho face a number of connectivity challenges. While Econet wireless network coverage is available, some families have challenges with charging their mobile phones since they do not have charging equipment such solar power systems. They depend on neighbours for charging and this may take days. I know this because I have experienced it with my parents when their solar system was down. I could go for day looking for them without success as their phone batteries will be flat. For urgent matters, I used to call neighbours and ask them to relay the message or ask to talk to my parents. Furthermore, in Zimbabwe, mobile data is relatively

very expensive especially for the unemployed. There are no lucrative mobile data promotions and special packages as is the case in South Africa. Thus, in most instances, people may not have airtime to enable communication on WhatsApp for example. As such, although the current transnationalism has all these possibilities of connectivity, there are such impediments hence my deduction that interviewed migrants portrayed an exaggerated view of their transnational experiences that overlooks the costs of connectivity. This is in congruence with some of the criticisms of transnationalism proffered by Waldinger (2015) that although ICTs technologies significantly shape accessibility and frequency of communication in transnationalism, there are glaring limitations especially for rural communities. In the next sections, I present the different ways in which transnational migrants negotiate their caring roles, power, rights and authority in their families while being away.

5.2 Caring practices and arrangements in transnational families

Historically, as indicated in the previous sections, when the father migrated, the children were left under the care of their mother and the extended family. The woman would engage in subsistence agriculture and make sure the children had food. In some instances, the mother would sell some of the produce to buy what the children may have needed if the migrant father had not sent any money. Let me return to MaNkiwane, the daughter of a migrant who later became a wife of a migrant. She noted that:

> *Back in the days, when our father was a migrant, our mother was a very industrious woman. We never lacked food. She would work in the fields and take care of us from the produce she would harvest. There were instances where she even sold cow peas to get money to buy us shoes. She made sure we were always sorted (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

This emerged as a trend that was common in the past where the woman had to step up to make sure her children had food while the husband was away. However, when major issues arose or major decisions had to be made in the absence of the migrant husband, other male members of the family of the mother of the migrant stepped in to decide. According to the respondents, major decisions entailed issues to do with land, livestock, marriages and deaths. Responding to the question of the role of the extended family while the migrant member was away, Bab' uNyathi, the ex-soldier stated that:

> *The extended family helped when there were challenges of discipline with the children or to help in the fields during the ploughing season and to help when there were major decisions to be made like on marriage while the husband was away (Johannesburg, 2017).*

On the same aspect, consider Gogo MaDube's narration. It is typical of family life where the wife was left behind. She is a 72-year-old widow currently staying with grandchildren from the extended family and a hired worker. Her biological grandchildren stay with their parents. Gogo MaDube noted that her husband had migrated to South Africa in 1963 while their first son followed in 1985 and the rest of the children in the later years. When her husband was away, his brothers stood in for him to make decisions. Reminiscing on her life as a left behind wife, she offered the following narration:

> *In families there are some decisions that a woman cannot make. Some of these are decisions regarding land and livestock, they are always considered to be major decisions that are in the men's domain. So, when my husband was away, I relied on his father and brothers to make such decisions for us. I remember some year, I cannot remember which one, when there was a serious drought and one of our cows was in a terrible state. I could see that the only way out was to kill it or else it was going to die. Although it was mine, together with my husband, I could not make that decision. I had to wait for the elders of the family to decide what had to be done (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Bab' uMlilo, also shared these sentiments. He is a 68-year-old return-migrant now settled in Tsholotsho. Offering the history of migration in his family, he remembered that he and his siblings were left with their mother under the care of the extended family when his father migrated. They all lived in one big homestead made of smaller household units. He then migrated in 1969 and sometime later returned to get married and also left his wife in Tsholotsho with his family. After being a migrant for over 30 years, he returned to Zimbabwe for good in the early 2000s and now all his children are migrants. Currently he stays with his wife, grandchildren and hired workers. He narrated that:

> *You see, back then things were different. The extended family had so much control over the affairs of the family. Unlike now when these young wives stay in their own homesteads and make decisions with their husbands over the phone, in the past our mothers depended on paternal uncles and our grandfather to make decisions for them. This was because then, communication was difficult. We used to have a piece of land which was part of our fields but was not in use, it belonged to my father. One of his aunties returned from her marriage after she divorced her husband. She stayed with us and needed some piece of land where she could farm and get food. My mother could not make the decision, the elders set and deliberated, and my mother was only told that the aunt had been given the land (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Thus, historically, women played a key role in caring for the children while the extended family deliberated and decided on major issues. This vividly illustrates the subtle manifestation of the organisation of kinship as well as structures of ascent and descent within patriarchal families in Tsholotsho. Just like in most Southern African societies, descent in families in Tsholotsho

follows patrilineal lines[17] where emphasis is also placed on patrilocality. This means after marriage, the woman assimilates into her husband's kin group and within this group, male members have the obligations lead other members of the same group to ensure continuity – see (Lowes, 2020). There is a critical role of the extended family which becomes a source of effective social security to members (Mushunje, 2016) with much emphasis on solidarity and interdependence. As such, even when the husband is away, the structures of family organisation within families uphold the division of labour where the woman keeps to her feminine role and another male member steps up to fulfil the obligations of the absent kinsman. This is also illustrative of the provisions of the family systems theory where families are able to reconfigure themselves in response to any changes that may have occurred. Kinship organisation and the unwritten but known obligations of members to another become the campus guiding members in the adjustments made and how they are made. Similar arrangements were noted in some of the current transnational families where women were left behind. The women took up the caring roles for the children while the extended family network was a source of effective social security to members (Mushunje, 2016) with much emphasis on solidarity and interdependence.

Currently, in the transnational era, the major variation is that the wife left behind also doubles up as a grandmother to children left behind by her own children who are also emigrants. Within these families, there was also a notable presence of hired workers (domestic workers and livestock attendants) who helped the grandmothers to take care of the children. Let me go back to Gogo MaDube and MaSiwela, two grandmothers in Tsholotsho. Gogo MaDube narrated that:

> *The livestock attendant assists me a lot in taking care of these children. He helps fetch firewood, water and also when I am not around or on days where I feel frail, he even cooks (Tsholotsho, 2017)*;

while MaSiwela, put it this way:

> *I am a mother of seven. Two of my girls are married and stay in their homes. The other five are immigrants in South Africa. Of the five, three are married man and living with their families there. The other two are single mothers and I stay with their children here. Each of them has two children. Now, given the number of children and the load of work in the fields when it is the agricultural season and other demands, they have hired workers (domestic workers and livestock attendants) who are helping me with the chores at home and tending livestock. I only supervise them (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

[17]Zimbabwean culture. Available from: https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/zimbabwean-culture/zimbabwean-culture-references#zimbabwean-culture-references

Gogo MaNdlovu was of a different opinion. She is now a widow and her husband was a migrant. She recalled that her father had also been a migrant although she could not remember when he first emigrated. All her children are immigrants in South Africa and she sadly related to me how she lost two of her children in South Africa to suicide years back. She currently stays with her grandchildren and strongly indicated she does not want to hire the aid of a worker because they are trouble. She opined that:

> *I have tried living with domestic workers, they are impossible people. They give you a headache. I would rather stay with my grandchildren and we help each other around, life goes on. When you get a domestic worker, she will start having affairs and bringing her boyfriends to my homestead at night, I do not want that. Livestock attendants are better, but they are also trouble, they impregnant people's children and then disappear and you remain in trouble since you brought him into the area. Some of these workers will even steal from you and run away, they are a headache (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

According to some of the key informants, there were some instances where the children were left in the sole care of the hired workers. Thus, in light of the foregoing, it emerges that in Tsholotsho, caregiving arrangements are part of the critical changes that are a result of transnational migration (Baldassar & Merla, 2013) and feminisation of migration. The findings indicate that kinship organisation and structures still matter as the extended family actively participates in managing and caring for children left behind (Hoang et al., 2015) just like in the past. Although weakened, it is still an effective social security next for transnational families. As such, the current transnational families have their own kinship logics of family organisation that are not confined to modernisation dictates of the nuclear family. While female relatives and grandmothers continue to play a significant role as caregivers while parents are away, a notable emergence of other care arrangements within these transnational families has been observed (Kofman & Raghuram, 2012). These not only involve intra-family care arrangements, but also that of other non-family members (either from within or outside the community) – see also (Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

Unlike the historical migrants, transnational migrants maintained some presence in their children's lives although not physical. Responding to the question on how they maintained their roles as parents to their left behind children, transnational migrants in Johannesburg (both men and women) stated that they sent remittances to cover their children's needs (food, clothes, school fees, stationery, health, paying workers, etc.). This is a clear demonstration of how gendered roles in families are also about different genders providing different things. For the men, their masculine role is material provision and breadwinning while for women it is

affective care. Thus, in the transnational paradigm, men continued with their provider role in the family while women traversed the gender roles divide as they took on the breadwinning role. They gave up their affective role as home carers and socialisers responsible for sustenance. All the interviewed transnational migrants with children in Tsholotsho indicated that they actively took care of their children's lives through remittances, a trend confirmed in a study conducted in the same area by Ncube (2010) see also - (Ncube & Gómez, 2011, 2015). Similarly, in a study on remittances in the DRC, Kakonde also found that remittances were also a symbol of status and dignity within families and communities of origin (Kankonde, 2010).

Although transnational parents participate in care-giving obligations, key informants and two grandmothers in Tsholotsho stated that some migrant members left children behind but never communicated nor sent any remittances to cater for the needs of their children. Gogo Zabanye, a key informant, is a 75-year-old village head standing in for the rightful village head (her husband's brother) who is in South Africa. Reflecting on the foregoing, she put it this way:

> *You see my grandchild; people are not the same. In this area, there are certain cases where some migrate, leave their children behind and you never hear from them. They will not care what their children ate, what they wear, let alone paying school fees. There are grandmothers who are suffering here because of such people (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Gogo MaMoyo, is another 65-year-old widowed grandmother looking after left her behind grandchildren in Tsholotsho. Her brothers migrated to South Africa a long time ago. Her first son moved in 1996 after finishing school and the siblings followed in the later years. She looks after six grandchildren born to three of her children with the help of hired workers. She offered these reflections:

> *My daughter, together with her siblings, live in South Africa, she has been there for years now. She has been having children in South Africa and sending them to me. Am told she is not working a stable job, so she gets men for accommodation purposes and she gets pregnant. She would call me once the child is a year old and entice me to keep her child for her. She will tell me how she now wants to try and work for her children. As soon as I receive the child, she will communicate for a few months and then keep quiet. After a while I will hear she is pregnant again. She has done this three time and because she is my child, I cannot refuse to keep her children from her with the hope that one day she will do the right thing. She is not communicating nor bothering what her children wear or eat or whether at all they go to school (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Gogo MaMoyo's reflection is similar to that given by MaNdebele who narrated that:

> *One of my sons who lives in Johannesburg visited home and impregnated a girl when he was still a young man. When the girl delivered, she kept the child for a few years*

> *and got married to another man. She left the child with her mother. My grandson would visit occasionally. After a while he indicated that he wished to come and stay with me. I spoke to his grandmother and she agreed, and I took him in. Meanwhile, my son had married another woman and they now have children. They forget about this one with me. It is a stress for me when schools open because I will be worried about his school fees. I have to hustle to get by with this child, it's a stress (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

The two scenarios presented in Gogo MaMoyo and MaNdebele's reflections demonstrate the deep-seated challenges associated with migration. Although there may be a seemingly smooth flow of communication across borders for some, there are also challenges of parents deserting their children and overburdening the grandmothers and/ guardians. This unearths the frictions and conflicts inherent within families in the context of migration. This illuminates the prevalence of what Kufakurinani et al., (2014) labelled as diaspora orphans. Although they use the concept loosely to cover even those who received plenty from their parents, it also referred to children who did not enjoy any benefits from their parents abroad. Arguably, the latter were more vulnerable as they grappled with the sense of neglect and abandonment. This could potentially have a far-reaching negative effect on the emotional wellbeing of the children.

The sense that the grandmothers took care of these children regardless demonstrates both the circulation of care theoretical approach proposed in studying care arrangements in the complex of transnational families as well as the political economy of sex in migration as propounded by Hunter (2007) as will be explained further on. On one hand, the concept of circulation of care demonstrates that, although migration physically removes parents from their children, families come up with novel ways of ensuring that another person steps in and covers the care gap. In so doing, families retain a sense of collectivity and kinship and consequently engage in processes and practices of being family (Baldassar & Merla, 2013). This is because, more often than not, families are entities full of care and affection. Thus, notwithstanding the fact that the distance that physically separates migrants from their families is the major obstacle to family life, circulation of care enables transnational family life. Although this is the case, the concept fails to cater for other care arrangements that involve people from outside the family sphere, for example hired workers. My study highlights the fact that in Tsholotsho, the major trend is to have hired workers actively involved in caring for left behind children and grandmothers. Although the shortcoming of the circulation of care concept confines the care circulation within families, the concept of global care chains offers a broader lens to view care within migrant families. According to global care chains, people from outside the family sphere are active players in the provision of care for those left behind (Knight, 2012; Yeates, 2004). Thus, the

case in Tsholotsho best demonstrates a combination of both concepts to come up with effective care arrangements for the left behind children.

On the other hand, these scenarios demonstrate Hunter (2007)'s notion of the changing political economy of sex and sexuality in migration and the magnitude and consequences of the *masihlalisane* concept as discussed by Maphosa (2012). Hunter observed that in South Africa, for example, due to the notable increase in unemployment and poverty as a result of changes in the political and economic structure, generally, men's ability as reliable providers for their families decreased. This notable change also led to the inability of young men to raise enough money to marry, consequently leading to a decline in marriages. According to Hunter, women then migrated in relation to these structural challenges that led to the restructuring of the traditional system of familyhood where male were providers. As the women flooded the urban areas, mostly in squatter camps or *imijondolo* as Hunter puts it, they practiced *umasihlalisane* (cohabiting) – (see Maphosa, 2012) or engaged in casual sexual relations with other male migrants for incentives (could be accommodation, money, emotional attachment etc). This created momentary linkages from which children could be born. Consider Lillian's case. She emigrated to South Africa when she was a 23-year-old unmarried girl. She told me that her dream was to preserve her virginity until she got married to her future husband and have a white wedding. However, when she got to South Africa, accommodation pressures mounted on her as she could not stay with her father forever. She moved out and stayed alone and after some time found herself cohabiting with her boyfriend to share expenses and the next thing, she was pregnant. They later formalised their relationship with their families traditionally and she was still married to the husband by the time of the interview. She offered the following reflections:

> *I moved to South Africa in 2002. My father had already been a migrant from before I was born. He used to come home after some two years or so but with time his visits became more frequent. We learnt that he had another woman in South Africa. When I got to South Africa, I could not stay for long with him and as such I moved out. My sole desire had been to abstain from sexual activity up until I was married. However, I could not achieve this as the challenges of Johannesburg caught up with me and I found myself cohabiting with my boyfriend who was Shona. We had our first child before both families knew about our relationship (Johannesburg, 2017).*

The new care arrangements may lead to disruptions of existing family structures consequently leading to likelihoods of families reassigning roles or changing existing power/authority/influence structures (Rodriguez & Margolin, 2015). As a result, between the emigrant parent and the *in-situ* caregiver, there may be reassigning (desired or forced) of

decision-making power and authority in relation to the left behind children and around productive goods. This constitutes a de facto change of rights, power and authority as the gap created by the parents' absence is taken *de facto* by those present, thus, power symmetries are automatically dictated by the status quo. This may inevitably lead to systematic alterations of the family systems to facilitate their ability to thrive in the prevailing circumstances. In the next section I look at the power, rights and authority dynamics within transnational families.

5.3 Power, rights and authority within the dominant family formations in Tsholotsho

The dynamics presented next are as observed within the two broad transnational family categories prominent in Tsholotsho.

5.3.1 Power rights and authority in families where husband/ father is a migrant and wife and children are left behind

There are different power dynamics, rights and authority at play within the broader family category where the husband/father (and his children) are migrants and the wife and/or mother are left behind. In the absence of her husband the wife wields some form of power, authority and rights (albeit limited). It emerged that the wife gained autonomy to make decisions on day-to-day issues such as disciplining children, religion, handling of agricultural harvest, among others, and informed the husband later on her decisions, while for some of the decisions on capital goods and property, she had to first consult with the husband. For example, on issues pertaining rights, such as handling/ use of land and livestock, the wife could not make any decision without consulting with and getting final consent from the husband. This is unlike in the past where the extended family stepped in to make decisions on behalf of the migrant member.

Although this was the case in the past, women within these families gained some form of power. They had the power and agency within themselves that enabled them to work hard in the absence of their husbands to ensure the survival of their children. The women had the confidence, assertiveness and agency to make sure their families survived even in the prolonged absence of the breadwinner. For example, Bab' uNyathi, one of the family respondents indicated that:

> *Our mother was a strong woman. She worked so hard against all odds to make sure that we had food to eat. She did not depend on any one to make sure we were taken good care of, she was a resilient woman. If it were some of these young women of today, they would have returned to their families or even had affairs, but our mother stood the test of time in the absence of our father (Johannesburg – 2017).*

Moreover, together with her children, the left behind wife had solidarity with her children and they viewed themselves as a family within the bigger family. She stood together with her children regardless of the situations they faced. As such, although the wife may have been subjected to patriarchal control where she had no power to make decisions or power over any capital goods, (overt forms of power), she had some covert power within herself and with her children. Interestingly, as women gain this power, they remain conscious of the fact that the husband is the head of the family and hence has the ultimate power and authority. The rights and authority to make decisions and the power and control still remain with the men This was demonstrated in one of the left-behind wives in Tsholotsho, MaNkiwane's avid assertion that,

> *As much as I may be able to make some decisions while my husband is away, it does not mean I am now equal to him. He still remains the man and head of this family. I call him when there is a decision to be made. He makes family decisions about cattle and land while I deal with decisions on goats, donkeys and chickens. The cows are his responsibility because it was like that even in the past. A wife does not have a kraal and land. When he comes back, I allow him to take his place and lead us as the family. At times he may make me reverse some of the decisions I may have made, and I accept because he is the head (Tsholotsho: 2017).*

MaNkiwane's narration of her experience as a left behind wife is also illustrative of how, currently, owing to transnationalism and the resultant migrant simultaneous embeddedness, men still retain their rights and positions of power and authority within their families.

Her narrations reveal how, although seemingly empowered by male absence, left behind women are still influenced by patriarchal ideologies of power and authority within families. MaNkiwane still holds on to the dictates of patriarchy that men control the means of production. Thus, although gender relations are reconfigured (Musanga, 2016), there remains some deep-seated gendered ideologies that shape women's actions in the absence of their husbands. Thus, although absent, the man is still accorded his space as the leader of the family and hence has the final decision even in his absence.

In instances where the husband migrated leaving his wife and children behind, the wife reinforced on the religion that the family followed, and, in most instances, children attended the church that the mother attended. Drawing on his experience with his family, Bab' uNdiweni narrated that:

> *My wife runs our home in my absence. She has the complete oversight of the children and basically everything when I am away. I am a very traditional man, personally I believe in ancestral worship and would love my family to follow suit. But my wife is a Christian and when our children were still young and at home, she took them with her to church. Now they are old and migrants themselves and she is living with our grandchildren. She also takes them to church with her. She has the authority to influence the religion they follow because she lives with them (Johannesburg, 2017).*

His narration highlights the changes that have occurred within migrant families in the context of transnationalism. It reveals that in transnational migration, gender has become open for negotiation, in the process transforming gender relations within families (Musanga, 2016). Unlike in the past where patriarchy dominated and other men filled the power/ authority vacuum created by the absent other and made decisions on his behalf, transnationalism results in women gaining decision-making power as they actively and directly communicate with their migrant husbands in making decisions. In that sense, these changes challenge the patriarchal order of family organising. These changes are reflective of what Musanga (2016, p. 367) refers to as a "transformed type of masculinity that is more tolerant and open to gender change".

Responding to the question of who disciplined the children in the absence of the father, most of the left behind women indicated that the mother had the autonomy and power to discipline the children. However, in cases where the children were not heeding their mother's discipline, she would inform the father as the ultimate head and authority of the family. This is unlike in the past where other male members of the extended family stepped in to reinforce discipline in the absence of the father. It emerged that like in the past, children fear their fathers and are likely to be on their good behaviour if the father intervened. This reveals how transnational migrant men make efforts to maintain relationships and enforce them virtually as opposed to the relationships that are established by blood and left to be. Although the man is the father, he makes efforts to be an actively present father within his families compared to historical migrants who were absent and alienated from their families. This further demonstrates the family rebuilding strategies in the current generations of migrants punctuated by efforts to be present as a reparation for their fathers' absence. All these differences in family making strategies by migrants in different generations are evident in the following narrations. Bab' uNyathi, further reminiscing on his childhood experiences when his father was a migrant offered these reflections:

> *In African culture, it is alright to beat up children as it is regarded as a way of disciplining the child. My father's absence made me extremely happy because he never got a chance to beat me up. My mother was a tough woman, she disciplined us but us*

> *being boys and more so adolescents, we always found our way around her. When our father came to visit, I was happy but also scared, I would think of all my misdemeanours and often wondered if he saw through me. Basically, his absence made life very easier for everyone at home because the 'ruthless' authoritarian would be away (Johannesburg, 2017).*

In a similar account, MaNkiwane, one of the young wives left behind put it this way:

> *I have two boys and one girl, the boys are now in secondary school and as they grow at times, they become rude. I used to discipline them on my own when they were younger but now, they are old and I at times fear that when I try to beat them, they may beat me. I know they will never do that because I am their mother, but I just fear that. So, in cases where I try to discipline them and I feel they do not listen to me, I call their father and tell him. He knows how to deal with them. At times he will call them and settle the matter on the phone yet at times he will come home and sort the matter. My children now know that when I say I will tell your father; they better change or else they will be seriously disciplined (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Bab' uNyathi's narration gives us a glimpse of the past realities of families with migrants fathers while MaNkiwane's offers us a view of the current. In both scenarios, fathers emerge as the ultimate figures of authority within families. In the past, they were only able to enforce discipline when they visited, or another father figure stood in for them to enforce discipline. However, currently, the fathers are able, to a certain extent, to enforce discipline while away through active communication with those left behind. In terms of the children's education, both parents in consultation with each other made the decision. Although there is consultation, the husband has the final say, given the financial implications of this decision. He is the one who is gainfully employed, and he will be the one to determine the kind of school he can afford to pay for.

Unlike in the past where men travelled for years without coming back owing to challenges in modes of travel, contemporary migrants can move freely back and forth between their homes and destination countries. Furthermore, they are in constant, almost everyday contact with their families back home. Giving an account of his family history Bab' uNdiweni, further stated that,

> […] *in the past, it took migrants at least two years and some five years to travel back home after migrating because there were no means of transport and migrants travelled by foot and had no passports but now, they have passports and fast cars (Johannesburg, 2017).*

As such, present day transnational migrants enjoy flexibility in travel and communication which allows them to retain their rights, power and authority albeit across borders. Although this is what was recorded from the respondents, their views created a very idealised picture of transnational family life where everything worked smoothly. However, from my experiences

and observation as a person from Tsholotsho, although travel and communication has become easy, migrants still face challenges. Most of them are in low paying jobs and have limited leave days which makes it difficult to travel back and forth at will. Moreover, transport costs limit quite a majority from frequently visiting home. In terms of communication, they do try to keep in touch but their families back in Tsholotsho usually have challenges with charging their phones such that they are not always reachable.

In the past, as Gogo MaDube, one of the grandmothers in Tsholotsho put it this way:

> *[…] when there were decisions to be made in the family about cattle, my husband would write a letter and say 'go to Ndlovu' referring t his brother and tell him your issue. Or when there were in-laws coming for lobola negotiations, if my husband is away, he would instruct me to invite his brothers, uncle and aunt to come and take his position. After that, they will write him a letter explaining what transpired, (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

From the quote above, it emerges that as men migrated, a vacuum was created. The spaces they evacuated as a direct consequence of the migratory experience led to the reorganisation and/ reconfiguration of familial relations. Other family members had to devise means and ways to fill social vacuums created in the families. In this case, paternal uncles played a critical role in ensuring continuity in family lives by stepping in to take the place of the absent husband. The extended family on the husband's side (i.e. the husband's brothers and/or paternal uncles and in some instances, aunties and parents) had authority to take over the responsibilities of the absent husband and make decisions on his behalf. Notably, the wife became the *de facto* head of the family over and above the power, rights and authority transactions that took place following patriarchal dictates. While she was the head, of the family, she did not have decision making power as it was given to the extended family male members. In some instances, decisions could be made by the emigrant husband's mother or paternal aunt. Thus, the indefinite absence of men resulted in the reconfiguration of family relations as well as power and authority. However, in the current transnational scenario, men still retain their decision-making power and authority from afar due to their ability to be simultaneously embedded.

In the same families, the wife also took up the responsibilities of the absent husband in the public domain. For example, where there were community meetings, the wives stepped into their husbands' shoes and attended the meetings representing their families. Traditionally, these spaces were a preserve for men while women were relegated to the domestic sphere. However, in the absence of the men, women have become active actors in public spaces and also contribute to the public discussions. Closely linked to this, was the notable increase in the

number of women who took up roles as village heads in the absence of their male counterparts who were supposed take up the position. I encountered four women who held the positions of village heads on behalf of their husbands. Customarily in Tsholotsho, village heads are men appointed on hereditary grounds. By right and according to tradition, the successor has to be a man, an heir to the incumbent village head. However, due to the fact that men are the predominant emigrants in this area (including the rightful candidates for the position of village head), when the time comes for that person to be appointed and they are absent, an elderly woman in the same family or his wife may be appointed to hold the reigns until the man comes back and takes up his responsibility.

In some instances, the man came back home to be appointed and immediately ceded the village head duties to the wife to take over the position while he returned to South Africa to carry on with his job. MaNyathi is an example of this arrangement. Her husband is the one who was supposed to take up the village headship role in their village. However, he is a migrant since 1991. The two have only daughters for children and all of them are now immigrants in South Africa. MaNyathi stays back in Tsholotsho with her grandchildren with the help of hired workers. She narrated that:

> *When my father-in-law, who was the village head passed on, my husband was the one who was supposed to take up the post. However, he is still working in South Africa. So, what he did was, he came home and took up the post as the village head and then returned back to South Africa to work because he was not yet ready to retire. He then left me, as his wife, responsible for all the duties of the village head. I attend all the meetings and also convene village meetings to address different issues (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Although this may be seen as emancipation of women to actively participate in the public sphere, they still remain in the shadows of their husbands. This is because there were instances where the woman was addressed in reference to the husband. For example, one of the key informant respondents in thsolotsho stated that *'Mrs Petros is the one standing in as the village head on behalf of her husband' (Thsolotsho, 2017)*. Petros is the name of the husband and the woman is not addressed by her own name. This woman is not MaNyathi referred to above, it is a different woman who heads another village. Thus, although occupying the position, she is not given the recognition as a different person but rather the husband is the one being recognised in absentia.

In terms of distribution of duties within families, women in Tsholotsho stated that they did not take up men's duties. Instead they hired people to perform those duties traditionally defined as *masculine* such as fencing fields, cutting firewood and herding cattle. These could be men hired to permanently stay with and be part of the family or someone occasionally hired as and when a need arose.

5.3.2 Power rights and authority in families where husband and wife are migrants, and the children are left behind

My research findings revealed that in the case where both parents are migrants, the children that moved to stay with their grandparents mostly moved to their maternal grandmothers. This is unlike in the past where the paternal grandmother was the closest because the children lived in the same compound as her. These findings are in line with Kautzky (2010)'s findings focusing on rural South African communities where maternal grandmothers acted as substantial secondary care sources for the children left behind. In Tsholotsho, respondents highly attributed this to the acrimonious relationship that usually prevails between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. As such, the daughters-in-law do not trust their mothers-in-law to take good care of their children. Such sentiments were picked from an interview with Nkazi who reminisced how she struggled to leave her children with their paternal grandmother. She stated that:

> *Although I divorced with my husband, my mother-in-law still wanted access to her grandchildren. However, I just had to leave my children with my mother, I could not leave them with my mother-in-law because I did not have a good relationship with her. She was mean to me before my husband and I divorced, she did not love me. I could not trust her with my children, they were better off with my own mother at least (Johannesburg, 2017).*

This same sentiment also surfaced in another interview with one of the key informants, Mr Ngwenya, who is a Councillor with the local authority (see Box 5.1). Thus, in Tsholotsho, the movement of children from their parents' homestead to the grandmother's (which is the most common), is used as a care arrangement adopted in response to the pressures of migration on family systems. This confirms Cox and Paley (1997)'s assertion that families, as dynamic systems, have an adaptive self-stabilisation ability as actions of subsystems compensate for changing conditions. They also have adaptive self-organisation where the system has the ability to change to accommodate transformations to its current structures/formations. Moreover, the innovative arrangements for the residence of the left behind children are a clear depiction of the reciprocal and interdependent actions of the different family members (known as the subsystems) within transnational families. This gives the family system its ability to self-organise and self-stabilise.

Box 5.1: Care arrangements for left-behind children

Here in Tsholotsho, it is common knowledge that most mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law do not have a good relationship. In most instances, the mother-in-law becomes mean to her son's wife because she will be thinking that the young lady is now a barrier between her and her son. She will be thinking that she will not get what her son used to send to her because he will now be sending to his wife. In the same vein, there are some daughters-in-law who get into marriage with a preconditioned mean attitude born out of the general belief that mothers-in-law are always abusive to daughters-in-law. As such, when such migrate, they prefer to leave their children with their own mothers because of the bad blood between them and their mother-in-law.

Excerpt from an interview with Mr. Ngwenya, KI - Tsholotsho, 2017)

Rights and authority in relation to the children within these families were ceded to the grandmother. Like in the previous family type, the parents, while being away made decisions that had monetary implications. The appointed caregiver made decisions on everyday issues, for example, discipline and religion. To augment the foregoing, consider Gogo MaNcube's reflections. She is one of the grandmothers in Tsholotsho. Her husband migrated to South Africa long before they got married. He returned to Zimbabwe and married her and left her with their born child, living together with the extended family. Now, the husband is still a migrant and the children have also moved to South Africa. She lives with the grandchildren and hired workers. She stated that:

> *I make all decisions concerning the children then inform their parents in South Africa about the decisions I would have made. The parents cannot argue with the decisions that I make concerning their children because I know what is best for them, I live with them (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Also reflecting on decision making for the left behind children, other grandmothers also opined that:

> *Their grandfather, my husband, who is the head of the family, makes the decision about how the children are brought up at home. Their mother makes the decisions about where they will learn. As for the church, I am here as their grandmother they go with me. I discipline the children as I am the one who stays with them. Yes, the parents cannot decide on everything as they do not live with the children. I am the one who sees the good and the bad they do. I can only consult the parents here and there (MaNdebele - Tsholotsho, 2017);*

and

> *Other decisions I decide with the help of the parents but when it comes to religion, I decide. I discipline the children since I stay with them (MaNyathi - Tsholotsho, 2017);*

and

> *I make the decisions because I live with the child. I am the one who tells her about how she should handle herself. She lives with me, so I give her my law. Her mother cannot instruct her from South Africa. Where will she see her? I instruct her because I see her everyday (Gogo MaMoyo - Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Clearly, on authority and decision making, in light of the children left under the care of grandparents, the guardian has the authority to make decisions that shaped the children and influence what they become. Mr Ngwenya, the councillor and local authority key informant brought another dimension, noting that:

> *The decisions are made by parents of the child i.e. where the child will learn, which church the child will go to, these come from South Africa. But it becomes a challenge to effect and apply the decisions since those taking care of the children back home also have their decisions, which sometimes are practical (those from South Africa are theoretical) - [meaning migrant parents make decisions based on abstract and non-practical realities]. As such, here at home the child will be practicing decisions from the child minder, who is always there with them and with whom they spend most of the time (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

In most instances where children were left in the care of hired workers, the workers were autonomous in that they were not accountable to anyone in Tsholotsho. Rather they were directly controlled from South Africa by the emigrant parents. There were, however, some instances where, although living in a separate homestead with the children, the worker was entirely under the control and authority of the children's grandmothers. The grandmother had some level of autonomy in decision-making and authority but ultimately, were accountable to the emigrant parents. However, dynamics were reported that at times even if the grandmother may control the worker, the worker could defy the orders given and do as they please.

All these shifts and adaptations due to migration inevitably reconfigure family structures, patterns of authority and power within families (Bernhard, Landolt, & Goldring, 2005; Graham et al., 2012). Unlike in the past where women depended on other men in the extended family to make decisions for them, currently, women become de facto heads of their families. In so doing, they have some autonomy in decision making while continuing in their reproductive roles. These findings concur with assertions made in terms of instances where men migrated, roles and responsibilities within the family shifted, with women assuming double roles as *de-facto* heads of families and caregivers for the children (Bloch, 2008; Madzivadondo, 2012; Murray, 1981). However, although the women gain significant authority as *de facto* family heads in the absence of their husbands, it is only on day-to-day matters that confer limited power or rights to the women – for example, ascendance over children. They only have limited authority to make decisions on less critical issues and inform the husband later. The women do not make any autonomous decisions on capital goods. When making these decisions, they have to consult with the husbands as the legitimate head of the family with the ultimate power, rights and authority to make and/or endorse these decisions. Men always have the final say, they make the decisions on key issues around productive capital rights and ownership like land and livestock. This is contrary to Bello-Bravo (2015) and Hadi (2001)'s work which proffers that in most patriarchal societies, when husbands or other male counterparts migrate, women are empowered and accorded better autonomy, power in decision making and self-confidence. Although it may appear as if migration allows women to enjoy some form of emancipation and empowerment, in reality they get limited autonomy, which I equate, to just ceremonial conferment of power and authority.

In essence, transnational families introduce new forms of inequality that exist within transnational social spaces that are invisible on the surface (Sinatti, 2014). Transnational social spaces aid the operationalisation of culturally constructed notions of gender and inequality in various settings (Chant & McIlwaine, 1995). A good case in point is that of MaNkiwane alluded to above who indicated that she calls her husband when key decisions are to be made. Undeniably, the wife takes part in decision-making and to a certain extent participates in how things are done in the family. However, the reality of their transnational lives demonstrates that patriarchal dictates cannot be neutralised by place, distance or time. Just as the transnational migrants are simultaneously embedded, being here and there, the notions of male dominance also thrive within the virtual and fluid transnational social spaces created by transnationalism.

Again, there is a clear demonstration of the notion of power as a relational aspect where one person exerts power and the other person accepts or concurs. The husband has the power to order and direct his wife to make certain decisions in a specific way even if he is not physically present. The quote above demonstrates that transnationalism affords migrant men an opportunity exert their power (Lucas & Purkayastha, 2007) albeit from a distance. It demonstrates how power plays in transnational family life. Although the husband is physically absent, his virtual presence, enabled by transnational social spaces, allows him to relate with and exert his power on his family from a distance. Thus, this notion of simultaneous embeddedness allows men, as husbands, the opportunity to head their families and exercise their power, rights and authority in consultation with the wives. This is done through communication and regular visits that are driven by technological developments in tele-communications and transport.

In light of the emerging realities within families where children are left behind in the care of grandmothers and workers, it is apparent that power, rights and authority to make decisions over children left behind is a shared responsibility across place, time and space. Parents have a say only on financially oriented matters, while the grandparents, who are the guardians, make decisions on the key day to day issues that mould the character of the children. This is similar to what wives do when they are left in charge of the children. Although the parents may wish to make the decisions, distance does not allow them to enforce those decisions and hence leaving that responsibility to the *in-situ* caregivers. This is in line with Parreñas (2001)'s notion that within transnational families, some members produce income in the host countries while others perform reproductive and socialisation functions in the sending country albeit maintaining a virtual presence amidst the separation. As such, although biological parents (emigrants) have authority to exercise their power and rights in decision-making on their children and influence their upbringing as the parents, that privilege is taken away from them by distance. It is ceded to the present caregiver by virtue of them being present with and being there for the children.

Although the parents may be simultaneously embedded, there are other things that distance will forbid them to enjoy because they are not physically present. Within transnational migration scholarship this parenthood practice is defined as transnational parenting (Kufakurinani et al., 2014; Menjívar, 2012). While the parents exercise their parenting from a distance with the inevitable limitations, family members left behind take an active role in

raising the child. Chant and MacIlwaine, (1995) argue that although members of transnational families may not be sharing same residence, they are still able to collectively participate in basic reproductive and consumption tasks. Through transnational social spaces and transnational social fields, aspects of social life take place across borders. Although migrants live in South Africa, they have some influence in the upbringing of their children back home. They do this through transnational mothering (Millman, 2013; Parreñas, 2013; Parreñas, 2001; Schmalzbauer, 2004) and fathering (Chereni, 2015) practices while also engaging in their economic pursuits in the host country.

Reminiscing on his fathering experience while away, Bab' uNdiweni, a transnational migrant and family history respondent in South Africa put it this way:

> *I have been a migrant long before my children were born. However, I did all I could to make sure they are well taken care of. In the past, I could not talk to them because there were no phones. So, I tried to write each of them a letter and just tell them how much I loved them. I took care of all their needs – school, clothes, food and such other things that children their age needed. When phones came, I made sure my wife had a phone so that I could talk to them I made sure I called them every weekend. I really tried to be there while away. I reprimanded them where there was need. It made me feel I fathered them well although away, in so doing, I retained my authority in their lives as a father. At times, however, I feel like I missed on a lot of things in their lives, like watching them grow, helping them with school and such other things. I feel they could have turned out better than they did if I was around. But that does not mean I blame their mother; I believe she did her best (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Recalling her experience as a transnational mother, Petunia, one of the transnational migrants also narrated that:

> *I communicate with my child on a daily basis through WhatsApp. To further enhance our communication, we send each other voice messages on WhatsApp and even do voice and video calls and also send pictures on WhatsApp. This way, I can hear what my children need, be able to have deep conversations and offer them my love and care. This keeps us in constant touch despite the distance that separates us. It makes me feel like a mother I am supposed to be to my children. I also have a say in what should be done to them, my mother consults with me. There is consolation in that I can participate in my children's lives and try to provide for them as much as I can (Johannesburg, 2017).*

MaNdebele, one of the few return migrants who had gone back to Tsholotsho after her children had finished school offered the following reflections about her transnational mothering experience:

> *When I went to South Africa, I left my children with different people. It affected me but I had no option, I had to go and hustle so that they could get a chance at a better life. So, when I got to South Africa, I made sure I work so hard. I sacrificed myself to make sure they were at least comfortable. I could not give them all they needed but I tried to*

> *cover their basic needs. I remember there were Christmas days I spent alone in my room eating maize and tea because I did not have money to buy nice food, yet I was happy because I knew that the money had gone towards meeting my children's needs. None of them misbehaved, they knew I am very strict. I communicated with them every month through letters and then later through phones. I sent them money every monthend and some goods too. I so looked forward to August because that was the time that I could visit home and spend time with them. I look back and am proud I sacrificed that much (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

When asked how migrant parents performed their parental duties while away, Bab' uHungwa, a Headman in the area offered these reflections:

> *What I have noted is that migrant parents try to maintain their role as parents and show their love to their left behind children here by paying their school fees on time, buying them school uniforms, clothes, phones and groceries. At times others overdo it and end up spoiling their children while trying to compensate for their absence. Undeniably, though, remittances cannot be a substitute for physical presence of parents that comes with love and care, and at times discipline (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Thus, through transnational parenting, transnational migrants are able to reclaim some of their power, rights and authority in their children's lives. This is not withstanding the fact that within these families, there are some parents who migrate and completely disconnect with their children and families back home. Thus, the ability to remain simultaneously embedded does not translate to mutual engagements across distance.

Historically, mothers ensured that the children continued to know and identify their father while he was away through showing the children photos of their father and occasionally making reference to him. Gogo MaDube, a grandmother who was once a left behind wife explained it this way:

> *In one of the letters he wrote, my husband put a picture of himself inside. He was at a very nice place with green grass and flowers. He told me that that was his boss' homestead. I kept that picture and always showed it to my children. They always had a picture of what their father looked like. The boys even fantasised on how they would also work in such a place when they had grown and gone to eGoli (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Bab' uNyathi, giving a narrative of his family history, reflecting on his childhood experience when his father was a migrant, which is typical of what happened in most families then put it this way:

> *When we misbehaved, our mother would always reprimand us and tell us that she will tell our father of all the bad things we were doing. Because we knew him to be a very tough man, we always kept our behavior in check knowing that one day he will come back and if bad reports were given, we will be in trouble. That way, our mother made sure that we are kept aware that we had a father somewhere (Johannesburg, 2017).*

However, currently, while pictures are still shown, the fathers keep in constant communication over the phone and they visit regularly; hence their children are able to identify them as the father. The foregoing depicts the family rebuilding strategies within migrant families in the current generations. Instead of perpetuating the legacy of absence and separation like the historical migrants, transnational migrants actively repair the absence of their fathers by being present.

5.4 Family life turbulences: critiquing migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in family life

Migrant transnationalism and the resultant simultaneous embeddedness have an inevitable effect on families. Comparing historical and contemporary family accounts of migration demonstrates the effects of transnationalism on families. In the past, when family members migrated, they were removed from their families with minimal interaction during the time the migrant was away and consequently embedded in South Africa. As a result, this led to the development of the concept of families divided (Murray, 1981). The consequences of this division were especially evident in husband–wife as well and child-father relationships. Thus, historically migration meant that the emigrant members uprooted themselves from their homes and country of origin and integrated into a different socio-cultural environment (Handlin, 2002; Schiller, et al., 1995; Takaki, 2012).

For instance, in the process of being uprooted from their home countries and integrated in South Africa, migrant men from Tsholotsho had affairs and/or married South African women. This led to them having concurrent families in South Africa and in Zimbabwe. These were qualified as affairs and not polygyny as the husbands engaged in them without the approval of the first wife. However, given that men having multiple wives was an acceptable practice, more often, the wives in Tsholotsho accepted the presence of the other woman. This was mainly because there was no way they could successfully oppose the relationship as they were separated by distance. Although migrant men married in South Africa or had affairs, the majority of the wives back in Tsholotsho waited for their husbands to return without having any explicit/known affairs or being sexually active. As alluded to in the excerpt in box 5.2, it appears older generation women were able to "control themselves" and as such led celibate lives for as long as their husbands were away. Although this may seem plausible, it is a

patriarchal and sexist demand on women. It placed the burden of responsibility for marriages to work on women who had to postpone and suppress their sexual desires while men did not postpone the expression of their sexuality and engaged with other women. It shows how patriarchy perpetrates gender inequality and the subordination of women such that it denies them control over their sexuality (see - Kambarami, 2006).

The ability by women to remain celibate could be attributed to the fact that in the past, women were married into and left with the extended family that acted as a policing mechanism for her behavior unlike present day wives who stay in their own homesteads away from the policing eye of the bigger family. Notwithstanding, there were however some few instances where left behind wives ended up engaged in affairs. For the majority, their affairs were facilitated by the elders (on the migrant husband's side), who sat down and discussed that the woman was young and 'her blood was still hot', implying that she had sexual desires that needed to be fulfilled and their son was not around to do that. However, there were a few instances where the left behind wife, in her own accord, had clandestine sexual relations with the brother or nephew of the migrant husband or with total strangers. This only became known if the wife got pregnant. These eventualities affected the stability of families as infidelity in some cases led to divorce.

Box 5.2: Migration, infidelity and gender

Historically, whilst my father went away, the women of that time, my mothers, those ones were strong, there was that strong ethic for them to wait for him but not with these young women today the wives of iNjiva. For the young generation, as the husband goes that side, the wife remains having an affair this side. This is why you see a lot of cartoons in the newspapers where the iNjiva comes back unannounced and the wife's lover hides and is sweating under the bed or hides behind the door, that is what is happening (*the name iNjiva is derived from the word Injiva that referred to a Coat or Jacket that had a three quarter length that many Ndebele migrants brought back when they were coming back from South Africa. Thus, the name of the coat was used to refer to all emigrants who were in South Africa.*) It's because of this generational gap between our mothers and our daughters, ah they are different. Ah! They are different, the young present generation iNjiva wives have hot blood, they cannot stay without being intimate and as such will remain clandestinely courting another man into the husband's bedroom and in most cases, this leads to divorce. My mother's generation could control themselves. They had self-control which is missing today. Generally, society has become more promiscuous and it's because again if you are an extended family, you are providing intelligence, you are seeing who is doing what and it was difficult to do something in secret, quietly, it was difficult. Back then they policed each other. Now, No! No! No! With movement towards the nuclear family, no one is policing anyone, do not involve yourself in my issues, they are mine, you focus on yours. So that allows for promiscuity.

(Excerpt from an interview with Mr. Nyathi, a historian, Zimbabwe - 2017)

Thus, although transnational families enjoy increased social presence, the glaring lack of proper social and familial systems to moderate such dynamics has led to chaotic and messy realities in marriages. Although transnational migration eased the challenges of relating and closeness while transnational migrants are away, it only caters for the social and partly

emotional needs. It leaves other emotional and physiological needs like intimacy and sexual gratification unmet. Silver (2006) partly notes this challenge when asserting that separation of spouses leads to depressive symptoms and feelings of loneliness. These unmet needs still propel spouses to engage in extramarital affairs like it was in the past. Only that currently, it happens within a context that lacks strong social support systems to regulate and moderate the reactions of members and calm the turbulent social/ familial storms.

Although in the past migration led to divided families, present day transnational migrants enjoy simultaneous embeddedness and constant communication with their families. Simultaneous embeddedness has led to the emergence of transnational families 'living-apart-together' (Caarls & Mazzucato, 2016; Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). As a result of transnationalism, a significant number of children in Tsholotsho, as is the case in most countries of the world, are nurtured in transnational families (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011; Parreñas, 2005; Poeze & Mazzucato, 2013). They are separated from their migrant parents (Hoang, Lam, Yeoh, & Graham, 2015) and taken care of by either grandmothers or hired workers (Kufakurinani et al., 2014; Madziva, 2010). In Tsholotsho, when parents emigrate, children either move from their homes to stay with extended family members (De Silva, 2003; Madzivadondo, 2012) or at times certain care arrangements through hiring of domestic workers are made and children remain in their 'homes' (Hoang et al., 2015). Within these arrangements, parents thrive to keep in regular contact and remain present in their children's lives albeit from a distance. Although parents have the ability to be simultaneously embedded, their physical absence in their children's lives may not be compensated for by anything. No matter how often a transnational parent may try to contact the left-behind children, their physical absence may, in some instances, effectively render their efforts inadequate and inefficient. Children are robbed of quality emotional bonds with their parents as they are left to bond with secondary caregivers. Thus, notwithstanding the benefits accruing from transnational migration and the subsequent abilities by transnational migrants to be here and there at the same time, there are some challenges/ complications that still remain unsolved.

Some socio-cultural constructs like gender are fundamentally altered and reconfigured in response to the new realities created by the movement of a member. In Tsholotsho, women have taken up roles traditionally known to be for men. In families where the husband is an emigrant and the wife is left behind, the productive and reproductive roles are the responsibility of the wife. The wife doubles up as the de facto head of the family as well as care givers for

the children (Bloch, 2008; Madzivadondo, 2012; Murray, 1981). Inevitably, all these shifts and adaptations reconfigure gender relations, patterns of authority, rights and power within these transnational families (Bernhard, et al., 2005; Graham et al., 2012).

Notwithstanding the migrants' ability to be here and there at the same time, it should be noted that it does not automatically translate to smooth running and non-chaotic families. It only places them at a better position as they are able to conduct family life within transnational social spaces. The transnationally sustained families enjoy the ability to keep in constant touch, but family politics and complications still manifest in that transnational landscape. Unlike in the historical accounts where the extended family played a critical role in mediating family relations and circumventing quarrels, in the current landscape, the extended family has been weakened and does not wield much authority. In current spousal relationships, migrant husbands also have affairs in Johannesburg and so do some of the left behind wives. The difference is that most of them keep the affairs secret. In my opinion, very few of these affairs lead to the birth of children due to the increased uptake of contraception methods. As such, although transnationalism has afforded families the abilities to remain linked across vast distances, it has not eliminated the complications of physical separation that migration brings on families. Transnational families are fraught with challenges that emanate from physical absence of members mainly evident in relationships between spouses as well as parents and children. Mr. Ngwenya, a local authority key informant offered the following comment:

> *When it comes to families, there is nothing good about migration. Marriages have been destroyed as both husbands and wives engage in extra marital affairs. This has led to a high rate of divorces in the district as well as prevalence of HIV and AIDS cases (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

In summary, two major trends emerge as changes that have occurred in family life and organisation as a result of transnational migration. Firstly, due to transnationalism, there is a growing trend of migrants becoming simultaneously embedded in both their home and host countries. This is contrary to the historical trends where there was a lineal perception of migrants as people who uprooted themselves from their country of origin and integrated into the host countries. As a result, there has been notable change in the ways of exerting authority within families where, in the past, male migrants relegated their authority to other men in the family while they were away. However, currently, as facilitated by the possibility of being simultaneously embedded, migrant men can exert their authority directly. Secondly, there is a massive wave of women migrating as compared to historical trends where women constituted

a big proportion of those left behind. This has led to the emergence of new family formations and changes in patterns of residence and authority as new care arrangements are made for the left behind children. All these are reflective of the ability by families as systems to adapt and self-stabilise as a way of compensating for changing conditions. It also demonstrates the adaptive self-organisation ability inherent is families as systems that allows them to change to accommodate transformations to its current structures/formations (Cox and Paley, 1997).

A notable continuity across time has been the persistent challenges that are seen in intimate relationships that cannot be solved by virtual social presence. Thus, although submissions in transnational migration scholarship have seen this as a positive improvement, they have almost fallen into the trap of over-romanticising transnational migration. They have almost presented transnational families as engaging in novel ways of keeping together and almost successfully negotiating familyhood across space and place. In essence, physical separation still poses detrimental challenges to families in migration. In this regard, Gurung (2015) warns against idealising transnational families as coherent social entities with uniform family experiences. Such an approach to transnational families may conceal some of the inherent internal conflicts and differences in interests (Menjívar, 2000). For example, the inability by transnational families to contain the challenges posed by spousal separation leading to high incidences of divorces challenges the conception of families as systems that self-organize and self-stabilise. This was an inherent ability in historical migrant families as the elders played a key role in ensuring the family system remained stable. However, in transnational families, there emerges a trend where families split due to infidelity between spouses emanating from the system failing to regulate the behaviours and actions of some of its key subsystems. It is apparent therefore that the systems thinking in transnational families fails to account for what happens if a member of the system disconnects as a result of failure by the system to re-stabilise itself. By focusing on the bigger structure, it fails to acknowledge the destabilising effects of when the individual exercises their agency and operates against the interests of the whole system/structure.

CHAPTER 6: FAMILY RITUALS, MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Soeffner and Zifonun (2016) submit that rituals are largely conceptualised as fixed sets of symbolic behaviour that is passed from generation to generation. These performances, although not universal, are widespread and have a symbolic and practical significance. For example, in migrant families, they help migrant members to make statements about belonging or at least claims of it in their families and communities of origin (Gardner, 2002; Gardner & Grillo, 2002; Geschiere, 2005). They are an important locus for understanding the formulation of family identities and cultures. A focus on place, space and time when examining performance of and participation in rituals in transnational settings helps in understanding the significance of belonging in transnational families. Rituals provide a productive landscape wherein individual members may creatively model meanings and map the transformations proffered by transnational migration. Gardner and Grillo (2002, p. 180) suggested that the "analyses (at the household level) of the performance of and meanings attributed to classic life cycle rituals (births, marriages and deaths) should offer an important route to understanding relations between place, culture, ethnicity and gender among transnational migrants".

In this chapter, I seek to explore how rituals in migrant communities have been changed or adjusted in the context of transnationalism and its consequent effects on families. This is because transnationalism affects the significance, experience and organisation of rituals as deeply embedded symbolic cultural practices within families (Dessing, 2001). I pay particular attention to rituals related to three life cycle events as they are held within the family sphere (i.e. birth, marriage and death). I track the continuities and changes that these life cycle rituals have undergone as a result of migration and transnational migration in Tsholotsho. By focusing on life cycle rituals (marriages, births and deaths), I sought to understand how transnational families navigate the transnational landscape to carry out these symbolic life cycle events that shape their identity, culture and belonging. While rituals in transnational settings may symbolically express togetherness, the reality of members' physical separation complicates the scene. As such, I also assess how distance affects the dispersed family members' ability to participate in local ritual performances back home. I assess how transnationalism can potentially change, disrupt or challenge the performance of these rituals within transnational

families. Further, I assess the different reasons why members of transnational families choose to perform some rituals and forego others within their families and how rituals are influenced by both contexts in which migrants remain simultaneously embedded.

6.1 *'The one that travelled is dead'*: lifecycle rituals in the context of migration

In the past, as has been presented in the preceeding chapters, men were the only ones who migrated in Tsholotsho. They travelled to South Africa and stayed there for years and the date of their return to their communities was not known. Their prolonged absence rendered them socially dead as they were excluded from and ceased to be part of their families for a long time (Králová, 2015). Social death refers to loss of significant social connectedness and loss of social roles which result in one's inability to be part of their society and perform their social duties as well as conform to socio-cultural norms prescribed by their social group (Kankonde, 2010; Králová, 2015). As such, their absence during ritual performances did not matter much. Where they were needed, families devised ways to make sure they were represented. Elaborating on this, Bab' uNdlovu, a village head and return migrant in Tsholotsho put it this way:

> *Well, in the past, with those who migrated, there was very little we could do to involve them because we did not know when they were coming back. In IsiNdebele language they say ohambileyo ufile' (literal translation – the one that travelled is dead) – so until they return, they are treated as such – dead (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

This demonstrates how migration complicated family life in the past when there were no means to facilitate regular contact. In the past families were forced to treat their migrated members as a 'dead person' however without mourning their death or performing the rituals that go with dying in most African countries (- see Maloka, 1998 on the significance of death rituals in African societies). Thus, in the past, migrant families lived with so much emotional strain until their emigrant member returned or wrote a letter. Thus, crossborder family life practices in the historical epochs of migration were very limited. Therefore, in the following subsections I present the different life cycle rituals related to marriage, births and deaths and how these were handled in the context of historical migration where migrants were regarded as dead.

6.1.1 Rituals related to marriage

Among the Ndebele in Tsholotsho, there are a number of rituals to be performed at different stages along the process of marriage. However, of the ones identified by the respondents I selected only two (*ukuvela and ukucola*) that I will present and show how they have either changed or remained the same in the context of migration and transnationalism.

i. Ukuvela (Appearing)

Traditionally, this is the initial stage of lobola negotiations between the two families involved towards a marriage. Through this process, the son-in-law made his intentions known by the in-laws to-be and eventually became formally recognised as such. During this process, the man had to make a number of payments that were culturally central in building/ establishing a relationship between the two families. These culminated in the son-in-law being formally recognised as such. The small payments to be made included *isivulamlomo* (literal translation – 'that which opens our mouths', pragmatically meaning a token to break the ice for the in-laws to start the negotiation process)*; uswazi (*literal translation - a whip, meaning a fee that the son-in-law is charged for trespassing in the father-in-laws' homestead*); pfukalukuta/ukweqa uthango* (literal translation - jumping the boundary of the homestead, pragmatically meaning trespassing) and *ukangaziwe* (literal translation - *let me be known*, referring to a token the son-in-law is charged to be lawfully recognised as a son-in-law in the family). Payment of these would lead to the final stage of negotiations where the son-in-law is charged the bride-price refered to as *amalobolo* in isiNdebele. The *amalobolo* bill given did not have to be paid in full upfront/ immediately. Rather, it could be paid at a later stage in the near future when children were born. The girl's father was a critical figure in all these negotiations which had to be done in his homestead. In the context of migration, where the girl's father was a migrant and away, the negotiations still took place in his homestead and his brothers (the girl's partenal uncles) represented him in the whole process. After everything was done, the family then sat down and wrote a letter to the migrant father to tell him what had transpired and how the whole process was handled.

ii. Ukucola

After *ukuvela*, and payment of all the dues, the girl would now be ready to go to her husband's place. However, before this happened, her family had to perform the *ukucola* ritual. This was the ritual where the father of the bride slaughtered a beast and took the bile of that beast and annointed the bride. In the process, he informed the living-dead (the ancestors) that their child was leaving them for another family and they should continue protecting her. This was indicated by the respondents and is also in sync with assertions proffered by Nyathi (2005) in his work on Zimbabwe's cultural heritage. According to the family history narratives, this was an important ritual with significant spiritual connotations. It was performed as a process of acknowledging/accepting and blessing the union of the two who are getting married. The ritual was also a way of pleading with the ancestors to keep watching over their child. After the ritual, the girl was then accompanied to her in-laws' place by a select few family representatives. In some instances, she was accompanied by a bigger crowd known as *umthimba* (the bridal party). Some respondents in this study mentioned that in the past, along the way to her in-laws, *amacansi* (reed mats) were laid on the bride's path for her to walk on. This was done as a precaution that no one takes a mound of sand from her foot-prints to bewitch her.

Interestingly, marriage meant there was a subtraction on the girl's family and an addition on the man's. To complete the cycle, respondents indicated that the groom's family also had to perform the *ukucola* ritual to welcome the bride into the family and formally introduce her to their family ancestors. As such, when the bride arrived at her in-laws', a beast was slaughtered and she was anointed with bile from the animal and introduced to her husband's ancestors by her father-in-law. The father-in-law would inform the ancestors of the new addition and pleaded with them to protect her as their own. This signified her incorporation into the family. Just like in the *ukuvela* ritual, if the father was a migrant, his brothers would stand in for him and ensure that the ritual is performed properly before their daughter was given away in marriage.

Remembers Bab' Hungwa, a headman in Tsholotsho. He offered these reflections about rituals and marriages in the historical era of migration:

> *You see in the past things were really different. It was not like now when you can communicate with someone in South Africa any minute you feel like. I remember when my sister got married and our father was away in South Africa. There was no way they could reach him on time. So my uncle, his older brother and my grandfather took the*

> *lead in the whole process of ukuvela and ukucola. It was after all had been done that my father was then informed of all the proceedings through a letter (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Rettelling her experience of her own marriage, Gogo MaNcube, one of the grandmothers in the study area put it this way:

> *My father had been a migrant for years, we knew that he would visit home every two years. But now, when I got married, my husband-to-be was also a migrant. He had just returned home on a visit and he met me on a few accounts and then eventually asked me out for a relationship and told me he wanted to marry me, and was serious. Eventualy I agreed and he wanted to finalise all the marriage rituals by the time he travelled back. So I elloped and the lobola negotiation process was started and my uncles stood in for my father and everything was done, right from ukuvela through ukucola to when I was accompanied to my in-laws' place. Interestingly, my husband's father was also a migrant and he was away. When it was time for ukucola on their side, his elder brother stood in for him and performed the ritual. When my father came back one year later, I was married and with my first child (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

This demontsrates the critical role of kinship structures and the mutual responsibilities of members who belong to the same group. According to Sibanda *et al.,* (2014) in Ndebele families, there are some individuals who assume positions of responsibility and authority, for example aunts, uncles and the elderly. Within their kinship systems, paternal uncles carry the status of a father while maternal aunts are also regarded as mothers (Sibanda *et al.,* 2014; Nyathi, 2015, Ndlovu, 1995). As such, paternal uncles have the responsibility of leadership and ensuring continuity and cohesion in families in the event that the father is away. They usurp their authority if a need arises, usually to ensure stability in the family. These are inherent provisions that are known by all members of the group and are not questioned when effected. In this case, they did so by stepping in to represent the migrant father to ensure continuity in the family. This is evidence of the availability of values and norms within families that determine patterns of interaction and messages and rules used to shape members as propounded by family systems thinkers (see - Klein & White, 1996; Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016).

Although standing in for the migrant father was the most common practice during the *ukuvela* and ukucola ritual, there were some instances also where a migrant made arrangements with his family to perform his marriage ceremony while he was away. Mostly, the bride would be a woman he would have courted while still at home. In such instances, the migrants' younger brother could stand in his place to facilitate the completion of the marriage process. After the process was over, the bride moved to stay with the absent husband's family while waiting for her husand to return. MaSiwela, a grandmother in Tsholotsho narrating her own marriage experience explained it this way:

> *I remember when I got married, my husband-to-be had migrated to South Africa for some time. When he left, we were already in a relationship. It took him longer than expected to return, so he sent his people to my family so that he could marry me while he was away. He feared other young man would take me instead. His younger brother took his place where he was needed and the process was completed. I moved to stay with his family and waited for him until he returned (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Although this happened, it was not such a common practice. More often than not, it resulted in affairs between the two which could have a destabilising effect on the bigger famiy system. The arrangement is a potrayal of the family as a system to adjust and configure itself in the event of any destabilising effects that may arise from within the system or its outside environment. However, the family systems theory in such cases fails to explain how systems respondend to such individual and secret actions that may eventually have a destabilising effect on the whole. Although the elders may chip in to negotiate and ensure peace, the triger for these may come in a bit late when the woman is already pregnant. Commenting on this, Mr Nyathi, a historian in Bulawayo offered these reflections:

> *Having a brother stand in as the groom for the absent brother was a good practice to a certain extent but it opened doors for temptation. While the actual husband was yet to come, a relationship could be brewing between the wife and the stand-in brother and things could go wrong (Bulawayo, 2017).*

As such, although the practice was meant for good at the macro family level, it could have dire consequences for micro elements of the system and eventually destabilising the whole.

Overally, during the migration era, everything relating to marriages happened in Tsholotsho mainly because only the men were the ones migrating during this time. Migrant members were treated like dead people as the family did not have control over when they would return. Family life continued as normal as family structures allowed for necessary plans to be made for someone else to represent the migrant and all the rituals that needed to be done were done. Although this was a plausible move, in the case of a man standing in for the groom, it could produce detrimental results with a destabilising effect on the family. In the next subsection I present birth rituals.

6.1.2 Rituals related to birth

A number of birth related rituals were highlighted by the study respondents. These rituals were performed during and after pregnancy when the child was born. For example, during pregnancy, there were certain rituals that were performed and herbs that were given to the mother to drink as a way of facilitating safe and natural delivery. In some cases, a pregnant

woman whose labour contractions would have started was made to drink a concoction. For example, water mixed with soot collected from the kitchen grass thatch hut, while in others it had a piece of a donkey's placenta which is believed to ensure a safe and more smooth delivery.

Some of the rituals mentioned by the respondents were not as elaborate because, although practices, respondents did not fully undetstand the way they were practiced. As such, I selected three rituals to present here. These were rituals that were common to all families and I gathered enough information to allow for an analysis of the changes that have occurred in the context of migration. The three rituals that will be presented are: *Ukwethesa inkanda and ukugqizisa intebe (Strengthening of a baby's fontanelle and placement of a charm for spiritual protection); ukulahla inkaba (Disposal of the umbilical cord)* and u*kubamba umpfula*[18]

i. Ukwethesa inkanda and ukugqizisa intebe (Strengthening of a baby's fontanelle and placement of a charm for spiritual protection)

Traditionally, among Ndebele families in Tsholotsho, when a child was born, this ritual was performed. It was aimed at strengthening and protecting the child from spiritual harm. The child does not interact with the general public until after a given period (ranging from 3 to 6 weeks). Within the period of seclusion, this ritual is performed. It is done through smearing a sludgy concoction of herbs on the child's fontanelle as a way of strengthening the child and protecting him/her from evil. This is usually done exclusively by a traditional healer and in some instances in collaboration with elderly women in the family. The types of herbs mixed and the procedure of applying the concoction on the child's fontanelle are unique for each family. Some families also included *ukugqizisa intebe (*literal translation – putting a protective charm on the child's neck or waistline*)*. *Intebe* is kind of a waist lace which has a mixture of special herbs sewn into the lace by a traditional healer. It is then tied either on the waistline or neck of a child to protect the child from evil spirits. The ritual of strengthening the fontanelle is driven by the belief that if a child's fontanelle is not strengthened and he/she encounters people with evil spirits or evil intentions, he/she is likely to suffer a misfortune. This misfortune will generally be symbolised by a sunken fontanelle. For some families also, it is believed that when a child gets to where there are other children and is not properly strengthened and

[18] Ukubamba umpfula is one of those Kalanga phrases imported into the IsiNdebele language in Tsholotsho and research participants did not know the literal meaning of the phrase when asked about what it means. It is a commonly used phrase which refers to the ritual that is performed to allow the husband to meet his wife and new child in the literal sense and also in terms of husband and wife resuming sexual relations after the wife gives birth.

protected, the other children may overpower him/her leading to sickness and at times death. In the context of migration, nothing changed in line with this ritual because historically, it is only men who migrated and women did not move and they had their children back home. The women remained at home and everything was performed there and the there was no need for the man's presence. Bab' uNdiweni, one of the historical migrants and current transnational migrant put it this way:

> *In the past it was not as difficult especially when looking at birth rituals because only men migrated, and women remained behind. It meant children were born at home and the elderly women who were custodians of these rituals took care of everything. So, nothing much was affected (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Bab' uNdiweni has experienced a bit of both the historical and the transnational epochs of migration. His children were born in the past when regular travelling was dificult. He is among those that were once regarded as dead. His narration thus reveals that, in the context of the husband's absence due to migration, *ukwethesa inkanda* and *ukugqizisa intebe* were some of the rituals that were performed in the absence of the husband without any hustles.

ii. Ukulahla inkaba (Disposing the umbilical cord)

In Tsholotsho, each family traditionally has a perculiar way of disposing the child's umbilical cord after it falls off. Historically, when the umbilical cord eventually droped off, the older women in the family who would have taken the role of midwives took it and disposed it in accordance with the family's set way of disposing the cord. From the study respondents, it emerged that some families dig a pit in the centre of the kitchen or the hut where the child was delivered and bury the umbilical cord there. Others however, burn the cord and grind it to powder and then add it to water and give the baby to drink; while others throw it into the river. Again, for other families, the cord is thrown away with dirt; while others have the mother tie it loosely around her waist and take a walk in the bush and it falls off. For some families, the cord is mixed with some herbs before it can be disposed as a way of deterring witches from taking the cord and using it to bewitch the child. The disposal of the cord had a spiritual connotation of depicting belonging and that is where lies the roots of the common saying that 'home is where my umbilical cord is'. Just as is the case with strengthening the fontanelle, nothing changed in the way this was done in the context of migration because it is only men that migrated. Consider Gogo MaDube's narration:

> *In most instances, when these husbands migrated, they always made sure they left their wives pregnant. While away, the wife would give birth and by the time he returns, that child could be two years old, depending on how long he stayed in SA. When the child*

> *was born, the elderly women in the family would make sure all the rituals are performed according to tradition and most of them did not require that the father be there (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

As such, with the ritual of *ukulahla inkaba*, just like in the ritual of strengthening the fontanelle, given that children were born in Tsholotsho and everything was performed there, there was no role expected from the migrant father. As such, the ritual was also smoothly performed.

iii. Ukubamba umpfula[19]

While the child is quarantined with the mother and all other rituals are performed, the father of the child would still have not seen his child and wife. The wife is forbidden to go to the matrimonial bedroom where the husband would have been sleeping all along. This condition is enforced to avoid a situation where they step onto each other's shadows, which was considered a taboo if the ritual of *ukubamba umfula* was not yet performed. This ritual had to be performed to facilitate the husband's reunification with his wife and child. The way the ritual is performed differs from family to family. For some families, the couple paints their faces with ashes, while some make special herbal concoctions which they wash themselves in or drink allowing for a passage/ right to reunite as a family. In cases of those who bath with the herbal concoction, the husband baths in the water and then the wife also baths and then after that they hold each other's hands to end the ritual. One family that gave a detailed account of the process mentioned that when it is time for the ritual, the elderly women take the husband to his wife and child covered in a blanket. They take an old wooden plate, and *isancele* (a curving tool), make a fire using firewood from the velvet leaf willow tree (Combretum molle)[20] known in isiNdebele as *umbondo.* They then put the curving tool (*isancele*) in the fire and put water mixed with herbs in the wooden bowel. After a while, when the curving tool is now hot enough, the husband takes it and puts it in the water in the wooden plate. He puts the wooden plate under the blanket covering his wife and child and then joins them under the blanket as well. After a few minutes, the blanket is removed. At this juncture, the wife washes the husband's left foot and hand and the husband does the same to the wife then they throw away the water. After that, they can resume having sexual relations, and the father can also see his child.

[19] Ukubamba umpfula is one of those Kalanga phrases imported into the IsiNdebele language in Tsholotsho and did not know the literal meaning of the phrase when asked about what it means. It is a commonly used phrase which refers to the ritual that is performed to allow the husband to meet his wife and new child in the literal sense and also in terms of husband and wife resuming sexual relations after the wife gives birth.
[20] http://www.worldagroforestry.org/treedb2/AFTPDFS/Combretum_molle.PDF

In this ritual, the father of the child plays a significant role. In cases where the man was a migrant and his wife had a child while he was away, when he returned home, he would not use the gate to access the home. Rather, he would use any other access point along the boundary of the homestead. This is because it is a taboo for him to step where the wife would have stepped. It did not matter how old the child was, the ritual conditions had to be observed all the same. As in the case of the present husband, the migrant husband also would not sleep in the same bedroom as his wife until the ritual had been performed. Thus, as soon as he arrived, he would be immediately taken to his uncle's place to spend the night there. The following day, the rest of the ritual processes would be performed. After these rituals, the spouses could resume normal relations such as talking, being intimate, patting each other and holding hands and the father could also see his child. As earlier mentioned, where the husband was a migrant, the elderly women made sure that the *ukubamba umpfula* ritual was performed upon his return. Precautions were taken not to violet the conditions of the ritual. The ritual was undertaken with the belief of averting perceived bad luck that may befall the family and the child if it is not properly observed.

Gogo MaMoyo, another grandmother interviewed in Tsholotsho offered the following reflections:

> *You see, my grandchild, for us black people, rituals are very important and have to be adhered to religiously to avoid bad omen. So, when a child was born, our grandmothers made sure that all the necessary rituals are adhered to. For those of our sons who were migrants, when they returned, the elders made sure that all the traditional dictates are adhered to, for example the ritual of ukubamba umpfula. They made sure that everything was done properly (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Also consider Bab' uKhanye's response, he emigrated to South Africa in the 1970s and had his children while he was still a migrant. Currently, he is a return migrant based in Tsholotsho. He proffered that:

> *It is the same as I would come from my workplace in South Africa, while my wife was at home, I wouldn't go to my home straight, whether a child was born or not. I would just unpack my luggage and head to my aunt's place where I would be given a room to spend the night. The elders encouraged this to make sure they check if my wife was ok, not pregnant and without any disease and I was also checked for diseases. If my wife had a child in my absence, then the ritual of ukubamba umpfula was performed, then we would meet (have sexual relations) with my wife (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

In the presentation of marriage rituals, there were instances where the men could be represented for ritual performance purposes. However, with the *ukubamba umpfula* ritual, the actual father was needed and could not be represented. This reveals the fact that although families could

have systems in place to ensure their smooth function, there were some aspects of family life where no one could replace the absent member. In the next subsection, I present rituals related to deaths and how they were handled in the context of historical migration.

6.1.3 Rituals related to Death

In this section, I present a holistic account of some of the processes and the rituals performed from when a death occurs until after burial. All the respondents proffered intimate narrations of death related rituals, unlike their much shorter references to other life cycle events, which made it difficult to choose any specific rituals for presentation. Historically, among the Ndebele families in Tsholotsho, death was a feared event that was treated with great respect. When a death occurred, children (below the age of 18) had to leave the home immediately to stay by the neighbours' or any other close by family member's homestead. This was regardless of whether the death occurred in Tsholotsho or any other place, in all scenarios, the children had to vacate their homestead. The children would be treated with extra care/ sensitivity e.g. they would be given all they want so as to divert their attention from the funeral at their home.

If the death occurred in the morning, the corpse would be burried later in the day after 2pm. However, if it occurred in the afternoon, burial woud be done in the morning of the followng day. On either occassions, the corpse was kept in a closed room called *indlu emnyama (*literal translation - a dark room) because there would be no lighting in there. One close relative would go inside the hut at intervals to check and confirm that indeed the person was dead. Everyone else would be sitting very quietly outside, in front of the hut where the deceased's body was, in a very sombre atmosphere. If it was confirmed that indeed the person was dead, a selected family member showed the men gathered at the funeral wake where they should dig the grave for the deceased to be buried. The digging of the grave was refered to in isiNdebele as *ukulungisa umuzi wakhe* (literal translation - preparing the deceased's home). When it was time for burial, the deceased's body would be taken out of the homestead through an opening created on the side of the homestead's boundary/fence. The deceased's corpse was not taken out of the yard using the usual gate because it was believed that would retain the spirit of death in the family.

During burial, an elderly member of the familiy was appointed to 'talk' to the deceased to tell them that they were being taken to their final home. The deceased person was buried covered in a blanket if it was a woman or cow hide if it was a man. If the deceased was a man, his heir

would stand by the head side of the grave with no shirt on and will be given a spear that he would then pierce on the ground until the burial ceremony was completed. If the deceased was a woman, she would be buried with her utensils and clothes while a man would also have his chair/stool and some of his clothes buried together with him. These items were detroyed before they were put in the grave. All buttons and zips were supposed to be removed from the clothes as they were not supposed to be placed in the grave.

Before the grave was covered, the ritual of *ukuphosa inhlabathi* (literal translation – throwing the soil) as a way of saying goodbye was done. This ritual entailed throwing a small portion of soil into the grave and this was done only by members of the core family and close relatives of the deacesed. During the perfomance of this ritual, some will 'tell' the deceased to rest in peace while others would request that the deceased carry a word to their ancestors to keep looking after them. While some will conjure avenging spirits to torment whoever may have killed the deceased relative, others will be uttering words of loss and final goodbyes. If a woman lost her husband, she would be the first to perform the ritual and then all other family members/ relatives would follow. In the case of a young wife (young enough to remarry and perhaps have children), she was not allowed to throw in the soil using her hands while facing the grave. Rather she would have to turn her back to the grave and then scoop the soil into the grave using her feet. It was believed that if the wife threw in the soil while facing the grave and some day decides to remarry, she would be tormented by continously seeing the face of her late husband instead of the new one. As such, turning her back to the grave was a way of erasing the memories so that when she remarries she would connect with her new spouse. Thereafter the grave would be covered up with soil and then a big stone (the grave headstone) (known in isiNdebele as *insika*) was placed by the head side of the grave. If it was a husband who died, the stone would be placed by the wife or his eldest son and if it was a wife who died, the husband would place the stone. In the event of a parent dying without a surviving spouse, the oldest son would place the stone. Thereon, stones were piled on the grave and in some instances logs were used. These were put as a memorial or mark that would last forever to show where this person was laid to rest.

In the context of migration, not much changed in terms of the time of burial because there were no quick means then to communicate with the migrant members. Also, the funeral could not be prolonged because there were not facilities like mortuaries to preserve the deceased. The migrant was only notified of the death through a letter that was written in red ink and sent to

him. Red ink symbolised urgency and not so good news. It could take long for the message to reach the migrant. In some instances, the migrant would only learn of the death of a relative upon return. Where the migrant needed to play an active role during the burial and he was not around, the family appointed his brother to stand in his place and perform the rituals.For example, if the migrant was the heir to the deceased. Upon returning, the migrant will then be taken to the grave to be shown where his relative was laid to rest. He would then put a stone on the grave as a way of showing his last respect to the deceased. The migrant would also speak to the deceased from the grave side and give apologies for not being there when he was needed and also plead with them to continue taking care of the family with the other ancestors he or she has joined.

After the burial, people went to eat the meat from a slaughtered cow in most cases, though in some instances it could be a number of goats. The crowd would sit outside the homestead in an open space in small groups. Each small group would be given their own chunk which they ate without any corn-meal i.e. sadza (pap) known in IsiNdebele as *isitshwala* or any other starch. The meat was roasted and not cooked and could not be taken into the home but had to be eaten from outside until it was finished. Furthermore, the meat was eaten without salt. Ensuing the above mentioned rituals, the ritual of removing ashes from all the fire points that were made during the funeral was performed. The family elders also used Pigweed *(Chenopodium album)* i.e. a weedy herbal plant they called *'iphunga'* in isiNdebele to cleanse the homestead. Thereafter, the family could start using their own resources and cooking from their own supplies. All the while they would have not been performing any household chores.

After that, if it was the husband that died, the widow would then wear black clothes from head to toe as a sign of mourning. If it is a man who lost his wife, a small piece of black cloth would be pinned to the sleeve of the widower's shirt. No man was allowed to pursue the widow in mourning clothes until the period of mourning was over. However, considering that polygamy was a common practice in the study area, there was liberty for the widower. He could not be in total mourning as he had to be intimate with his other wives. If parents lost a grown up child, the mother would wear a black head tie and black blouse. The father would have a small piece of black cloth pinned onto the sleeve of his shirt. The end of the mourning period was signified by the removal of the black mourning attire. For the rest of the family members, they had to cut their hair as a sign of mourning. Men had the whole head shaven clean, while women had

a small portion of hair cut and the hair would be put together, mixed with some hearbs and disposed. At this point, all the deceased's belongings would be gathered and locked away in a hut that would not be open until the end of the mourning period. It could be opened at times by one specified person just for cleaning.

In the context of migration, where the man was a migrant, he would only participate in the rituals when he returned. If he had lost his wife, he would have the black patch pinned to the sleeve of his jacket or shirt as a sign of mourning. If it were other family members, he would also have his head shaven and the hair disposed in the same manner as of the rest of the family. Thus, the timing of the rituals for the migrants was postponed unti their return. They were treated as 'dead' as they could not easily keep in touch with their families back home and participate in family making practices.

A period of mourning was declared and in the past it used to be one full year. Mourning clothes were worn until the end of the mourning period. At the end of the mourning period, a ceremony would be held which is known in Tsholotsho as *igalifu*[21]. In this ceremony, those in mourning clothes would have them removed. In the case of a widow who lost her husband (wearing all black) or a mother who lost her son (wearing black top and head tie), these clothes will be removed and she would then be given a new set of clothes. During this ceremony, the belongings of the deceased would be shared among the family members present at the ceremony. In this case, the migrant member would then have his share of the deceased's estate upon return. For any key roles that he should have played, a male family member stood in for him.

Thus, clearly, in terms in the context of migration, all the rituals were done on time back in Tsholotsho. They were only postponed for the migrants who would have been away and upon their return, they were performed by the book. This was done to circumvent bad omen befalling the migrant family member due to failure to perform rituals. Gogo MaDube stated that:

> *When migrated, it was difficult to link with them, let alone for them to travel back home. Therefore, when anyone died, burial continued as was the norm. There were no*

[21] Igalifu is a word popularly used in Tsholotsho that has its roots in the Kalanga language. It refers to a ceremony/ritual held at the end of the mourning period where the spouse and/or parents wearing the mourning clothes will have these removed. On this day, the mother or wife who was wearing black mourning clothes will be given a new set of clothes to change into symbolizing the dawn of a new era in her life. Then the belongings of the deceased will be shared amongst the surviving family members.

> *mortuaries like now to keep the corpse and even if they were there, there was not definite time as to when the migrant will be back as we could not coomunicate with them immediately. So, those who died were buried and the migrant would at times learn of the news after some time (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Bab' uHungwa also offered the following reflections:

> *Being a migrant was painful back in those days. You were a loner in a far away land and lost touch completely with your family back home. Things would happen and you would only learn of them months later. There was very little that could be done, that was what it was. One would then participate in the relevant rituals upon return. Nomater how much time would have lapsed, one had to perform the rituals to make right with the ancestors (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Gogo MaMoyo narrated that:

> *There could have been some circumstances that the migrant would have been needed to play a central part in the burial process and maybe after. But because he was not there, the family made arrangements to have the second in seniority after him to take his part so that the burial continued and was finished in a proper manner. When the time to share the belongings of the deceased came, whatever was to be given to the migrant was kept and given to him upon return (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

In the event that a migrant died in South Africa then, they were burried as a pauper because there were no means of repatriation. Transport was a challenge and these migrants were illegal in South Africa, as such there was no way their bodies could be carried back to Zimbabwe for burial. This is the reason burial societies were later created to help repatriate the bodies of migrants who died in South Africa.

Evidently, in all the earlier discussed rituals (i.e. marriage, births and deaths), families in Tsholotsho ensured rituals were performed accordingly. In some instances, the migrant member was represented by another if their presence was required. Having another member standing in for the migrant member to facilitate the performance of rituals shows that within families, there are some critical rituals that had to be performed at the stipulated without compromising their timing as failure to do so could anger the ancestors. Maloka (1998) writing about Basotho men in South African mines proffered that ancestors are not distant, rather they are part of everyday ordinary affairs of families and may bring luck when happy or misfortune when angered. The similar cultural beliefs on the role of ancestors are found among people Tsholotsho. Thus, families had to devise ways to get the rituals done to avert danger. However, there were yet some that could be delayed to be performed at a later stage when circumstances allow. This shows that timing does not have the same significance in different rituals although non-performance may have dire effects. However, within the pending/postponed rituals,

situations could arise that forced their immediate performance due to imminent risks emanating from the non-performance (Brown, 2003). Thus, in the past, time was the only variable that was rendered relative and could be negotiated for some rituals, unlike place. This depicts the non-transportability of home in terms of geographic location.

Moreover, the postponement of some rituals within migrant families to accommodate the migrant member also shows the hope that families had that their member was alive and would someday return to fulfil his duty. This is regardless of the fact that a person that travelled was regarded as 'dead', which denoted social death (Kankonde, 2010; Králová, 2015). In the case of the migrants from Tsholotsho, they were socially dead, their physical separation from the families resulted in their inability to fulfil certain social roles that were expected of them especially in ritual performances (see - Kankonde, 2010 on Congolese migrants in Johannesburg). As such, absent migrants were replaced by other present members in performing the sociocultural mainstream duties which are crucial in family making practices. Moreover, their absence induced some anxieties and fears that they could be physically dead. In the case of these historical migrants from Tsholotsho, the findings reveal how migration caused families left behind to live in perpetual anxiety and fear, though unspoken, of not knowing whether their relative was alive or dead. Occasionally their fears were allayed when they received letters or word through visiting fellow village mates. This, however, happened after long periods filled with hope, uncertainty and anxiety. Life cycle events such as marriages, births and deaths were constant reminders of the uncertainties around the concerned member's life. Although families came up with strategies to replace them physically, there remained perpetual emotional wounds that only the return of the member could heal. Hence, in some instances, mothers cried upon the return of their migrated sons as a sign of relief and happiness that he is alive as Bab' uNdiweni narrated that when his father returned from South Africa, his grandmother cried tears of joy that her son was alive.

6.2 '*Being here and there at the same time*': simulataneity and Life cycle rituals

In the previous section, I presented life cycle rituals related to marriages, births and deaths in the context of migration in the past where migrants stayed away for long periods before they could return to their families. However, as has already been alluded to in the preceding chapters, with infrastructural developments in travel and communication, present day migrants

are able to keep in regular contact with their families through visits and communication. This has resulted in simultaneous embeddedness, also referred to by some scholars as 'being here and there at the same time'. Moreover, women have also become active in migration leading to what is known as feminisation of migration. Thus, as a result of transnationalism and the feminisation of migration, a number of changes and continuities have been observed in the performance of life cycle rituals within transnational families in Tsholotsho. In the next sub-sections, I present these changes in detail as they emerge in the study sites.

6.2.1 Marriage rituals

In Tsholotsho, the majority of the family members left behind were old women who were past the child bearing stage living with their grandchildren born to migrant parents. A significant number of the young, economically productive people (both male and female) and married couples reside in Johannesburg. Very few young people in the marrying age are left in Tsholotsho, and as such rituals related to marriages and births are now rare in Tsholotsho.

However, because young women are also now migrating just like young men do, they now meet their suitors in South Africa. When they meet in South Africa, most younger generation transnational migrants do not observe proper traditional marriage procedures. As earlier discussed in chapter 5, the young people practice *umasihlalisane* (see – Maphosa, 2012). The cohabitation could either result in formalised marriages or could just end abruptly. This *umasihlalisane* is reflective of Hunter (2007)'s notion of the political economy of sex. Political economy of sex refers to changes in a people's sexual practices in response to changes in the political and economic systems. Writing on South African migrant men and the spread of HIV/AIDS, Hunter notes that as unemployment and poverty rates increased, men failed to reproduce and maintain families. Young men also failed to raise enough money to pay *lobola*, consequently also leading to a decrease in marriages. As a result, women also migrated and when they reached the destination areas, they cohabited, creating temporary sexual unions which in some instances led to marriage or just ended as those involved moved on. As such, a majority of the migrants from Tsholotsho generally cohabit without the knowledge of their families until they have children. Although they cohabit initially, in most instances they would eventually formalise their union by observing their families' marriage rituals so that they can be formally and traditionally considered as husband and wife. Mr Moyo, a key informant in Johannesburg, who is a leader of one of the burial societies offered these reflections:

> *These kids are now different from us. We tried to do everything by the book when it came to marriage. But for them, a boy meets a girl on the streets, and they like each other and there they are, cohabiting. They do not bother telling parents. In most instances we only get to know about their arrangement when a child has been born. There have been some other occurrences though where both families end up meeting each other when these two lose a child (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Bab' uNdlela also put it this way:

> *Life is now expensive in South Africa, accommodation is a challenge and if one is not working, it becomes really difficult. So, these children nowadays get into relationships and decide to cut on their accommodation bills by moving together. In some instances, the girl would have just moved to South Africa and having accommodation challenges and will just get into a relationship with a boy as a way of getting accommodation. Then they start cohabiting and eventually get children. The common thing is that after a child is born, they will start alerting the families and the boy will then pay all the dues (Johannesburg, 2017).*

This reflects Hunter's assertions discussed above where the economic challenges faced by migrants in Johannesburg lead them to change their sexual practices to ensure survival. Moreover, it reflects the conflicts between the structure and agency within families. Although the family as a system has values and norms that dictate the due processes to be followed in marrying, individual members device ways and means to ensure survival which may not be in sync with the dictates of the structure. What is prescribed in Tsholotsho is not followed through in Johannesburg due to the challenges posed by being away from home and the safety nets it provides. This demonstrates the inherent frictions in migrants' lives as they try to reproduce home away from home. Clearly, it emerges that what can easily work in Tsholotsho as family making practices will not work in Johannesburg.

Because of this transnational migration dynamic, it has become a common practice in Tsholotsho to have *ukuvela* and *amalobolo* negotiations done in South Africa. This is unlike in the past where these were done in the girl's parents' homestead back home. Just like time, the concept also becomes negotiable in transnationalism. In instances where the father is also in South Africa, he plays his leading role in the process as the father figure. However, in instances where the father is back in Tsholotsho or is late, the girl's paternal uncles take over the leading role and facilitate the process in consultation with the parents back home. Where consultations are made with family back home, they are done in real time as the proceedings are taking place in South Africa. While in Johannesburg, I had the privilege to witness one lobola negotiation where the father of the bride travelled all the way from Tsholotsho to Johannesburg to be part of the *ukuvela* ritual for his daughter. In light of the foregone, it emerges that transnationalism allows for marriage rituals to be performed in families across borders. Unlike in the past where

women were passive participants in the process, in the current context, mothers also play an active role. They are consulted in the process especially in instances where the husband is no longer alive. This could be traced to the influences of the Anglo-Saxon culture, specifically the feminist incursion into the African culture that called for women empowerment and emancipation.

Consider the case of Patricia, the young woman who immigrated into South Africa, married, had a child and later divorced and sent her child back home. She later met another suitor and had her *ukuvela* and *lobola* negotiations held in South Africa. She narrated that:

> *When my boyfriend told me that he wanted to come and formally be known in my family, I told my Aunts in South Africa who in turn informed my Uncles and brothers. We had been staying together for a few months and we wanted to make it formal. My Uncles and brothers then informed my mother back home as my father is late now. They agreed that ukuvela be done in Johannesburg. My elder brother led the proceedings and at the end the money was sent home to my mother (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Bab' uNyathi, also proffered that:

> *Now things are different. You find that in most families in Tsholotsho, 90% of the members are in South Africa and only a few are back home. So, it only makes sense that such rituals as ukuvela be performed where the majority of the people are and then the rest can be finished at home. This is mainly so because the majority of the people who will be expected t attend the ukuvela rituals are in South Africa, so if it is taken to back home, very few people will be there to attend (Johannesburg, South Africa).*

These changes demonstrate how Johannesburg is increasingly becoming a viable home with family rituals being performed there. This means the destination of migration, which often offered only abject and asocial way of being, has been turned into viable social spaces where family life as lived in Tsholotsho could be replicated. By performing the rituals in Johannesburg, migrants affirm it as their home where some intimate family making practices can be performed without dire consequences.

Notwithstanding, one of the continuities noted is that although the *lobola* negotiations are done in South Africa, the woman (or the bride) and her suitor travel back to Tsholotsho where the *ukucola* ritual is performed. Notably, there is flexibility in where (place) the *ukuvela* ritual can be performed unlike *ukucola*. *Ukucola* cannot be performed in a foreign land because it is a process that has to be done in the land of the ancestors while talking to them in the process. After this, the bride is accompanied by a few select individuals or a bridal party to her husband's family.

Gogo MaNdlovu, a grandmother in Tsholotsho offered the following reflections:

> *Some of these processes can be negotiated and done in South Africa, but there are some that will eventually require that they come back home. Those can only be performed in the land of one's ancestors. Ukuvela can be done in South Africa, but when it comes to ukucola, that has got to be done by the girl's father's kraal, in his rural home, that is very important (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

From the foregoing, it emerges that among families in Tsholotsho, ancestors are central/critical in shaping family making practices. The common belief is that ancestors are physically located in the area of one's origin and that place is always referred to as home. They are revered and should always be kept satisfied as it is believed that they have the capacity to punish if angry (Maloka, 1998). Thus, in the transnational era, place emerges as a very significant element in the *ukucola* ritual while it can be negotiated in the rest of the marriage rituals.

6.2.2 Birth rituals

There were not many new births in Tsholosho as most of the women left behind have passed the child bearing stage. However, there were a few young women in their child bearing stage who stayed in Tsholotsho whose husbands were transnational migrants. Just like in the migration era, the ritual of *ukwethesa inkanda* and *ukulahla inkaba* was done in Tsholotsho and there was no need for the involvement of the transnational migrant husband. However, the ritual of *ukubamba umpfula* was performed transnationally, unlike in the past where the family aited for the husband to return for it to be performed. To facilitate performance of the ritual of *ukubamba umpfula*, MaNkiwane, offered these reflections:

> *In my family, we are Zionists and if there is birth, we perform both traditional and church rituals. After giving birth, I am not supposed to eat salt until the ritual of ukubamba umpfula is performed and this is supposed to be done with me and my husband present. However, due to separation, the process has to be initiated even in his absence so that I can eat salt again. So, to initiate the process, we buy coarse salt from here [Tsholotsho], put it in an envelope and send it to my husband in South Africa through omalayitsha*[22]*. He receives the salt and licks it and puts it back in the envelope and gives back to omalayitsha to bring back home. Meanwhile I will not be eating salt since after giving birth. Upon receiving the salt, it is given to the baby to lick as well and then after that I can eat salt. Then the rest of the ritual will be completed when my husband comes home (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

This illustrates the ability by families as systems to regulate themselves and adapt to the changes in their environment. The flexibility offered by transnationalism allows families to

[22] Omalayitsha is the Isindebele word for private transporters or courier-service providers, which literally means 'those who carry'.

enact otherwise bounded practices across place and space. As families perform ritual practices transnationally, they are also confirming transnational social spaces as viable platforms to enact familyhood. As such, it emerges that transnational social spaces thus provide important sites of interaction for transnational families where they can construct and reconstruct collective identities through interpretation of processes as individuals interact (Carter & Fuller, 2015) and navigate the complexities of separation and dispersion within these transnational social spaces. They act as enablers of family rituals which are practices/ interactions that aid incorporation, identity creation and confirming belonging.

For transnational migrants in Johannesburg, although some of them indicated that they did not perform rituals, there were still a few who performed these rituals while in South Africa. They stated that although they were far from the elders who were custodians of the rituals, they still received the concoctions from back home sent through *omalayitsha.* Interestingly, even the families in Tsholotsho indicated that they facilitated the performance of these rituals when their members are in South Africa. Commenting on this, Gogo MaNdlovu put it this way:

> *[…] those in South Africa still perform birth rituals, they inform us here in Zimbabwe especially the male children and we send the necessary herbs that are needed through omalayitsha or other relatives. At times my male children they travel back home, and we do the rituals for their new-born babies. It is easier now to travel, they no longer take weeks to reach home like our husbands used to, so they can come home, and we do the rituals, then they go back at any time (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

There were also a few other transnational migrants who indicated that the husband's mother travelled all the way from Tsholotsho to Johannesburg to come and assist the family perform the rituals. She brought along all the herbs that were used in *ukwethesa inkanda* and *ukugqizisa intebe* to strengthen child. It also emerged that there were some who performed rituals through Zulu herbalists who gave them the concoctions for them to apply on their children's fontanelle (*ukwethesa inkanda*). This emanated from the fact that the transnational migrants parents believed that the practices between the Zulu of South Africa and the Ndebele of Zimbabwe were not so different as Ndebeles trace their origins to Zululand.

In terms of *ukulahla inkaba*, most transnational migrants indicated that when the umbilical cord dropped, they kept it and waited for the opportunity to to travel back home. Upon reaching home they would give it to the baby's partenal grandmother who would then dispose of it according to the family's tradition. In some rare occasions, a few transnational migrants

indicated that they sent the umbilical cord back home through *omalayitsha* and the grandmother would receive it and dispose of it accordingly. Thabo, one of the young transnational migrant men in Johannesburg offered the following reflections:

> *I am a christian, but I still believe in our traditions also. So when my child is born here in South Africa, we receive the herbs from my mother back home with instructions on how to apply them on the child's fontanelle. However, when it comes to the umbilical cord, when it drops, we keep it. We keep it until the child has grown old enough to travel, usually after a year or so and then we travel home and give my mother the cord and she will disporse of it accordingly (Johannesburg, 2017).*

In a similar account, Newman, another young transnational migrant man put it this way:

> *For my wife and I, my mother-in-law always travelled when we had a baby. It was easy for us because my rural home and that of my wife are close to each other. So when my mother-in-law came, she would be given all the necessary concoctions by my mother for ukwethesa inkanda. She would stay with us for maybe a month and then after that she will travel back home. We will then give her the child's umbilical cord to go and give my family so that they can dispose of it acording to our tradition (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Gogo MaMoyo in Tsholotsho also narrated that:

> *In the current era, it is easy to move people and things around. So when my children had babies in South Africa, I would send the concoctions through omalayitsha and they in turn would send the umbilical cord so that I can dispose of it properly. They did not wait for their ability to travel, no, but it was critical that the child's cord be disposed properly, in the land of its ancestors (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

From the foregone narrations, it emerges that in birth rituals, most of them could be performed transnationally yet when it comes to disposal of the umbilical cord, it had to be done back in Tsholotsho. This was done to link affirm the child's belonging to the land as well as her belonging to her ancestors. It reveals how the place dimension related to the place of burial of one's umbilical cord when born is a very significant marker of belonging to a particular geolocation. It emphasises the need not only to reproduce familyhood (Moyo et al., 2016) but also to assert and claim belonging to a particular land (Geschiere, 2009). Just as Ndlovu, et al., (1995) posited, it is very important for the code to be disposed according to the family's prescribed pattern. This is done to avoid invoking danger or risk for the child or creating a sense of wrongness (Tonhati, 2018) as well as affirming the child's relationship to the place of their birth.

As shown in Thabo's account, a majority of transnational migrant families in Johannesburg had also joined the Zionist churches who practiced both the traditional *ukwethesa inkanda* and *ukugqizisa intebe* rituals and the other spiritual practices that entailed use of 'holy' water. Thus,

over and above the traditional rituals, the child underwent spiritual rituals that included sprinkling with 'holy' water, prayer and being given wooven wollen strings to tie to their neck, waist, hands and feet. Thus, these transnational migrants embraced the church beliefs and combined them with the traditional beliefs that were upheald in their families.

Furthermore, among transnational families, in terms of births, elderly women, mostly left behind in Tsholotsho, are custodians of ritual practices. The fact that transnational migrants are separated from these key people has created a discontinuity in terms of culture and tradition. It has created a gap in the knowledge needed for the transnational migrants to perform the rituals while away from Tsholotsho and in most instances has resulted in non-performance of rituals by the transnational migrants. Ntando, a young father and a transnational migrant in Johannesburg stated that:

> *At first, I used to believe the claims about what could potentially befall my family and specifically my children if I did not perform the family rituals when they were born. But then when I got to South Africa and had a child, I did not know what to do to my child as I was not taught the rituals and my mother was too far to help and as such, we ended up not doing anything to the child. My child grew well without any disability and now I have two and nothing happened to them. So, from then I just realised the elders just threatened people to perform rituals but in essence there is nothing that really happens if you do not (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Moreover, some of the transnational migrants who did not perform the rituals indicated that some of the birth rituals that they had to perform entailed conditions that were difficult to fulfil. For example, the separation of the husband and wife for some time until the baby's umbilical cord dries and falls off or the husband not seeing the child until after the ritual has been performed. Transnational migrants indicated that they stayed in rented spaces, most of which are one room or divisions of a room. This posed a challenge as limitation in terms of availability and use of rented space in Johannesburg has a bearing on the intimate socio-cultural practices. As such, being away from home where there is ample space and time led to constraints posed by the dynamics of place, space and time. Moreover, their children are born in hospitals and upon discharge, it will be the husband's responsibility to collect the mother and child from the hospital and bring them 'home'. This means it becomes difficult for the husband to observe the condition that he cannot see the child or the wife before performing some of these birth rituals.

The changes noted demonstrate symbolic interactionism among transnational migrants as they create and recreate meaning around life cycle rituals as symbols through which they enact their familyhood in transnational social spaces. It emerges that within these transnational families, transnational migrant members accord new meanings to various cultural activities in response

to their realities in destination countries. As families are dispersed and circumstances challenge the practice of familyhood and performance of some ritual practices, migrant members experiment to see what will happen if they modify, forget or postpone family rituals through their own interpretative processes. As they do this, they are able to accord new meanings to family rituals and objects in their new environments.

6.2.3 Death rituals

In transnational migration, a lot of changes were noted in the way death rituals were performed in transnational families. Unlike in the historical migration era where migrants were excluded by distance from burials back home, in the curent epoch they play an active role. Transnationalism has made it possible, through ease of communication and movement across countries, for migrants to take part in deaths in their families back home. If a death occurs in Tsholotsho, those at home call family members in South Africa to notify them. In most instances, those at home will be instructed to take the corpse to a funeral parlour either in Bulawayo or Tsholotsho District business centre where the body of the deceased will be kept awaiting finalisation of the day of burial. Most of the times this is also done to give members of the family who are away a chance to prepare to travel and be part of the burial. In the case of historical migrants, if a family member died back in Tsholotsho, the migrants could get the news well after the deceased had been buried and it was difficult for them to travel back for burial. Contrary to migrants in the historical epoch, all the transnational migrants interviewed indicated that they travelled back to Tsholotsho to bury their family members in the event of a death. However, the transnational migrants indicated that they only travel back for the burial if it is a very close relative. For other extended family members, they would send donations to assist in the funeral arrangements. Thus, in transnational migration, the day of burial could be delayed for a while to allow for the transnational migrants to make their way home and be a part of the burial rituals. Bab' uNkomo, one of the village heads in the area put it this way:

> *In the current migration set up, a lot has changed. If someone dies today here in Tsholotsho, we communicate with family members in Johannesburg immediately. In the past a person would be buried either the evening of the same day he/she died or in the morning of the following day. But now, those in South Africa usually tell us to take the body of the deceased to the mortuary and then evrything else will then be determined after that. This is usually done to allow those that are far to travel home and be part of the burial. The body is usually kept for a week maximum before burial can take place. There are very rare occassions when the waiting period would go beyond a week especially for those who die in Tsholotsho (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

MaSiwela, in Tsholotsho also narrated that:

> *Now there are mortuaries and funeral of a person who dies in Tsholotsho can now take days. Those in South Africa will determine the length of this waiting period. There are some instances where those in South Africa would have added the deceased as a beneficiary of their burial society in South Africa. So when the person dies here at home, we wait for the burial society to come with its members and a coffin to bury the dead as well as groceries which will be used to feed people coming to the burial (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

Bab' uNdiweni who has been a migrant for over fourty years offered these reflections:

> *In the past, it was not so easy. Being a migrant came with a lot of emotional challenges. We were literally renoved from our families and distance denied us the priviledge to bury our family members. A lot of people died and we could not be part of their burial. But now, it is a lot better, thanks also to availability of mortuaries. We really are able to travel back to Tsholotsho to bury our loved ones with ease. We can leave on Friday evening and come Monday morning we are back at work (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Another notable change is that, unlike in the past when a migrant died in South Africa, he was buried there as an indigent due to lack of means to facilitate the repatriation of the deceased. The major setback was that it was difficult and expensive to repatriate bodies from South Africa due to transport challenges. As things started changing in the mid-1980s, after Zimbabwe had attained its independence and some developments in transport networks were noted, repatriation became possible through migrant organisations that were pioneered by activists that had a political agenda. These were not necessarily burial societies. However, even in this era, most of the migrants were illegal in South Africa, which made it difficult for most of their dead bodies to be repatriated due to lack of proper documentation. Most of them had left the then Rhodesia without even a birth certificate.

Bab' uNdlela, one of the family history respondents in Johannesburg offered the following reflections:

> *In the mid-1970s, there were activist organisations that were recruiting young Zimbabweans in South Africa especial those from Matebeleland to leave SA and go and join ZAPU. They used to move these young people via Botswana. These activists were hiding behind Church and most young people were recruited by these old men back to Zimbabwe. It is these same organisations that facilitated repatriations of any dead people from Tsholotsho at that time. So, in the mid-1980s, these activist organisations actively repatriated the remains of people from Tsholotsho. They got much organised immediately after Zimbabwe got its independence. This was the period when most young people were leaving school in Matabeleland running away from Gukurahundi and crossed to South Africa to start life afresh in South Africa. Although such organisations were in place, most of those dying in South Africa were buried there as it was difficult to repatriate the remains of the deceased. Other than transport challenges, most of these individuals did not have any form of identity as most of them left Rhodesia without even a basic birth certificate. I can still remember vividly in 1983*

> *when a cousin of ours could not be repatriated because he did not have proper papers and was buried in SA (Johannesburg, 2017).*

However, currently, due to transnationalism, family members that die in South Africa have their bodies repatriated back to Zimbabwe and burial societies play a significant role in this process. For example, they work closely with funeral parlours in the processing of paperwork in the event that the deceased did not have proper documentation. Burial societies among migrants from Tsholotsho in Johannesburg started in the early 1990s. They served to reduce not only the socio-cultural but also the financial burden on members in the event of death, either of the migrants themselves or their family members in Johannesburg or back in Tsholotsho. Membership in these burial societies is based on familial links or geographic residence back in Tsholotsho. There are some burial societies that are made up of members who belong to the same family and share blood links. In this kind of societies, if the family member is a man, his wife's funeral will be covered in full. In the event that the husband's parents die and are not covered, the society will contribute a small financial token to assist in the burial proceedings. However, if the wife lost her parents, nothing will be contributed. Moreover, if the family member is a woman, her husband will not be covered because they claim that he is not part of their family. In terms of geographic residence, migrants from the same area back in Tsholotsho come together and form a burial society.

Mr Dewa, a president of one of the burial societies in Johannesburg indicated that:

> *When improvements in transport occurred and travelling became easier, we decided to organise ourselves and form a burial society in the early 2000s that would help repatriate fellow members who died here in South Africa. We had realised that repatriation was a very expensive process and, in most instances, became such a burden on surviving members who made efforts to carry the remains of their loved ones back home. So, we started our burial society and it was open to anyone who was willing to be a member and is from Tsholotsho (Johennesburg, 2017).*

Mr Tshuma, who is also the president of another burial society formed on blood ties put it this way:

> *Our burial society was started in 1999. It was a family initiative that came about after we had really suffered the pain of repatriating family members who died in SA, it was so expensive. So, we formed the burial society and a member pays ZAR30 for each beneficiary added. This helps a lot in the event of a death. It also allows us to give our loved ones a decent send off and ensure they are buried in the land of their ancestors (Johannesburg, 2017).*

In the burial societies, migrants contribute an average of ZAR30 in subscriptions on a monthly basis and the money is kept in the association's bank account. It is only withdrawn in the event

of a death of a member or a beneficiary. The money is used to facilitate the repatriation of the corpse of the deceased in the case of migrants, or to buy a coffin and send a team to go and bury the beneficiary of the burial society member if the death was in Tsholotsho. For the society formed on family and blood ties, it emerged that when repatriating the corpse of the deceased, the deceased's immediate family members who are part of the society will be given first preference. However, if there are immediate family members who are not part of the society, they would not be given space in the cars. Only two seats will be reserved for the deceased's maternal relatives.

In repatriating the body of the deceased, respondents confirmed performance of certain peculiar rituals along the way to Tsholotsho. One of these rituals was the 'collection' of the deceased's spirit from the exact location where the person died. It could be in a hospital or from a spot where the person was shot or stabbed or had an accident while in some instances, the spirit was taken from where the person was staying. This was done using a small branch from the Buffalo thorn tree *(Ziziphus mucronate) i.e. Umphafa* in isiNdebele where an elderly man/woman in the family would carry the branch and upon getting to the spot where the person died, call the person's full name and ask them to come home with them. Then the elderly man/woman would take the branch to the coffin and it will be kept there and taken along to Tsholotsho. Mr Dlamini, one of the leaders of the burial societies in Johannesburg offered these reflections:

> *When we repatriate the deceased, we do some rituals along the way. Seeing the person would have died away from home, it is critical that their spirit is taken along with the body to its final resting place. This is to ensure that the spirit of the deceased does not keep wondering in the foreign without a resting place. So, what we do is that we go to the place where the person would have died, and we get a small branch of a tree and use it to take their spirit. That branch will be placed on the coffin until we get to Tsholotsho (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Almost all respondents indicated that they performed this ritual except those who belong to Christian Pentecostal churches. However, those from Zionist churches performed these traditional rituals alongside their church rituals. Along the way to Tsholotsho, they 'spoke' to the deceased, informing him/her of where they were. Nkazi, whose narration is typical of most of the transnational migrants' accounts proffered that:

> *There will be that one elderly person who is in charge of rituals. Along the way, this person will talk to the deceased and inform them of how we are progressing and also where will be. They will do this until we get home in Tsholotsho (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Upon reaching their final destination, which is the deceased's rural home, they handed everything to the elders in the family to continue with the process until the end. Interestingly,

the transnational migrants travelled back to South Africa soon after the burial was over. However, close family members remained behind for a day or two to participate in some immediate post burial rituals such as cutting of hair as a sign of mourning. However, although they remained behind, they did not stay back until all the rituals were performed. The transnational migrants indicated that they attended the performance of a few critical rituals and not all rituals because there was varying significance attached to the rituals. There were some rituals that family members were afraid that if they did not perform, they would attract bad luck for example, cleansing the family from the spirit of death. There were also some that they performed out of obligation as a way of expressing solidarity with family and affirming membership, for example cutting their hair as a sign of mourning.

One issue that stood out among transnational migrants is that when children died in South Africa, they were buried there. Generally, this was attributed to the fact that most children did not have proper documents to be repatriated back to Tsholotsho. Bab' uNdlela, one of the elderly transnational migrants and a family history respondent offered these reflections:

> *You see, with children, it's different. They do not have any attachment to place like adults, especially a place they can call home. As such they can easily be buried here in South Africa. It is important among our people to be buried in the place where our umbilical cords are buried, with our ancestors, but this is different with children. Most of them have their umbilical cords disposed in South Africa and as such cannot claim much of Tsholotsho as home (Johannesburg, 2017).*

During my fieldwork in Johannesburg, I witnessed a burial of a child that had died in South Africa. The parents were not part of my respondents but the father was from Tsholotsho. The parents were not yet traditionally married but cohabiting. They resided in a rented room in a house shared with other tenants in Yeoville suburb. Mourners gathered to hold consolation evening prayers in this house, with a few people sitted in the small living room, others in the corridor and a bigger crowd gathered in the veranda outside. Their families only got to meet after the death of the child, each coming to their own child. The deaceased child's partenal grandmother also travelled from Zimbabwe to South Africa to be part of the burial. I observed tensions on the first day of gathering as the woman's family wanted to lead the funeral procedings claiming that the deceased child's father disrespected them by cohabiting with their daughter without fulfilling the required cultural formalities. As such, the man was not formally recognised as their son-in-law. On the other hand, the man's family accepted that their son trasgressed cultural norms, was at fault and thus they apologised. However, they maintained their claim that the deceased child was theirs and as such they were supposed to be allowed to

lead the burial of the child. The tension between the two families that ensued was eventually eased when the families reached a settlement whereby the man's family took unconditional, full responsibility to honour all the cultural obligations which entailed paying fines and all the necessary dues (i.e. ukuvela and payment for damages charges). The child was eventually buried at the Slovo Park cemetery in Soweto. Mourners returned from burial and were served lunch and refreshments. This particular incident demonstrated the place making practices among migrants; how rituals were performed in a different place. Different from home (Tsholotsho), Johannesburg became a place where everybody congregated to negotiate between two families. By gathering in the small room at Yeoville to hold a funeral wake for the child, then conduct a burial and return to the house to share a meal, migrants affirmed the viability of Johanneburg as home where family life can be organised and lived as would have been done in Tsholotsho. Thus, rituals among transnational migrants serve not just to confirm the distant home or create a new home, but aslo help maintain a home in two places at the same time. One may argue that the burial of children in South Africa and abandoning of some rituals for example may be illustrative of a weakening of the enactment of the transnational family. Although this may be true to a certain extent, the fact that the grandmother had to travel from Tsholotsho to be part of her nephew's burial reflects the conscious efforts by family members to enact the transnational family. Moreover, although documentation was one of the reasons for burial in South Africa in the case of children, the majority of transnational migrants indicated that children are not like adults. They do not have an attachment with Tsholotsho as their home and as such, can be buried anywhere, they cannot claim belonging to any place as yet. What they know as home is South Africa and for some, that is where their umbilical cords were disposed, thus they can be buried in South Africa with ease.

Across all the three life cycle rituals presented, transnational family members both in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg proffreed different reasons why they performed rituals. MaNkiwane expressed that in her family rituals are performed to avert danger. She offered the following naration:

> *If a child is born while the father is away, there are rituals that are performed before he can see the child. If the father happens to appear and the child runs to meet the father like others before the ritual is performed, the child gets affected. Aaaah! The child may be crippled or even die, it is a serious matter (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

For Newman, his family performed rituals transnationally as a way of cementing familyhood and affirming belonging. He put it this way:

> *You see, each family has a way of doing their things and this way defines who they are and what they believe. In our family, rituals are very critical as they are a way of showing who we are and what we stand for, they demonstrate our identity. If anyone is a part of us, they should perform the different rituals we perform, be it if there is a death, a birth or a marriage. Failure to do that is a huge statement of rebellion and may attract bad luck (Johannesburg, 2017).*

Both MaNkiwane and Newman's narrations were in sync with Mr Ngwenya, the Councillor's view, who offered the following narration:

> *In our area, rituals carry a significant spiritual relevance. In most families, these rituals link the living and the dead and are performed as a way of ascertaining protection of the living by the dead. Thus, failure by a family member to perform these rituals may be provocative to the dead (the ancestors) and attract punishment of bad omen for the family member (Tsholotsho, 2017).*

However, although this has been the case in most instances, there are some changes that have been noted where rituals are no longer observed, for example due to influences of Christianity and modernisation. A notable change is that, after burial in Tsholotsho, a majority of the transnational migrants indicated that they no longer cut their hair as a sign of mourning like it was done in the past. This was mainly because they had to go back to work and thus could not impromptly cut their hair. Another reason given for not observing this ritual was their convertion to Christianity which had no regard for such traditional rituals. Regarding the length of the mourning period, most families indicated that this was no longer a year, but rather the mourning period ranged between 3 to 6 months depending on family preference. This was largely due to the fact that the majority of the family members worked in South Africa and some of their places of work required that they wear uniforms. For some, especially women, their work places required that they wear classy clothes yet on the other hand the mourning clothes had to be less fashionable and not appealing to deter any suitors pursuing her. As such, they could not go for long while wearing mourning garments and as such the period had to be cut short. When the mourning time was over, a significant number of transnational migrants indicated that the family in South Africa could gather and have the mourning clothes removed without necessarily travelling to Tsholotsho. Members would only travel for the *igalifu* ritual which would be done usually a year after the burial of the deceased. As already indicated, some of these changes were as a result of the influences of Christianity on families in relation to life cycle rituals, which I present in the next section.

6.3 Christianity and ritual performances within transnational families

> "*Before blaming everything on migration, it has to be noted that Christianity had already done a fundamental job in changing and altering rituals in most Zimbabwean societies" (Mr Nyathi, Historian, 2017).*

In the forgone, it is clear that life cycle rituals within migrant families have undergone some transformations. However, although migration brought about some notable changes, Christianity had already fundamentally altered ritual performances in the country as a whole and families in particular. Box 6.1 is an excerpt from an interview with Mr Nyathi, a historian in Zimbabwe. Notably, migration just became another process that aggravated the erosion, transformations and alterations in rituals. Emphasising the same, Dr Hadebe, another academic key informant in Zimbabwe also indicated that significant changes had already been provoked by the advent and adoption of Christianity. He noted that:

Box 6.1: Rituals, migration and Christianity

...rituals had to be directed and they were rooted in a people's cosmology. But now in terms of cosmology, our world view, we have faced onslaught from Christianity, which is Christianity, a world view, Christianity is another people's world view, it's a cosmology, which is an alternative to the African world view, so which then reinforces the destruction of those processes, those stages because we no longer believe in them anyway. Migration comes just as a mop up operation in a situation where destruction has already happened. Christianity with its new world view has done the destruction and migration is just a mop up operation. It will not account for the major changes; fundamental changes because to change a people you change their world view not their practices. If you do not change somebody's worldview, their cosmology, their belief, their philosophy, you will drive their activities underground but not eradicate them. To bring about change, sustainable change, you need to erode the pillars that support the system and its cosmology

(Excerpt from an interview with Mr. Nyathi, a historian in Zimbabwe, 2017)

> *The advent of Christianity superseded most of these rituals and people are no longer keen to openly do the things they know because that will be considered as backwardness and that has been the challenge (Zimbabwe, 2017).*

However, although Christianity has been seen as superseding tradition, some families devised new ways of practicing their rituals. According to Dr Hadebe, things performed ritualistically do not need lab tests to actually verify them. As such, families perform their rituals in secret through new and creative ways. Elaborating on this, he stated that:

> *People would have done their rituals behind the scenes without you noticing. They assign one or two people to do the rituals. You come to a birthday party everything is there the cakes are there, but people have done their rituals, they slaughter that goat, you don't know maybe in the slaughtering the ritual is done within a minute and it's done, and they go on. Or they say this is the Aunt who will do this, and you think it's just routine but no, she is properly selected, they know she is the one who has to do it and once she is the one who has done it everything else is ok. It's time for cake cutting and she is ushered in, it looks small but then the family knows, so rituals are taking place as we live, although clandestinely in some instances (Zimbabwe, 2017).*

Although some families may have embraced Christianity, the majority of them belonged to the Zionist churches. Zionist churches, unlike Pentecostals and orthodox churches, allowed members to mix Christianity with traditional rituals. This is the dominant practice in Tsholotsho. Although a majority of the families I interacted with were Zionists, there were some families that were Pentecostals. In my interactions with the families I observed that these families were very radical and completely abandoned ritual performances in marriage, births and deaths. I remember in Tsholotsho, where I attended one burial where the deceased man and his wife had converted to a Pentecostal church. I observed how the wife kept refusing to perform some rituals saying she no longer believed in them. By the grave site, she was told that she had to perform the ritual of *ukuphosa inhlabathi* by turning her back to the grave and scoop the soil into the grave using her feet (as elaborated in section 6.1.3). When she refused to perform this ritual, there was a tense confrontation with the elders of the family and she was told that it was not a request but a command. She was eventually coersed into performing the ritual, with the elders citing that her actions were going to anger the ancestors and attract bad luck. This is illustrative of the silent friction and contradictions in ritual performances within reconfigured families in the context of migration and christianity. Such nuances were not highlighted in the interviews as respondents gave a very idealised version of things. However, in my observations I noted some of these subtleties.

In a similar but unrelated burial, I abserved another challenge. In this case, the heir in the family was refusing to perform the ritual of washing hands with a herbal concoction and eat some meat that was supposed to be done by the head of the family. The man (who was now a pastor) stated categorically that he no longer believed in those rituals and as such could not perform them. Unlike the woman presented in the earlier case, no one forced the man to perform the ritual. These two scenarios first demonsrate the friction and conflict between christianity and cultural traditional beliefs within African families. As African families convert to christianity, they abandon traditional/ cultural rituals, most of which they associate with evil spirits and adopt christian practices/ values which are seen as holy and modern (Adamo, 2011). Okeke et al., (2017), writing about the Igbo in Nigeria also noted these conflicts and frictions noting that in most African countries, families perform rituals in marriages, births and deaths which have a cultural significance. However, with the advent of Christianity, most of the practices are now shunned and classified as evil. Secondly, the scenarios also demonstrate the gender dynamics within migrant families. The man's ability to stand his ground in refusing to peform the ritual is illustratrative of hegemonic masculity in patriarchal societies where men have authority that

they can assert successfully. Furthermore, being a pastor placed him in a position of authority whereby his decision could not be revoked. On the contrary, the scenarios of the bereaved woman being forced to perform the required ritual against her will demostrates emphasised femininity[23] where women must conform to and be submissive to the dictates of patriarchy. It further reveals the authoritative role of elders within families in ensuring adherence to family traditions.

As such, in light of the foregoing, it can be noted that transnational families interact and perform rituals as well as ascribe meaning to rituals within transnational social spaces. This depicts the symbolic nature of interactions in migrant families' engagement across place and space facilitated by creation of meaning and circulation of objects in transnational spaces. Thus, in transnational families' interactions, life cycle rituals emerge as a critical aspect of family life and place making practices in the transnational landscape. Rituals form a critical part of family practices as families place much emphasis on identity creation, belonging and a people's relationship to space and place (Soeffner & Zifonun, 2016). Rituals provide important sites of interaction. Within these sites, family members construct and reconstruct collective identities through interpretation of processes as individual interact (Carter & Fuller, 2015) and navigate the complexities of separation and dispersion within transnational social spaces. These findings thus contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex of transnationalism and families and the changes and continuities that occur within families as they are exposed to constant and sustained migratory trends. Notably, the resultant family life defies normative notions of familyhood based on proximity and shared residence as family life and other significant family practices are transacted virtually regardless of distance.

6.4 Migration, transnationalism and performance of life-cycle rituals

In light of the findings presented above, it emerged that in the study area, historically, rituals were performed at home (Tsholotsho) while in the transnational epoch they are performed by families both at home and transnationally. Their symbolic and practical significance for some

[23] Arie, P. (2016) Hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. Available from https://purushu.com/2016/02/hegemonic-masculinity-and-emphasized-femininity.html#:~:text=Emphasized%20femininity%20is%20the%20idea,needs%20and%20desires%20of%20men.&text=Girls%20who're%20raised%20with,seek%20power%20in%20a%20relationship. Accessed on 13 October 2020.

is that they are performed as an obligation that serves to affirm one's identity and belonging and also as a way of averting danger. Interestingly, in some families, rituals are regarded as spiritual practices closely linking the living and the dead as also alluded to by Nyathi (2005). Thus, the performance of rituals becomes a way through which migrant family members virtually engage and re-engage in symbolic interaction, mainly done to preserve family ties as well as reinstate and celebrate familyhood and avoid danger (Gardner & Grillo, 2002; Sutton, 2004) regardless of geo-spatial separation. This is because within families, rituals symbolically amplify customs and values and create an awareness of valued and shared behaviour and beliefs and mediate identity formation for family members (Roberts, 2002).

During the migration era, all rituals related to marriages, births and deaths were done in Tsholotsho. The concepts of place, space and time in the ritual performances remained fixed in Tsholotsho as the place called home. This was mainly because only the men were the ones migrating then and the rest of the family remained back home. In that epoch, there were no mechanisms to allow the migrant members to participate in family life back home, hence the cliché *'he who travelled is dead'*. As such, most rituals were performed smoothly in the migrant's absence. However, in instances where they were needed, families made arrangements for the migrant member to be symbolically replaced or represented. This representation of the migrant member demonstrated the symbolic interaction within families as they reassigned 'meaning' to individuals to fulfil requirements in ritual performances.

Although for Carter and Fuller (2015) in symbolic interactionism, individuals create and maintain societies through face-to-face repeated interactions, in the context of migration, where some critical members were physiclally removed from family as a place, families devised means to ensure the member was represented to fulfill the obligations of physical presence in the interactions. This demonstarted the families' preoccupation with maintaining predefined processes of engaging in family life. As such, they engaged in the symbolic creation and recreation of familyhood by devising means to bridge gaps created by the absent members. The symbolic representation of the migrant member demonstrated the concern within families to ensure that specific social and cultural conditions were met for families to fulfill their cultural obligations, maintain order and ensure families remained intact.

Thus, generally, during the migration era, the concepts of place, space and time in ritual performances remained fixed. However, there were instances where rituals demanded that the

migrant be physically present and could not be represented. In such scenarios, there were delays and negotiations in relation to time as the ritual was postponed until the migrant returned. The negotiations were an indication of the families' preoccupation with maintaining and fulfilling pre-set processes and conditions of familyhood. They were a demonstration of the significance of symbolic interaction within families in creating and recreating meaning of what it means to be family in the context of changes brought about by migration. According to Blumer (1986), within families, as individuals interact, they create, assign, recreate and reassign meanings to different aspects of life through interpreting processes embedded in their every day's lived realities. As such, in the context of migration, families assessed their lived realities of separation with other members due to migration and devised ways and means of overcoming the challenges yet at the same time maintaining their families intact.

In transnational migration, rituals in families are performed transnationally across physical borders. This happens in the broader structural context of transnationalism and feminisation of migration, where, although people are physically removed from their families, there are many ways for them to participate in family life cycle rituals. As more family members move, including women, some rituals also move in relation to place of performance, for example, in marriage rituals. Unlike in the migration context where only men migrated and thus everything remained rooted back home, in transnational migration, even women are now migrating, and new families formed in South Africa. Instead of families waiting for members to return for them to be physically present in ritual performances, families symbolically interact within transnational social spaces. This has seen some sacred objects travelling between places to fulfil ritual performance requirements. As such, instead of people moving, in transnationalism, sacred ritual projects circulate between places and connect family members symbolically. Thus, for some rituals, if families move, that ritual can also move, which is a demonstration of families' symbolic interaction across transnational spaces.

In the process, place and space are negotiated to ensure that rituals are performed on time. In a way, the new places where migrants reside also become authenticated as home. This is because in ritual performances, participation as well as the place where the rituals are performed are significant placemaking practices that also depict belonging (Geschiere, 2009), among other things. Hence their being performed in the new place of residence of the migrants in a way qualifies that place as home and also affirms belonging to the rest of the family back in Tsholotsho. In transnationalism therefore, there is a duality of the place called home. In this

context, transnational families present new systems of interaction operationalised by transnational social spaces that are powered by new communication and transport technologies. As such, these new possibilities allow for cultural practices within families to be conserved and thrive across multiple sites of residence for members from the same family. Although this is the case, there are some rituals, especially related to birth and death, where Tsholotsho remains the ultimate and legitimate place called home. This is because there are no negotiations made in terms of where, for example, the body of a deceased migrant or the umbilical cord of a new-born baby is buried. Which emphasises Geschiere (2009)'s notion of autochthony.

Within the different transnational families, varying importance was placed on these life cycle rituals, with much significance placed on death rituals, followed by birth and lastly marriage rituals. For marriages, there seemed to be more flexibility in terms of place, that is, where these rituals are practiced as well as the time of their performance. They have an extended time frame within which they can be performed. In terms of births, the fact that transmigrants are separated from the elderly as custodians of culture and tradition has created a discontinuity. It has created a gap in the knowledge needed for the transnational migrants to perform the rituals while away from Tsholotsho and in some instances has resulted in non-performance of rituals by the transnational migrants. Whereas in some, it has necessitated the movement of some sacred items across borders as families symbolically interact and enact familyhood from a distance.

Regarding deaths, similar to the findings of a study done by Moyo et al., (2016) on the death and burial of migrants in Johannesburg, it emerged that for transnational migrants, burial at home is a must. This mainly emanates from the significance of place in migrant's life where belonging is directly linked to land. This demonstrates Geschiere (2009)'s concept of autochthony where one's roots are traced to the land of their ancestors. This is similar to the emphasis placed on the burial of the umbilical cord when a child is born which is seen as asserting belonging to a place. As such, regarding deaths and burials, transnational migrants from Tsholotsho formed burial societies to facilitate the repatriation of members for burial back home which according to Moyo, et al., (ibid) is necessitated by fear of burial out of place. As in a study by Nunez and Wheeler (2012), they argue that this fear of burial out of place resulted in the rise of what they call 'extensive economies of death' prominent in Johannesburg where most foreign migrants live and die. This emanated from the need to avert risks associated with death and burial out of place. Thus, as bodies are repatriated back to Tsholotsho, rituals are

performed along the way to ensure a smooth transition of the deceased's spirit to their final place of rest and the afterlife.

A majority of the transnational migrants responding to why they repatriate the dead indicated that one has to be buried where their umbilical cord is buried. This was so that they can rest in peace and be reunited with their ancestors. Thus, there is a clear emphasis on the importance of place and the conception of home in the burial of the dead (Gardner, 2002; Gardner & Grillo, 2002; Geschiere, 2005; Moyo et al., 2016; Núñez & Wheeler, 2012). Given the significant relationship between the dead and the living in some families in Tsholotsho as also shown in Moyo, et al., (2016), one's place of burial is important because there has to be a definite place of reference for the living when they later perform other post burial rituals.

Notably, there was a lot of fear around deaths and to a certain extent births which compelled migrants to make sure they performed some of the rituals they regarded as critical within these life cycle events. In light of the foregoing, similar to literature, rituals in transnational families are performed for varying reasons. These include averting danger, appeasing the dead and expressions of familyhood and togetherness (Gardner & Grillo, 2002; Moyo, Núñez Carrasco, & Leuta, 2016). MaNkiwane's family, for example feared that if they did not perform the rituals, something bad would befall the family or one of them. Yet for other, like Newman, it was out of duty and obligation because that is the way things are done in their families. Thus, they partake in those rituals as a way of affirming their membership within their families.

6.5 (Re) configuration of rituals in transnationalism: Implications for families

Notably, significant changes take place within transnational families in terms of their organisation as well as structure and composition. Reynolds and Zontini (2014) note that instead of transnational families desintegrating and fragmenting due to physical dispersion of members, family relations are reconstituted in new forms. In terms of life cycle rituals, Dessing (2001), proffered that migration and transnationalism affect the significance, experience and organization of rituals as deeply embedded symbolic cultural practices within families. Thus, inevitably, in transnationalsim, family processes and life cycle events undergo significant reconfigurations that in turn have implications on family life in general. In this study, it emerged that although the practice and performance of rituals within transnational families in Tsholotsho has been reconfigured, the rituals are still performed and more-so considered

important practices to mark familyhood. These findings are similar to those in the study by Tonhati (2018) on migration, family and rituals among Brazilian migrant women in the UK. Just like in Tsholotsho, Brazillian women in the UK performed their family rituals and by so doing, they still retained their sense of kinship and familyhood in spite of physical separation from their families. In both instances, some of the stages in the performance of the rituals could be negotiated and skipped, yet the families studied still regarded the rituals as meaningful. Thus, being away from home does not deter migrants from continuously seeking to participate in ritualistic activities related to key life cycle events like marriages, births and deaths in Tsholotsho. Families studied on both sites demonstrated interests in maintaining family unity across borders and transnational migrants make notable efforts to keep themselves present in their communities of origin through engagements in ritual performances, among others. As families navigate the transnational divides, the notions of space, place, time and gender emerged as very critical elements, which I addres in the ensuing.

In the context of historical migration, family life continued as normal in the absence of the migrant men. Families made arrangements for the absent man to be represented by those present to ensure that rituals within families were performed. In most of the rituals, space and place remained fixed in the place called home while time could be negotiated and changed to suit the prevailing situations. Although place remained fixed in terms of performance of rituals, in the event that a migrant died in South Africa in the historical context, they were buried there due to difficulties related to repatriation. As such, although in all other rituals, place remained fixed, in the event of the death of an emigrant away from home, the importance of place in terms of place of burial could be revoked within families due to cicumstances beyond their control.

However, in the transnationalism epoch, although family members in Tsholotsho are dispersed in different places, they move back and forth between home and their destination areas, allowing them to be present when they are needed. In transnationalism, everything (time, place and space) changes in ritual performances except for place in relation to burial. Transnational migrant members of families can perform other rituals related to marriages, births and deaths in Johannesburg when time permits. In mariage, the whole process can be done in Johannesburg while only the *ukucola* ritual has to be strictly done back in Tsholotsho. Regarding births, strengthening the baby's fontanelle can be done in Johannesburg with the concoctions needed being sent from the Tsholotsho. In terms of ukubamba umpfula and

disposing the umbilical cord, these are often done in Tsholotsho. While in death, most of the rituals are done in Tsholotho with limited rituals done in Johannesburg during repatriation. This demonstrates what Tonhati (2018, p. 82) noted when stating that rituals as family practices have "a sense of fluidity regarding their capacity to adapt to being practiced in diferent ways even at a distance". Transnational families, through rituals, as sacred practices, are symbolically intercat and transact even in transnational social spaces as objetcs are moved back and forth. This marks the fluid nature of rituals as they adapt to transnational performance within families and also demontsrates Molotch (1993)'s notion that space is produced and reproduced through human intentions. Thus, in transnationalism, space is non-concrete, rather, it is socially constituted and produced by individuals through their social relationships, their movements, imaginations and interactions from various geo-locations (Low, 2009). As such, transnational families – as a form of a transnational space - are further established by the constant movements and interactions of members across national boundaries through ritual practices and performances. These changes in the ways in which rituals are practiced and performed within families due to transnationalism means that families engage in family life through transnational social spaces which are not restricted by geographic boundaries and physical separation (Collyer & King, 2012).

However, the place called home remains significant for the burial of both, the umbilical cord at birth and the deceased body at death. This is a significant place-making practice that confirms one's orientation in relation to the place called home. It demonstrates Geschiere (2009)'s concept of autochthony which simply emphasises the significance of and relationship with place in a human being's life. Within families in Tsholotsho, the major emphasis is that one belongs to the place of his/her ancestors, which is by and large referred to as home. Thus, in terms of burial, place becomes a significant element that marks belonging. Hence the significance of place in burial becomes part of the complex ways through which individuals claim homelands and belonging to families.

Moreover, with the heightened movement of people in transnational migration, there are notable changes in family gender roles within ritual performances. As the rituals adapt to processes of change, the distinct roles of masculinities and femininities also undergo significant reconfigurations. In the context of this study, in both sites, rituals are seen as spiritually significant cultural practices with specific elements often assigned through gendered lenses within different societies. However, given that migration separates family members, and in

some instances removes specialised individuals who are custodians of family rituals, it leads to reconfigurations and re-assignments of gendered roles. For example, in the past the father of the bride took a leading role in the marriage negotiations while women sat and followed. However, currently, with the feminisation of migration, women, aunts and the bride's mother can play active and in some instances leading roles in the marriage negotiations taking place at home. The present partenal aunties take the lead with the help of some distant male relatives and maternal uncles. Thus, women are accorded some form of authority within migrant families to stand in positions that would ordinarily be reserved for patriarchal members of the family. Thus, there is a notable change in family power dynamics within transnational families in relation to ritual performances.

Interestingly, in the context of births, very few notable reconfigurations were noted as the domain remained strictly dominated by women. However, there were instances where, in cases of a migrant son having a child in South Africa and his mother (who is the custodian of the ritual) is in Tsholotsho, the mother would communicate with his son and give him instructions on what has to be done. In such instances, the son assummed what has been socially constructed to be a feminine responsibility. However, by virtue of geographic seperation, he steps in to facilitate the performance of what has to be done to fulfill the requirements of the family rituals.

In the context of deaths, traditionally, elderly men led in the performance of most of the rituals. However, in the context of migration, especially in Johannesburg, where the elders may not be available, there were instances where a young man, who is the eldest in his family led the death proceedings in South Africa. When they got to Tsholotsho, he would give back the powers to the elders in Tsholotsho upon arrival by telling them that they have brought the deceased home and now he is leaving the rest to the elders. Again, in the event that there was an elderly partenal aunt in Johannesburg, she would also play a pivotal role in leading the processes leading to the repatriation and the performance of all the necessary rituals. Also, she would cede back the authority to the family elders upon arriving in Tsholotsho.

Interestigly, all these accounts imply that when families separate due to migration, they remain simultaneously connected and negotiations take place on who performs a ritual. There are some instances where the power is given to women and some where it is given to a men. This clearly indicates how families in this era of transnational migration, modernisation and globalisation, transform in response to these processes and how the processes in turn impinge on traditional

cultural practices. Thus, families adopt new ways to consciously navigate around these rituals in spite of geographical distance. They do this so as to actively avoid bad omens befalling their families in cases of non-conformity to cultural ritual regulations and practices. In so doing, they embrace some practices that reconfigure masculinities and femininities thus, confering power albeit on a transitory basis to whoever assumes the critical role of performing the ritual. As such, one can thus note that migration indeed leads to reconfiguration of cultural traditions and rituals, however, not on a permanent basis. Depending on the situation at hand, men and women are given circumstantial power to lead certain processes and then cede back the power when the task at hand ends.

CHAPTER 7: REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I set on a journey to unearth the historical continuities and current changes that have occurred within families as a result of sustained migration in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe. The main question that guided this study was: ***What are the changes and historical continuities in family structures, lives and organisation in the Matabeleland provinces of Zimbabwe as a result of migration and transnationalism?*** I departed from a keen stance to unpack experiences and influences of migration across time in relation to certain pertinent aspects of familyhood by engaging in other critical strands of analysis related to the question; namely: transnational migrants' membership, patterns of residence and authority, cultural changes and family formations. To understand these dynamics, I explored the history of migration in Tsholotsho through life histories going three generations back. I traced the continuities and changes that have occurred within families in the era of transnational migration. Within these accounts, there were subtle nuances of untold lived realities in the context of sustained migration as experienced by migrant families over time. To understand and interrogate the changes and continuities that have occurred within these families, I engaged with theoretical concepts of global care chains, circulation of care, family systems and symbolic interactionism.

A number of critical issues emerged in the findings. Notably, within families in Tsholotsho, much of the migratory movements back and forth that have been happening from about 50 years ago to date still exhibit varying degrees of illegality. It further emerged that significant reconfigurations of family forms in the study area occurred especially with the advent of feminisation of migration as women joined the streams of migration in Tsholotsho. In the same context, as migrant families transitioned to being transnational families, the ways in which families functioned also changed. These changes impacted on how family life was organised and lived transnationally. Migrant members are now able to be involved in everyday matters of family life while away. As will be discussed later, this resulted in the emigrants' ability to exert authority from a distance as compared to historically where migrant men delegated their authority to other male members of the family. Moreover, women have also gained some form of autonomy in decision making authority, as they make decisions in consultation with their husbands in transnational social spaces. Another notable change has been the diversification

of places of destination in South Africa. Unlike in the past where most migrants immigrated to Johannesburg, currently, transnational migrants from Tsholotsho have are found in different parts of South Africa due to ease of movement.

In the next sections, I offer reflections on the general emerging trends observed when family members as part of a bigger economic system, live separated as a result of migration. Furthermore, I also reflect on the notable transformations in life cycle rituals and patterns of residence that families have experienced in the context of transnationalism and feminisation of migration. Notably, this study employed a number of complementary conceptual and analytical frameworks for studying the changes and continuities that have occurred within families as a result of transnational migration. As such, this chapter also offers some reflections on the methodological, theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted for the analysis of findings. Furthermore, I will present the limitations of these frameworks in ensuring a holistic analysis of the issues under study.

7.1 Reflections on transnational migration and families in Tsholotsho

7.1.1 Transnationalism, feminisation of migration and families

Analysis of findings on migration and families in Tsholotsho revealed that historically, (50+ years ago as presented in family histories), the major variables in defining families were confined to blood ties, shared residence and marriage. However, in present day Tsholotsho, transnationalism and feminisation of migration, which are the two key structural factors impacting families, have led to a broadened conception and definition of family. Study findings revealed that the onset of migrant transnationalism in the late 1990s to the early 2000s where migrants were able to travel and communicate frequently with their families left behind led to reconfiguration of families resulting in the notable emergence of transnational families. Regardless of distance between the transnational migrants and the families left behind, family members became able to transact family life transnationally. They continue to do this through virtual interactions powered by transnational social spaces that are facilitated by the internet. This resultant ability of transnational migrant family members to remain simultaneously embedded (Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Tsuda, 2012; Vertovec, 2004), allows them to remain actively involved in everyday family life and decision making in Tsholotsho. Furthermore, transnational migrant members are able to exert their authority from a distance unlike

historically where migrant men delegated their authority to other male members of the family in their absence.

Feminisation of migration has also led to notable changes in families. The reason being that reproductive and care work is an invisible base of socio-economic systems that, in patriarchal societies (like Tsholotsho), is relegated to the household. Consequently, it becomes a responsibility of women (Orozco, 2010) as women are relegated to the domestic sphere. Thus, in Tsholotsho, the migration of women has transformed the traditional routines of care giving, leading to the need to adopt alternative care arrangements. In Tsholotsho, the study revealed that as the alternative care arrangements are made, a combination of care chains as broadly characterised by Murphy (2014) and circulation of care as propounded by Baldassar & Merla (2013) results. On one hand, care chains happen when *'outsiders'* who are not related to the family are incorporated into the intimate space of the family system in the form of hired workers (domestic workers and livestock attendants). This redistribution of care within families entails the commoditisation of care and reproductive work (Fudge, 2012; Knight, 2012). Those services normally associated with the traditional roles of wife or mother are transferred to other females, either from within or outside the family, who will perform them for money. On the other hand, circulation of care happens within the family where the extended family plays a pivotal role. Care is transacted within the confines of families without financial payment as this is based on creative arrangements within families to ensure their sustained coherent existence. The caregiving arrangements bind their members together in a web of reciprocal obligations, love and trust situated within kin relations and the moral economies of care (Baldassar & Merla, 2013, 2014; Vanotti, 2014). Orozco (2010) asserted that the extended family cushions and absorbs the shocks and costs of readjustment of care due to transnationalism and feminisation of migration. In Tsholotsho, analysis of findings revealed that grandmothers and hired workers are at the core of caregiving arrangements, a demonstration of the combination of the concepts of global care chains (Duru, 2014; Hochschild, 2000; Yeates, 2004, 2012) and circulation of care Baldassar & Merla (2013).

Inevitably, feminisation of migration greatly influenced patterns of residence of the left behind children. Historically when only the father migrated, the mother remained at home with the children. However, currently, when mothers also migrate, the children move to stay with their grandmothers or do not move and stay with hired workers. This is similar to findings from a study by Kautzky (2010) in South Africa where it emerged that the left behind children's

patterns of residence were complexly shaped by the migration of their mothers more than that of the fathers. This leads to a new form of family where care, support and shared residence become major defining factors more than biological affinities, albeit in a transitory manner. Transitory in the sense that hired workers are confirmed as part of the family through their care giving roles, conferred authority and shared residence with the children left behind. This, however, is a time bound arrangement in that when they decide to leave work, the membership ends. As such, the hired workers may not fully participate in deeper family affairs, for example rituals.

Furthermore, the fact that changes in family formations in Tsholotsho have a bearing on patterns of residence for the left behind children validates the claim by systems thinkers in family studies. Under this perspective, transnational families are systems made up of co-dependent subsystems that inevitably affect each other. As these subsystems interact (in this case, family members), a change in one may lead to a change or adaptation in another (McHale, Amato, & Booth, 2013; Ram, Shiyko, Lunkenheimer, Doerksen, & Conroy, 2014). Thus, prevailing patterns of family structuration in Tsholotsho have changed resulting in varying extents of conceptualisation of families across time as new family formations have emerged due to transnationalism and feminisation of migration. Thus, families in their present form fit Chamberlain and Leydesdorf (2004)'s definition of family wherein emphasis goes beyond paternal and maternal descent to include a variety of other social circumstances and interactions like friendships and employment. Notably, in Tsholotsho, there is combination of both the global care chains and circulation of care within families as transnational migrants hire workers to take care of their children while in some instances under the supervision of grandmothers who play a critical role in the process.

7.1.2 Patterns of authority, power and gender dynamics in transnational families

An analysis of family history accounts gathered in Tsholotsho indicated that historically, when husbands/fathers migrated, leaving their wives and children behind, a power vacuum was created. This pushed members to devise means and ways to fill it through activation of the inherent provisions of kinship systems. As such, the indefinite absence of men led to the reorganisation and/ reconfiguration of familial relations and power and authority as this vacuum had to be filled by other male members of the family (Musanga, 2016). These practices maintained the status quo in the making of families by upholding the dominance of patriarchy.

The extended family played a very pivotal and hegemonic role. Although the wife was present, she had limited authority. Ideally, it would be expected that when the head migrates, the woman becomes the *de facto* head and hence gains some form of authority in decision-making. However, given that historically in Tsholotsho the women remained living with the in-laws, they did not gain that autonomy as they were assimilated into the patriarchal system of the bigger family. The patriarchal system delegated and conferred much authority to the extended male family members.

Clearly, women's prospects for greater autonomy due to their husbands' migration was offset by the exercise of substitute authority by left behind patriarchal members of the family. This is also confirmed by some notions made by Yabiku et al.,(2010) in Mozambique and Desai and Banerji (2008) in India that in patriarchal societies, when wives are left in the broader context of the extended family, another male family member could wield considerable influence and authority in the absence of the migrant husband. Thus, given that wives to migrants 50^{+} years ago in Tsholotsho remained living with their in-laws, they did not gain much authority or power in decision-making. Other left behind male members of the family made the family decisions for them. This is in line with Kulczycka (2015)'s finding on a study on the left behind women and their empowerment in Nepal where it emerged that, in the absence of their husbands, women continued living under patriarchal control. Gurung (2015) also writing on migration and women in Nepal noted that, in the context of migration, family and broader social relations are influenced by patriarchy and at times to the detriment of women where they may be subjected to oppression, subordination and exploitation.

Although this was the case historically, women within these families gained some form of power. As noted in Chapter 2, Pinnawala (2009), proffers that power is either overt or covert, it is not only limited to control but rather has many expressions which include '*power to*', '*power over*', '*power with*' and '*power within*'. These different dimensions help in explaining some situations where direct control may not be present. As such, in the context of the left behind women in Tsholotsho, they had *'power within'*. As presented in chapter 5, this refers to power and agency within that enabled the women to work hard while their husbands were away to ensure the survival of their children. The women had the resolve and determination to ensure the survival of their families even in the prolonged absence of the husband as the breadwinner.

Moreover, together with her children, the left behind wife had solidarity with her children and they viewed themselves as a family within the bigger family. This constituted the *'power with'* of the wife and her children. She stood together with her children regardless of the situations they faced. As such, although the wife may have been subjected to patriarchal control where she had no power to make decisions or power over any capital goods, (overt forms of power), she had some covert power within herself and with her children. Most studies on gender and power dynamics have fallen into upholding the overt conceptions of power that view it as acts of control as propounded by Weber (1978). In Tsholotsho, therefore, the historical gendered power relation in the context of migration revealed that women did not gain overt forms of power. Rather, they had some covert expressions of power, that is, the realisation of hidden power as proffered by Pinnawala, (2009).

In the contemporary era of transnational migration in Tsholotsho however, married men have their own homesteads where they live with their wives and children, they are now 'independent' of the extended family. However, their independence is in terms of sustaining their livelihoods. This is because they cannot really be totally independent from the extended family in the many other ways in which their lives intersect with that of the extended family. As such, also the extended family may have lost its hegemonic influence, its role and presence remain visible within migrant families. Within the families where husbands are migrants, the wife gains some autonomy in decision-making, with minimal to no involvement of the extended family.

In Tsholotsho, women indicated that they had started taking a primary role in making critical decisions on agricultural production. These findings are in line with those from other countries. For example, findings from studies done in Mexico (Radel & Schmook, 2009); Morocco (Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2004); Nepal (Gurung & Purkayastha, 2013) and Armenia and Guatemala (Menjívar & Agadjanian, 2007) proffered that, among other indicators of greater autonomy, women gained greater decision-making power and assumed management duties when their husbands migrated. Within this type of family in Tsholotsho, women clearly gain some overt power. The women have the power to control their families on a day to day basis. They also have power to control some of the productive capital within the family, albeit in consultation with the migrant husband.

Interestingly, as women gain this power, they remain conscious of the fact that the husband is the head of the family and hence has the ultimate power and authority. This is in sync with Pinnawala (2009)'s notion that the empowerment of women does not mean women replace the men in the power structure nor does it lead to new power relationships within the families. That is why the left behind women in Tsholotsho consult with their husbands prior to making decisions or inform them as soon as the decision is made. When the husband returns, he is given the rightful position. This is illustrative of the symbolic interaction within families where, although the man is absent, he is still regarded as the authority figure and thus is given his place within transnational social spaces. Although separated by distance, families still maintain and manage family systems and structures across spatially disparate geographical localities. The ability by the wives to consult with their husbands on family decisions demonstrates the symbolic interaction within families in transnational contexts. It is a demonstration of the maintenance of society through repeated and meaningful interactions expected between family members although done from a distance (Becker & McCall, 1990; Blumer, 1986; Carter & Fuller, 2015). Transnational families thus, maintain meanings created over the years through constant and active interaction within their diverse socio-cultural contexts (Jeong, You, & Kwon, 2014). As such, women no longer consult the elders within the extended family system for any decisions to be made. Rather, the ability by their husbands to be simultaneously embedded allows the families to continue engaging regularly in family life regardless of physical separation.

This confirms the notion that in transnational migration, it is possible for transnational migrants to replace absence with social and virtual presence through simultaneous embeddedness that is made possible by transnationalism (Carling, Menjívar, & Schmalzbauer, 2012). This simultaneous embeddedness gives migrants the ability to affect the lives of those left behind despite being physically absent and vice versa (Boccagni, 2012a). As such, as is the case in Tsholotsho, within the transnational families, migrant husbands are able to communicate with their left behind wives and make decisions without the interference of the extended family. Thus within these families, unlike in the past, where migration meant migrants uprooted themselves from their homes (Jónsson, 2011), in the current transnational era, close relationships are nurtured and negotiated from a distance. This is done through such practices as remittances, transnational communication and regular return visits (Boccagni, 2012a, 2012b).

As migrants maintain close links and reciprocal relationships with their families, they somehow 'remain at home' even if they are away. Thus, allowing them to retain their authority to make decisions while away. As such, residential independence from extended family members (Yabiku et al., 2010) and the possibilities proffered by transnational migration give women autonomy and authority to make decisions in their families in consultation with their husbands. This even challenges the negative connotations of the notion of 'the left behind' which some have argued implies being left out and passive. However, although this is the case, it should be noted that there are some inevitable complications that physical separation pose as spouses are separated by distance. This is as shown in the previous section on transnational families.

Thus, inevitably, migration and currently transnational migration have notable effects on gender relations within transnational families. Migration disrupts everyday gender practices within families. The fact that women gain some autonomy and some form of power becomes conflicted with dominant gender norms in Tsholotsho. Although this is the case, this creates opportunities for the reconfiguration of gender relations within families. Consistent with conclusions from other studies in the region (Dodson et al., 2008; Musanga, 2016; von Fintel & Moses, 2017; Yabiku et al., 2010) and others beyond (Bastia & Busse, 2011; Dannecker, 2005; Gurung, 2015; Jamie, 2013; Nobles, 2013) on gender and transnational migration, within transnational families in Tsholotsho, gender relations are renegotiated and reconfigured. My study found that, in present day Tsholotsho, although there are renegotiations and reconfigurations of gender relations within families, most of these are not permanent. When the husband returns, the wife recedes to her position and cedes back to the husband his roles, power and authority that she may have assumed as the *de facto* head of the family.

However, while transnationalism leads to the migrants' ability to be here and there at the same time, it should be noted that this does not automatically translate to smooth running and non-chaotic families. Although, family ties, kinship relations, and other social ties may be renewed, and changed within transnational families, sometimes they may be shattered (König & de Regt, 2010). Separation may have disruptive effects leading to volatile family life and organisation. This is because, although enabling to a certain extent, transnationalism does not allow for the practice of some kinds of transnational family patterns. For example, the care for children and the elderly may be compromised (Mazzucato & Schans, 2008; Parreñas, 2005); maintaining emotional ties in marital relationships across distance may not be fully achieved (Mendiburo, 2018; Nobles et al., 2015) and gender roles in marriages and kinship may also be affected.

Thus, transnationalism only better places families in conducting family life within transnational social spaces. The transnationally sustained families enjoy the ability to keep in constant touch, but family politics and complications still manifest in that transnational landscape. This is augmented by Waldinger (2015) who notes that, although ICTs and travel technologies significantly shape accessibility and frequency of communication and travel, these cannot adequately compensate physical contact and "shared daily experiences that are the bedrock of intimate relationships" within families.

7.1.3 Transnational migrants' maintenance of membership to a family

The study findings revealed that currently in Tsholotsho, transnational migration has led to the emergence of transnational families wherein everyday life is lived and negotiated virtually, through social media engagements and transnational calls powered by the internet. It emerged that transnational families in Tsholotsho connect habitually across national boundaries, make daily decisions and engage in core life cycle issues virtually, similar to observations made by Bacigalupe & Cámara (2012). Thus, although migration generally means migrants' lives are punctuated by alternating moments of physical presence and absence (Cortes, 2016), in transnational migration, migrants enjoy the ability to nurture close relationships through virtual interaction powered by social communication technologies. This is in line with Licoppe (2004)'s assertion that in the interplay between transnationalism and families, social communication technologies do not only compensate for the absence of family members. Rather, they are further exploited to sustain ongoing interactions that sustain relationships across distance and time, inevitably blurring boundaries between absence and presence. This is unlike historically where male migrants from Tsholotsho were literally uprooted from their homes and integrated into South African communities with very minimal communication between them and their families back home. Although some scholars have argued that migrants had always maintained contact with their families one way or the other, the intensity and frequency of the practice has changed drastically. The ability by transnational migrants to live lives that transcend geographic divides allows them to be directly involved in everyday life of their families in Tsholotsho while physically absent.

Transnational families in Tsholotsho thus offer a new conceptualisation and form of familyhood and modifies prevailing patterns of family structuration. They are products of transformative and innovative processes where in the broader context of globalisation and

technological advancement, families devise new ways of becoming that defy the traditional parameters of families as bounded institution. Transnationalism thus places families in communicational situations that have a significant impact on how individuals, couples and families relate across place and distance. It breaks the limitations brought about by time, place and distance that ordinarily would limit ongoing family interactions by modifying the ways in which migrants and their families deal with spatial separation (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010; Bacigalupe & Cámara, 2012). This demonstrates Jónsson (2011) and Boccagni (2012a)'s assertions that migrants have the ability to maintain a social presence at home while physically separated owing to technological improvements that facilitate ease of movement and communication.

Thus, in transnational families in Tsholotsho, social technologies proffer ways and means that reshape distance and presence by creating a virtual co-presence wherein separated family members have an ongoing awareness of their kin albeit across distance (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010). Over and above the transnational migrants' ability to virtually engage in family life, transnational migrants also maintain their membership within families through participation in their families' life cycle rituals as discussed in the next section. Although this is the case, there still remains some limitations of the transnational migration paradigm in families in that there are some aspects of family life that may not be transacted transnationally, as already presented in the forgone discussion. Moreover, although respondents gave an idealised view of their transnational engagements, my observations indicate that there are a number of obstacles that hinder the smooth flow of transnational engagements. One example is the glaring digital divide between sending and receiving countries as communities in Tsholotsho still face challenges with electricity to charge their phones. Although some families have solar systems, a significant contingent still do not have access to these and depend on their neighbours. This means there are sometimes when they go for days without power on their phones which disrupts transnational linkages.

7.1.4 Transnationalisation of life cycle rituals

An analysis of the study findings indicates that there has been a transnationalisation of ritual performances and ritual spaces within transnational families. Instead of rituals being performed in specific places, spaces and at specific times as prescribed by the families and communities (Mwandayi, 2011), within transnational families, space is stretched across distance (Massey, 1994). This has led to the emergence of transnational spaces wherein family life is transacted

and sustained across physical borders of multiple nation states (Faist, 2006; Low, 2009). Social relations within transnational families take place transnationally - within transnational social spaces. These spaces allow family members in disparate geo-locations to engage in family ritual practices while being far from each other. As they engage in these practices, transnational ritual spaces are created. This results in the construction and composition of transnational spaces wherein family traditions such as ritual performances also take place, resulting in some items considered to be sacred like umbilical cords (in childbirth) having to move in between places to fulfil the requirements of family traditions. This is a demonstration of how families on transnational settings symbolically interact across geo-locations to maintain symbolic meanings and routines of family life (Molotch, 1993). Thus within transnational migration, as individuals move and interact, they create new spaces of interaction that lead to the transnationalisation of rituals and ritual spaces within transnational families (Low, 2009). These are fluid family spaces made of relations, communications and forms of relating to each other which are unrestricted by geographic boundaries and essentially deterritorialised (Collyer & King, 2012), leading to the reformulation of tradition as proffered by Salih (2003). This is a demonstration of the symbolic interaction within transnational families where members across territories devise means and ways of performing family practices that would ordinarily require proximity and physical presence. Although symbolic interactionism emphasises creation and maintenance of family and society through face to face, repeated and meaningful interaction (Carter & Fuller, 2015), in transnational families, members still achieve the same albeit without face to face interaction. This is a demonstration of the reconfigurations that have happened within transnational family interactions as members adjust various cultural activities in response to daily realities of their interactions.

Moreover, as ritual practices are transnationalised and performed across transnational spaces, the concept of place, as a geographic location emerges as a significant component. As transnational families perform rituals, these become placemaking practices that confirm their place called home. Furthermore, study findings reveal that in present day Tsholotsho, transnational families are comfortable to carry out some birth and marriage rituals in South Africa. This is because, in transnational migration, the concept of place speaks to geolocation in relation to one's place of origin, largely referred to as home as well as one's place of residence (host country). For transnational migrants, the place called home changes as they move from their home into new places that eventually form another place they may call home (Christensen & Jensen, 2011). Malkki (1992) noted that in the new global social order, people

are 'chronically mobile and routinely displaced' which leads them to create homelands in multiple spaces - leading to the duality of a place called home. However, although this is the case, in the case of burial, of the umbilical cord after birth and of the deceased bodies in death, one's place of origin remains a significant geographical reference to home. Transnational families demand that these be buried at home as in the place of origin. Thus, the performance of these rituals becomes significant as place-making practices that confirms one's orientation in relation to the place called home. This is a demonstration of Geschiere (2009)'s concept of autochthony which means 'to be born from the soil'. It emphasises the significance of and relationship with place in a human being's life. Emphasis in transnational families in Tsholotsho, is that one belongs to the place of his/her ancestors, which is by and large referred to as home. Thus, what makes burial place the right place is when one is buried where their ancestors were buried. For example, when transnational migrants die in South Africa, they are repatriated back to Tsholotsho. During repatriation, the body is protected and accompanied by an entourage while the soul of the deceased is constantly communicated with during the entire journey to the body's final resting place to ensure the soul is not left behind. This is a demonstration of the significance of space and place in the transnationalisation of rituals.

For example, historically, when a child was born in Tsholotsho, and the father was a migrant, families waited for the father to return for some rituals to be performed. The same applied in cases of marriages and deaths. The custodians of the rituals ensured that when the migrant returned, due diligence was done in the performance of the rituals to avert any dangers befalling those involved. In cases of births, even the child's parents placed so much respect on the rituals. They cooperated with the elders in performing all the rituals prescribed by their families and where they had to be performed. Families thus ensured that the rituals of *ukwethesa inkanda* (strengthening of a baby's fontanelle and placement of a charm for spiritual protection) and *ukulahla inkaba* (disposing the umbilical cord) were done in accordance with the prescribed way of the family and these were done in the father's absence. However, the ritual of *ukubamba umfula* was supposed to be performed in the presence of the father as he had an active role to play. As such, the family waited for the migrant father to return regardless of the number of years he would take while away. Thus, in the context of mobility, although this was a ritual that had to be performed soon after the child's umbilical code dropped, migration influenced the timing of the performance of this ritual.(Epstein & Gang, 2010). This shows how place and space remained rigid while time could be negotiated to ensure everything was performed according to the dictates of tradition. The same applied to rituals related to marriages where

migrant members waited to return to their motherland before they could commence the marriage process and the rituals that go with it. This is in sync with Epstein and Gang (2010)'s assertion that in transnational families, times to perform these cultural rituals are usually determined based on the availability of all family members, including the migrants. The insistence on the performance of these rituals at home demonstrates the significance of space and place in formulating one's identity.

In both the migration and transnational migration era, time in ritual performances has remained relative. Three possibilities emerge from the findings in both epochs where rituals can either be performed now, postponed to be performed later or never be performed. As such, in both migration and transnational settings, time can be negotiated with more flexibility in some rituals, unlike in the case of place. However, although this is the case, there are some instances where, for example in relation to burial of a deceased person, time can be negotiated but to a limited extent as burial cannot be postponed for too long. Also, although place can also be negotiated, this is impeded by the non-transportability of home in terms of geographic location. Geschiere (2009) refers to this as the constant innovations within rituals where new modifications are added to suit the current landscape of the people involved.

In contemporary transnational families in Tsholotsho, although there are families that still wait for the migrant to return and then perform the rituals, a significant number of families perform rituals transnationally. For example, birth rituals (*ukubamba umfula and ukwethesa inkanda*) in these families are now performed transnationally. The elderly women back in Tsholotsho send concoctions to their children in South Africa through *omalayitsha* with instructions on how to go about the process. However, in terms of *ukulahla inkaba*, most of the migrants indicated that they keep the umbilical cord of the newly born child and take it to Tsholotsho together with the child after the child was old enough to travel. Notably, migrants' ability to be simultaneously embedded has not only allowed families to exert authority in decision making on everyday life events only. Rather, it has also facilitated the performance of rituals as sacred and patterned symbolic performances that mark familyhood.

In terms of marriages, instead of migrants waiting to travel back home to get married, they now send *lobola* (bride price) money back home. Their family members in Tsholotsho will facilitate the whole *lobola* payment process in their absence. In some cases, *ukuvela* (appearing) negotiations and rituals for example, are done in Johannesburg. Older family members (Uncles

and Aunts) in South Africa symbolically represent the parents who will be back in Tsholotsho. After the negotiations, the rest of the other rituals will be performed when the marrying transnational migrants return home. The traditional and symbolic parts of the rituals have to be performed in Tsholotsho so that the migrants can gain their social recognition, for example as husband and wife. This is because Tsholotsho becomes the only place where the social significance of these rituals can be appreciated and valued. In Johannesburg, the man and woman can cohabit, and this is considered normal, leading to a notable trend of reduction of marriages among migrants. Notably, among migrants from Tsholotsho, there has been significant changes in relationships and sexuality leading to the emergence of a new political economy of sex as partners choose to cohabit instead of marry (Hunter, 2007, 2009). Rather, marriage becomes less of a priority while survival and daily wellbeing (availability of food and accommodation) takes centre stage among migrants as they thrive to fend for their families, both in South Africa and back home.

These negotiations and adjustments across space and place in transnational migration demonstrate the fact that migrants play an active role in shaping the performance of rituals as cultural and symbolic practices within families (Salih, 2003). In instances where transnational families perform rituals transnationally, for example, the ritual of *ukubamba umfula,* it becomes a depiction of enactment of familyhood across space and place. Migrants' ability to perform some of their family rituals transnationally demonstrates the provisions of symbolic interactionism where families adjust and give meaning to life as they interact on a daily basis. Rituals become a site wherein members symbolically interact to reinforce meanings of familyhood. They also construct and reconstruct collective identities within realties of physical separation. Despite the distance characterising their separation, transnational families coin ways to overcome the spatial challenges of their separation. They ensure rituals as symbols of familyhood are engaged in through transnational social spaces. Moreover, the ability by migrants to undermine the importance of performance of rituals at home, with home being Tsholotsho, depict their relationship with space and place where home is not only seen as the place of origin, but also the place of residence. Migrants thus demonstrate their agency to dictate the performance of life cycle rituals in their own spaces they call home. Thus, defying the traditional conceptions of home in Tsholotsho as the place where one's umbilical cord is buried.

Clearly, as ritual practices are transnationalised, families repeat, modify, adjust, postpone and in some instances forget family rituals through their own interpretative processes as they interact across different geographic locations. As families adjust and modify ritual performances, some rituals have been completely abandoned. This has mainly been due to the fact that family members do not know how to perform the rituals while others abandoned the rituals because they had become Christians. For example, among transnational migrants, Ntando and Newman indicated that they stopped performing some birth related rituals because they did not know how to perform them, and they also realised that no danger befell them for non-performance. Most of those who participated did so only as a way of fulfilling the conditions of belonging to their families. Among transnational families in Tsholotsho, MaSiwela's family abandoned ritual practice completely from fear of invoking trouble by performing the rituals wrongly. Over and above the influence of Christianity and other processes, this lack of knowledge can be strongly attributed to the weakened role of elders and poor mechanisms of communicating the rituals to younger generations. Yet for other transnational migrants, non-performance of rituals has been due to the influence of the South African cosmopolitan culture. All this demonstrates Salih (2003)'s assertion that transnational migrants' lives are influenced by two places that offer different resources which actively shape the migrants' conceptions of their social actions. Furthermore, it demonstrates the complexities of dual involvement for migrants emanating from their transnationalism and its effects on rituals as practices that shape their identities and affirm their belonging and familyhood (Goulbourne & Solomos, 2002; Sutton, 2004). Thus, while simultaneously embedded, migrants weigh and accord meaning to rituals and they perform some on the transnational social spaces. As they do this, they also allow their interaction with others and the realities around them within the transnational socio-cultural context to influence their practices, as premised in the tenets of symbolic interactionism (Carter & Fuller, 2015). According to Blumer (1986), individuals constantly create and recreate meanings to different aspects of life through interpreting processes embedded in every day's lived realities.

7.2 Reflections on theoretical framework

7.2.1 Global care chains and circulation of care

An analysis of findings from this study indicated that the two biggest structural factors that influence changes in families in Tsholotsho are transnationalism and feminisation of migration. These two factors lead to creation of care gaps within families that require alternative care

arrangements for the left behind. In this regard, the global care chains and circulation of care concepts were suited to explain the care arrangements made within transnational migration for the left behind children. Global care chains came about as a result of the commodification of reproductive work (Fudge, 2012; Knight, 2012) and are sustained by poor economic climates in countries in the Global South which force women to pursue migration as a livelihood strategy (Sassen, 2008). As is the case between South Africa and Zimbabwe, women from Tsholotsho migrate for employment as domestic workers in South Africa where they cover up for formally employed women by looking after their children (Murphy, 2014). The women from Tsholotsho would have left their own children behind (in most instances) under the care of hired labour or extended family members (Hochschild, 2000, 2003). Migrant women therefore become reproductive labour as they provide domestic and care work for a wage for women in South Africa who will be pursuing their professional occupations (Yeates, 2004). The migrant women in turn purchase even lower services of poorer women in the country of origin to look after their own children.

Circulation of care on the other hand emphasises on the creative arrangements within transnational families to ensure their sustained coherent existence (Poeze & Mazzucato, 2013; Reynolds & Zontini, 2014; Singh & Cabraal, 2013). Unlike global care chains where emphasis is on paying for care, circulation of care is a formulation of care situated within kin relations and the moral economies of care which form the core of families (Merla & Baldassar, 2016; Vanotti, 2014). In Tsholotsho, it emerged that transnational families practice caregiving arrangements that bind their members together in a web of reciprocal obligations, love and trust as well as tensions and relations of unequal power (Baldassar & Merla, 2013, 2014; Vanotti, 2014) as espoused by the circulation of care concept. Thus, with circulation of care, migrant women from Tsholotsho relegate their reproductive duties back home to their female relatives residing in their countries of origin.

These concepts thus clearly explain the care arrangements within transnational families and explain some of the critical elements of this study. For example, one of the key objectives of this study was assess the changes in patterns of residence and authority that are observed within families with migrant members. Findings from this study indicated that patterns of residence and authority for the left behind children in Tsholotsho changed drastically when women/mothers migrated. This resulted in new care arrangements that either took the form of care chains where outsiders were hired to care for the children or circulation of care where the

extended family played a key role in providing care for the left behind children. Yet, in some instances, the care arrangements took a hybrid form where there were some sheds in-between as some families incorporated both care chains as well as circulation of care, which is one of the theoretical contributions of my study.

Although combined, the concepts explain clearly the care dynamics in transnational families while individually, they have shortcomings. For example, global care chains have a narrow and limited focus on care exchanges between two people with one receiving financial returns in exchange of the care rendered (Baldassar & Merla, 2013). Moreover, it has a macro focus (inter-country) which ignores the intimate care exchanges within micro-family institutions (Yeates, 2011). For example, it does not cater for the exchanges of care within families where, although family members may be spatially stretched across vast geographical territories, belonging is still sustained through reciprocal, albeit uneven exchanges of care (Ahlin, 2015; Tronto, 2016). These care exchanges are seen as an expression of solidarity and belonging as well as constitution and preservation of relationships within families. Circulation of care on the other hand, effectively addresses these shortcomings albeit with its own criticisms. It over-romanticises care exchanges within families as if they flow smoothly without complication emanating from greed and ill-treatment of members. Moreover, the concept of circulation of care is premised on the assumption that what circulates in families is care and thus there are some elements of family life that it cannot explain. For example, there are different other socio-cultural activities (family traditions and rituals) that are undertaken throughout the life course to sustain and maintain families which fall out of the coverage of the circulation of care concept. It only focuses on the reciprocity of exchange of care within members.

7.2.2 Symbolic interactionism

The theory of symbolic interactionism is at the core of this study. It was used to explain transnational families' relations and interactions in transnational social spaces. It further elucidated how transnational family members construct and manage meaning of their interactions within geographically disparate places (Howard Saul Becker & McCall, 1990; Blumer, 1986; Carter & Fuller, 2015). This is done in the context of families whose lives are characterised by transnationalism and their members interact across territorial divides maintaining a network of transnational relationships. One of the objectives of this study was to assess how migrants from Tsholotsho in Matabeleland maintain membership in their families

and communities of origin and how they engage in and experience family life. Another objective sought to establish whether there have been any changes in family lives and organisation reflected in family life cycle rituals and how these have occurred. These questions require an understanding of how families live and organise their lives in transnational settings. How they interact and maintain familyhood while living-apart-together. Findings from this study indicated that they symbolically interact as families across distance, for example, with some sacred objects moving between places to connect families and allow them to enact their familyhood in transnational social spaces. This was more evident in ritual performances as transnational families indicated that they performed some rituals transnationally. Thus, symbolical interactionism was useful in explaining these actions across geo-locations and also how family members creatively devised means to ensure their family lives were smoothly organised. Furthermore, it explained how transnational family members created and recreated meanings of what it means to be family and how to organise family life without face to face interaction and physical proximity. However, although this is the case, the theory could not explain how families dealt with deliberate disconnections from the family by some migrants. It does not quite explain how families dealt with such realities as they recreate family life across geographic divides. This is however addressed by the family systems theory presented in the next section.

7.2.3 Family systems theory

Family systems theory was found to be critical in understanding the changes and continuities that happen within families across time. I provided a framework for analysing how families adjusted to the reconfigurations imposed caused by migration and transnationalism. Literature on family systems thinking views families as entities made up of interrelated elements which exhibit coherent behaviours, have regular interactions, and are interdependent on one another (Broderick, 1993; Constantine, 1986). Individual family members within the system affect, and in turn are affected by others and as members interact and changes occur, families have an adaptive self-stabilisation and self-organisation ability. This is where the system has the ability to change to accommodate transformations to its current structures/formations. Findings from this study indicated that in the context of migration and transnationalism, where some sub-systems were removed from the entities, families indeed had the ability to self-organise and self-stabilise. For example, in the historical migration era where migrants were treated as dead, when situations arose that needed the presence of the migrant, family members devised plans

to ensure the migrant was represented and every need met. In the transnational migration era, families devise means and ways to ensure that family life is organised smoothly across distance.

Moreover, the ability by families to enlist the help of outsiders to cover care gaps demonstrates the ability of the families as systems to adjust and adapt to new realities without prejudicing the existence and proper functioning of the system. This is contrary to some views that prevailed on migration that while transnational migration carried economic benefits for families, the loss of proximity of family members led to the breakdown of families and ultimately societal decay. Instead, the ability by transnational migrants to be simultaneously embedded allowed families as systems, to live lives that integrate daily activities, customs and institutions transnationally. Thus, in the transnational migration era, the family systems theory highlights the diverse ways through which families adapt to ensure family life continues. This is seen through the innovative use of social media platforms powered by the internet to link families across disparate geo-locations. However, although this is the case in transnational migration, in the historical migration epoch, the family systems could only explain the adjustments in replacing the absent migrant without much of flexibility. Thus, in the historical migration era, the families as systems were more rigid and limited in their reactions to change than transnational families which have a lot of flexibility and options in dealing with the changes that occur as a result of separation.

Thus, while the family systems theory is an ideal theory for explaining the adjustments and adaptations within families as a result of migration, it only focuses on macro structures. It views families as a whole without paying attention to the agency of the individuals within the system. As such, it could not go beyond the macro adaptations within the system to explain subtle aspects in human beings' interpersonal relations and their actions based on the meaning they create and attach to certain aspects of family life. It only explains adaptations in terms of the need for the system to self-stabilise. It cannot provide an in-depth understanding and explanation of the adaptations made as a result of individual emotions such as fear for example or as a result of tradition and culture in the case of life cycle rituals. In Tsholotsho, for example, it emerged that much of the adaptations and adjustments were beyond the mechanical need to stabilise the system to complex issues of fear and averting danger, affirming belonging and care.

7.3 Methodological reflections

Different scholars have proffered different conceptualisations as well as approaches to the study of families. Traditionally, in most African countries, family has been conceived as embedded within a domestic unit known as the extended family (Chimbiri, 2006; Colson, 1962). However, with different epochs of development and the influence of the western culture through globalisation, some changes have been noted. The basic change noted has been the detachment of what Colson (1962) calls the 'conjugal family', this refers to the nucleation of families which is consistent with and depictive of western ideals of family. Thus, the notable western influence particularly in most African contexts have tended to predominantly prescribe notions that view family as nuclear, living together and bounded by the nation state (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011a). As a result, most family studies have tended to stress geographical proximity as a precondition for interface and exchange within families, ignoring the inherent reality in present day societies of family links that transcend national borders. As such methodologies for studying families have been significantly constrained by methodological nationalism, geographic boundedness and normativism in their approach to families (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011b; Schiller, 2015; Wimmer & Schiller, 2003).

The emphasis on families living in one location is a reflection of methodological nationalism in the study of migration. Mainly, in instances where transnational families were studied, data were collected mostly in just one nation state (Wimmer & Schiller, 2003). This has resulted in a conscious omission of family practices across borders with transnational families viewed as temporary arrangements that will soon normalize through family reunification in either of the migration sites. In essence, this highlights the sedentarism and bias inherent in family studies where families are largely seen as entities that stay in the same place with the same members.

In efforts to deal with these challenges, I adopted multi-sited ethnography as a way of neutralising the bias towards locality and nation-boundedness of migration research. In the case of family histories as a method in gathering data in migration studies, much emphasis has been placed on gathering data from the perspective of those who remain behind (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004). In most instances, especially in African settings, given that women have tended to be the ones left behind, their accounts of history have been critiqued that they may not be accurate to the histories of the families they have been married to. As a result, critiques have highlighted that there tends to be a blurred distinction between the accounts of family

histories of their maiden and marital families. Further criticism has been proffered that more often than not, this tends to present a hybrid account of the family history if not guided properly (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004; Miller, 1999). However, in this study, I did encounter the hybridity and it was reflective of the realities of the respondents as to what they perceive as family and this offered an interesting platform to understand the intricacies of family and familyhood.

From a normative perspective, these intersections, crossroads and hybridity in histories told by the respondents would render family history problematic and as challenging the standard conceptions of and approaches to family. However, in my study, it became clear that the definition and framing of family boundaries largely depends on who is reconstructing the family history. I gathered family histories from two sides, those told by women left behind whose histories intertwine two families to make one account of their family histories. The other ones told by the migrants, which are also constructions based on their own distance idealisations, nostalgia, memories, fantasies etc. I allowed the narratives gathered from the respondents to guide the understanding and conceptualisation of families without super-imposing predetermined standards on who and what is family. In this regard, my study challenges normative methodologies and conceptions by questioning what a family is.

Furthermore, I illuminate the politics of identity, gender, place, space and time in shaping familyhood as viewed by different members of one family. This demonstrates the richness offered by family history through tapping directly to people's experiences and appealing to their memories of their lives. They reveal the nuances which otherwise might be overlooked through normative approaches to the study of families (Miller, 1999; Roberts, 2002). Thus, deploying the life history method to gather family histories afforded me an opportunity to not only trace the migration trajectories within different historical epochs in families. It also helped me to unearth other conceptualisations of family as shaped by gender, identity, space, place and time, which is my contribution to the study of families in the context of transnational migration.

7.4 Limitations of the research

In this study, I encountered some limitations. Firstly, it was the unwillingness of some targeted transnational migrants in South Africa to participate in the study. This prolonged the time spent in the field trying to get the adequate number of respondents needed for the sample in South Africa. Although this was the case, eventually, I managed to get the number of respondents needed. Secondly, although the majority were unwilling, the issue was further exacerbated by time constraints among those who were willing to participate but were tied up at work. A majority of them worked odd hours and in some instances, most would be sleeping during the day in preparation for their night shifts, making access to them a challenge. Thirdly, I encountered financial challenges as the study had to be done in two countries. That meant I had to budget double for all the fieldwork activities. Although this was the case, I managed to effectively achieve all the set activities under a stringent budget.

Over and above the technical limitations, I also encountered some limitations in the conceptual approach I had taken. During the course of my study, I encountered some dynamics that were very critical yet not provisioned for in my study. For example, during data generation through family histories in Tsholotsho, I encountered some emotional outbursts regarding issues around Gukurahundi as a cause of en mass migration of people from the study area. However, I could not interrogate this further to assess how the traumatic memories shaped and influenced family history. I did not deal with this aspect and had to avoid it because it fell out of the conceptual focus of my study and as such, I was not prepared to assess it.

Similarly, the issue of voluntary disconnections by transnational migrant members and how this impacted on family life organisation and structures also posed some limitations as the study did not provision for the assessment of how families dealt with those who disconnect. Over and above voluntary disconnections, it emerged that there were some instances where migrant members disappeared with no trace pausing challenges within families on how they deal with such losses. My study unearthed these realities, but I could not address them in terms of how families deal with such ‘losses’ in terms of family life organisation and life cycle rituals.

Moreover, the fact that I could not interview members of the same families in Tsholotsho and Johannesburg was another notable limitation. Although it was necessitated by ethical consideration in my study, it also deprived me an opportunity to get full, solid and coherent

accounts of family lives as lived across transnational social spaces by members of the same families.

7.5 Concluding remarks

The study adopted a systemic approach, combining theories of global care chains, circulation of care, family systems theory and symbolic interactionism to understand how different socio-cultural, dimensions of familyhood are affected by transnational migration. It sought to understand the changes and continuities that have occurred in terms of family structures, lives and organisation. The analysis of the findings showed that there have been notable changes and continuities in family lives, organisation and structure within transnational families in Tsholotsho. The noteworthy continuities are that migrant families have remained a constant feature in the study area and migration has remained intergenerational. Moreover, migration has maintained its informal/ illegal form over time regardless of the reforms that have been effected to promote legal migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa. In terms of changes, two major structural factors stood out as the major drivers of significant changes within families in Tsholotsho. These are transnationalism and feminisation of migration. For example, patterns of residence and authority of the left behind children in transnational migration have been significantly changed in response to feminisation of migration and the physical separation of children from both parents. This led to the inevitable emergence of transnational parenting practices in the area. This is unlike historically when only the fathers migrated leaving the children living with the mothers. Thus, the typical and prevalent pattern of residency for the left behind children in Tsholotsho is that they remain in the care of their grandmothers (mostly maternal grandmothers) and hired workers. This introduces new care arrangements within families. However, unlike in the past when migrants were completely removed from their families and regarded as ‘dead’, in the current transnational era, transnational migrants become simultaneously embedded in their home countries and in the host countries. They continue to maintain their presence and membership in their families back home through different modes of communication powered by the internet as well as frequent visits made possible by developments in transport technologies.

Thus, as left behind children shift places of residence and their care arrangements shift while on the other hand transnational migrants become simultaneously embedded. This leads to the emergence of new family formations called transnational families where family life is

transacted transnationally. As family life is lived transnationally, transnational migrant members continue to participate in family life from a distance. For example, they take part in life cycle rituals as a way of maintaining and affirming their membership within their families back home. Although much of these rituals are performed while physically present, there are some that, due to possibilities posed by transnationalism, are performed transnationally powered by transnational social spaces. Within the ritual performances, the notion of place, space and time emerge as very critical. In most instances, in relation to birth and marriage, these concepts can be negotiated. However, in relation to burial of the umbilical cord after birth and of the corpse in death, the concept of place cannot be negotiated.

Although the study attempted a holistic focus on the family, targeting different aspects of familyhood and family life, some issues arose that were not adequately catered for the study which may need further attention. For example, the study focused on how migrant members-maintained membership within their families. It emerged that historically, migrants had crippling limitations in terms of maintaining membership while transnational migrants enjoy a number of options that allow them to keep in touch with their families back home. However, although this is the case, the study did not pay attention to those members that disconnected from their families (whether voluntarily or otherwise). Although it did acknowledge that there were such situations, I did not dig deeper into what this means for family lives, structures and organisation. This deserves attention in order to ascertain how families are affected by and deal with such incidences both in the historical migration and current transnational migration era. Do families make any efforts to trace their members? What happens if the member clearly shows they are no longer interested in the family? What happens to those who just disappear without any trace? Does the family mourn their loss and consider them as dead or do they just let go and keep hoping that someday they will return? How does this affect life cycle rituals within the family? For example, in ritual performances, are these people symbolically represented as living but away or they are scratched off like the dead? Understanding these dynamics will give an even fuller appreciation of the dynamic intersections and complexities that make up family life and organisation in the context of migration.

Furthermore, the study also focused on whether and how changes in family lives and organisation of families are reflected in family life cycle ritual. Although the study ascertained these dynamics, it did not go deeper into understanding the implications of non-ritual performance or negotiations in timing and place of ritual performances on families and their

members. Thus, it is critical to have a study that will seek to unearth these dynamics and ascertain how far negotiations can be made. For example, posing questions like: what aspects of rituals allow for negotiations in place and time and how do these impact on family life in general?

Moreover, it emerged that left behind children's patterns of residence and authority change mainly as women migrate. This results in new care giving arrangements for these children. What remains critical is to assess how these new patterns of residence and care arrangements affect the children's wellbeing. Although they may be left under the care of hired workers or grandmothers, how does their separation from their parents affect their overall wellbeing? Furthermore, in light of some of the issues raised above in relation to limitations in the conceptual approach, there is need to carry out a study that will assess how the traumatic memories as a cause of migration shaped and influenced family history.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE - TSHOLOTSHO

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND FAMILIES - CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES ALONG PROCESSES OF SUSTAINED MIGRATION: A CASE OF TSHOLOTSHO IN MATABELELAND NORTH, ZIMBABWE.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE - TSHOLOTSHO

Introduction
My name is **Gracsious Maviza,** a Doctoral student from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am conducting a study titled: ***Transnational Migration and Families - Continuities and Changes along Processes of Sustained Migration: A Case of Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe***. You are amongst those that have been selected and I am thus requesting for your permission to carry out the study. This information will help me in writing the thesis for my degree.

Procedure
You will be asked a series of questions that relate to your experience, understanding and perception of migration and families. This will take about 1 hour of your time. If you feel uncomfortable in answering any question please say so. Information gathered through this research exercise will be used only for academic purposes and sources of information will remain anonymous. You are free to opt out now or anytime during the course of the interview.

Benefits
There are no direct financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

Further Information
Should you require further information about this research feel free to contact My Supervisor, **Associate Professor Lorena Nunez Carrasco** on +27 (0)11-7174427at Wits University.

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:				
LANGUAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: English / Ndebele				
RESPONDENT OVER 18 YEARS OLD?(*Preferably household head , or other adult in the household over 18 years old)*	**YES**		**NO**	

DATE OF INTERVIEW:
START TIME: **END TIME:**
TOTAL MINUTES SPENT ON INTERVIEW:

Confirm verbal Consent and audio recording consent

Verbal Consent	**Yes**		**No**	
Audio recording consent	**Yes**		**No**	

SECTION 1: MIGRATION HISTORY

1. Tell me about those who have migrated in your family.
2. Which year(s) did each of them emigrate from Tsholotsho? (*from the migrated choose the critical path and pay attention to relevance – follow a significant path e.g. mother, father, guardian, brother)*
3. Why did he/she leave?
4. Why did he/she choose South Africa?
5. How did he/she travel to South Africa?
6. Was there anybody in South Africa who help him/her to migrate? Who was there? (*pay attention to the history of migration in the family*).

SECTION 2: CHANGES IN FAMILY LIFE & NEW FAMILY FORMATIONS

1.What does family mean to you? Who are your people?

2.How is a typical family composed in Tsholotsho?

3. It seems people have been migrating for some time in your family, how has this affected/changed your family? *(Probe: family composition and living arrangements; gender roles and responsibilities; cultural rituals; migration etc.*)

4. In most Zimbabwean communities, the extended family system is valued but this is changing. In your view, is the extended family system still important to the people in your community including yourself? *(If yes, how is it important? What is its role? If not, what has changed?)*

5. When does the family get together? For what do they get together and on what occasions? *(Pay attention to productive, reproductive rituals activities and life cycle events)*

6. Has any of these changed as a result of migration *(Pay attention to the influences of migration and probe for such if not clear)*

7. How is your family different today from what it was 10 years ago? 20years ago? *(In terms of composition, relationships, culture and traditions etc.)*

8.Do you remember hearing your grandparents describe their family lives? (*Probe: family composition and living arrangements; gender roles and responsibilities; cultural rituals; migration etc.*)

9. How different is what they described from yours today?

10. How does migration affect spousal relationships?

11. How do migrated spouses maintain their roles as husbands/wives?

12. Has there been any extramarital affairs that have occurred (public/private) as a result of one spouse being away?

13. Have there been any children born out of these affairs? If yes, how has your family dealt with these? (*Pay attention to gender dynamics: who had the affair, wife or husband? Who had the child, wife or husband? Did the marriage survive?)*

SECTION 3: CULTURAL TRADITIONS & RITUALS (birth, marriage & death).

1. Does your family perform cultural rituals during marriage ceremonies, births and deaths? ……..
2. If yes, may you please give me a detailed account of these rituals? *(How they are performed, when, who should be present etc?)*
   a. *Marriages*……
   ……
   ……
   b. *Births*……
   ……
   ……
   c. *Deaths*……
   ……
   ……
3. Seeing that there are key members of your family who are away, how does your family handle the performance of important rituals in their absence? *(Probe to clarify if they travel back to participate)*
4. Has separation of family members through migration affected the way these cultural rituals are performed? If yes, how?
5. If your family members in South Africa get a baby, get married, or experience death, do they observe family traditions related to these? *(Pay attention to the effects of time, place/locality and space.*
6. How are your family cultural rituals and traditions communicated to younger generations in your family?
7. How has this been affected by migration?
8. If no to question 1, has this always been the case that your family does not perform any rituals or it's something new?
9. If something new, why did your family abandon the rituals and traditions? (*Pay attention to the effects of religion, education etc.*).

SECTION 4: CHANGES IN PATTERNS OF RESIDENCE AND AUTHORITY

1. Whom do you live with?

2. If among the people you live with are people who are not your biological children or siblings or parents, who are they?, are they related to you and why are you staying with them? *(Pay attention to extended family system and the emergence of non-blood -elations based families).*
3. If among the people you live with are children of emigrated family members, what has been the arrangement to look after them?
4. Which one of the parents is your relative and how are you related?
5. Are the parents married? (*legally or culturally*) - If not married, did the family know about their relationship prior to the child's birth? *(Pay attention to the relationship between migration and cohabitation).*
6. Where was the child or children born? *(Pay attention to smuggling of children across borders).*
7. Who makes decisions concerning the children's upbringing? *(Education, religion, discipline etc.).*
8. Who were these children living with before coming to stay with you?
9. If they were living with people other than family; why were they living with someone who is not family?
10. Who had the authority to make day to day decisions?
11. How do emigrated parents maintain their roles as parents for the children left behind?
12. How does distance affect parental life?
13. In your household, who makes family decisions? (*probe: livestock; land; children; religion; etc.*)
14. If the head of the family is an emigrant, who makes major decisions about family matters here? (*probe: buying and selling livestock; land allocation; decisions about children; religion; etc.*)

SECTION 5: TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANTS & MEMBERSHIP IN FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN

1. How do emigrant family members keep in touch with the family in Tsholotsho?
2. Do they send remittances? If yes, how often?
3. How do they send the remittances?
4. What are the remittances used for?
5. When do they send the remittances? (*Anytime, month-end Christmas, during funerals and other critical moments etc.*)
6. How often do they visit home?

7. What mode of transport do they use when visiting?
8. How do they communicate? (*mode of communication*)
9. How often do they communicate?
10. Has the communication changed in the past 2 years?
11. What has changed? (*Pay attention to frequency, modes of communication etc*.)
12. Do emigrants participate in all family occasions? If yes, how?
13. Do you consult emigrant members when making family decisions?
14. Do they consult the family back home if making decisions in the host country?
15. How do emigrant members deal with births, marriages and deaths in the destination countries?
16. Do emigrant members take part in events such as births, marriage ceremonies and deaths in their home countries?

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~**End of Interview: Thank the participant**~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
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Appendix 2: IN-DPETH INTERVIEW GUIDE: TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANTS – JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
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DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND FAMILIES - CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES ALONG PROCESSES OF SUSTAINED MIGRATION: A CASE OF TSHOLOTSHO IN MATABELELAND NORTH, ZIMBABWE.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE: TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANTS – JOHANNESBURG

Introduction

My name is **Gracsious Maviza,** a Doctoral student from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am conducting a study titled: ***Transnational Migration and Families - Continuities and Changes along Processes of Sustained Migration: A Case of Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe***. You are amongst those that have been selected and I am thus requesting for your permission to carry out the study. This information will help me in writing the thesis for my degree.

Procedure

You will be asked a series of questions that relate to your experience, understanding and perception of migration and families. This will take about I hour of your time. If you feel uncomfortable in answering any question please say so. Information gathered through this research exercise will be used only for academic purposes and sources of information will remain anonymous. You are free to opt out now or anytime during the course of the interview.

Benefits

There are no direct financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

Further Information

Should you require further information about this research feel free to contact My Supervisor, ***Associate Professor Lorena Nunez Carrasco*** on+27 (0)11-7174427at Wits University.

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:				
LANGUAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: English / Ndebele / Zulu				
RESPONDENT OVER 18 YEARS OLD?(*Abort interview when below 18)*	**YES**		**NO**	
DATE OF INTERVIEW: **START TIME:** **END TIME:** **TOTAL MINUTES SPENT ON INTERVIEW:**				

Confirm verbal Consent and audio recording consent

Verbal Consent	**Yes**		**No**	
Audio recording Consent	**Yes**		**No**	

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Gender

Male	
Female	

2. Marital Status

Married	
Single	
Widowed	
Divorced	
Co-habiting	
Other (specify)	

3. Immigration Status

Work permit	
Special Dispensation	
Study permit	
Special dispensation	
Permanent residence permit	
Refugee permit	

Asylum seeker permit	
Other: Specify	
South African ID	

SECTION B: REASONS FOR MIGRATION

4. **Tell me about your reasons for migrating to South Africa**

(Instruction to interviewer: Do not read out the responses, allow multiple replies and circle the applicable answers.)

For economic reasons (to get a job, improved standard living, etc.)	
To escape political oppression/persecution	
To escape religious persecution/discrimination	
To escape ethnic/tribal persecution/discrimination, ethnic intolerance	
To escape gender/sexual discrimination	
For educational opportunities	
Family reunion	
Other: Specify	

5.**When did you move to South Africa?** ***(Write down year & month)……***

6. **How would you define your current employment status?**

(Do not read out. Allow multiple answers)

Unemployed	
Retired	

Casual employment	
Working part-time in formal sector	
Working part-time in formal sector	
Working part-time in formal sector	
Working part-time in informal sector	
Working full-time in formal sector	
Working full-time in informal sector	
Voluntary worker	
Housewife/homemaker	
University/tecknikon/correspondence student	
Self-employed (specify trade)	
Other(specify)	

7. Migration History

a) Has anyone in your family migrated to South Africa before?
b) Did they leave family (***spouse and children***) in Zimbabwe?
c) Did they have family in South Africa?
d) If yes to question b) above, who were the family members? *(Wife/husband & children – married and born while in Zimbabwe respectively or children born in SA to a wife/husband married while in Zimbabwe; siblings from Zimbabwe; or married or cohabiting partner met in SA?)*
e) If they left family back home and were married but yet cohabiting in SA, did their spouses back home know about the relationship?
f) Where were you staying at the time the family member migrated to South Africa?
g) How did migration affect your family when the family member migrated?
h) How similar or different is your migration experience now as a migrant to when you were young and back in Tsholotsho?

8. MIGRATION, FAMILY AND LIFECYCLE RITUALS

i. Births & Marriages

a) Do you have a family in Johannesburg? Yes ☐ No ☐
b) If yes, who are they? (*spouse, children, siblings etc.*)

c) Where do they stay? *(Pay attention to the dynamics of work, space and time in migrant labour)*
d) If spouse, where and when did you get married?
e) May you please tell me about how and where you met your spouse?
f) Do you have any other spouse and/ children back home?
g) If cohabiting with another woman/man and your spouse is back in Tsholotsho, does he/she know about this other partner?
h) When and how did you decide to move in together and/or marry?
i) Was your family back home involved in the marriage negotiations?
j) If you have children, where were they born?
k) If born in Johannesburg, did you perform any rituals related to births in your family culture?
l) If yes, what are they and what is their significance?
m) If you answered **NO TO QUESTION a) ABOVE**, where is your family?
n) Who are they? (*spouse, children, siblings etc.*)
o) If your children are back in Tsholotsho, how does distance affect your parental life?
p) How does distance affect your relationship with your child/children?
q) How do you maintain your role as a parent?
r) If your spouse is back in Tsholotsho, how does distance affect your spousal life?
s) How do you maintain your role as a spouse?
t) What sort of new responsibilities do you now have?

i. DEATHS

a) Have you ever lost a family member in Johannesburg?
b) If yes, did you perform the rituals related to funerals and deaths in your family culture? If yes, which ones are those? If no, why did you not perform any? *(Pay attention to the influences of religion, education etc.)*
c) Where were they buried? (Tsholotsho or Johannesburg).
d) If buried in Johannesburg, why? *(Pay attention to documentation, costs of repatriation etc.).*
e) If buried in Tsholotsho, how was the body of the deceased repatriated?
f) Are there any rituals observed along the way when transporting the body of the deceased *(from departure from Johannesburg to arrival in Tsholotsho)?* If yes, what are they?
g) In the event that a family member dies back home, do you have to travel back home? *(Pay attention to: who would have died? - relationship with the deceased).*
h) If yes, when do you travel? (as soon as you receive the news of their death to participate in preparations for burial or just for burial after a date for burial has been set)
i) Are there any post burial rituals that are performed in your family?
j) If yes, what are they?
k) If you travel to Tsholotsho to attend burial of a family member, do you stay and wait for the performance of these rituals?

SECTION C: TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY LIFE

h. Who are your family members in Tsholotsho?
i. Are you in contact with your family in Tsholotsho?

j. How often do you communicate with the following back home:

Wife	**Child**	**Mother**	**Father**	**Sibling**	**Grandparents**	**Other (Specify)**
Means ***(how):*** .... **Frequency:** ..... **Occasion**	**Means** ***(how):*:** .... **Frequency:** ..... **Occasion**	**Means** ***(how):*:** .... **Frequency:** ..... **Occasion**	**Means** ***(how):*:** .... **Frequency:** ..... **Occasion**	**Means** ***(how):*:** .... **Frequency:** ..... **Occasion**	**Means** ***(how):*:** .... **Frequency:** ..... **Occasion**	**Means** ***(how):*:** .... **Frequency:** ..... **Occasion** ....

k. Which member of the family do you speak to the most? Why?

l. Has the ways and frequencies of communication changed over the past 10 years? How?

m. Which social media do you use?

n. What do you send/post on the social media?

o. How often do you go to Zimbabwe?

p. Are there any particular reasons why you go home as often as you do? Or do not go at all?

q. Do you send money home? ☐s No ☐

1. If yes,

To whom?	**What for?**	**How?**	**How often?**	**When?**
Wife	....	....	....	....
Husband	....	....	....	....
Child	....	....	....	....
Mother	....	....	....	....
Father	....	....	....	....

Sibling	....	....	....	....
Grandparents	....	....	....	....
Other (Specify)	....	....	....	....

q. When people back home make decisions, do they ever consult you? If yes how and for what kind of decisions?

r. Do you consult them when you make decisions? If yes how and for what kind of decisions?

s. Over the last 2-3 years, was there any event that you felt you should attend or participate in back home?

20. If yes, did you attend?

21. If you did not attend, did you participate and how?

v. Do you participate in community activities?

Comments and Observations

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~End of Interview: Thank the participant~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Appendix 3: FAMILY HISTORY IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND FAMILIES - CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES ALONG PROCESSES OF SUSTAINED MIGRATION: A CASE OF TSHOLOTSHO IN MATABELELAND NORTH, ZIMBABWE

FAMILY HISTORY IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

My name is **Gracsious Maviza,** a Doctoral student from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am conducting a study titled: ***Transnational Migration and Families - Continuities and Changes along Processes of Sustained Migration: A Case of Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe***. You are amongst those that have been selected and I am thus requesting your permission to carry out the study. This information will help me in writing the thesis for my degree.

Procedure

You will be asked a series of questions that relate to your experience, understanding and perception of migration and families. This will take about 30 -45 minutes of your time. If you feel uncomfortable in answering any question please say so. Information gathered through this research exercise will be used only for academic purposes and sources of information will remain anonymous. You are free to opt out now or anytime during the course of the interview.

Benefits

There are no direct financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

Further Information

Should you require further information about this research feel free to contact My Supervisor, Associate Professor Lorena Nunez Carrasco on +27 (0)11-7174427at Wits University.

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:
LANGUAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: English / Ndebele

DATE OF INTERVIEW:
START TIME: **END TIME:**
TOTAL MINUTES SPENT ON INTERVIEW:

Confirm verbal consent and audio recording consent

Verbal Consent	**Yes**		**No**	
Audio recording consent	**Yes**		**No**	

Main Question

May you please tell me about your family history in relation to migration?

Sub-questions

Important topics to discuss in the interview are:

1. **Definition of family**

   a. Who are your people? *(Tracing family lineage and definition of family).*

   2. Where are they living?

   3. What did family mean to you when you were a child?

   4. What does family mean to you now?

   5. How is your family today different from when you were a child

   6. How did your parents and grandparents describe their family lives?(*Probe on these issues: family composition and living arrangements; gender roles and responsibilities; cultural rituals; migration etc.*).

2. **Migration history**

   1. Who was the first to migrate in your family? *(follow the critical path)*
   2. Where did they emigrate to? And when?
   3. How did they travel to that country? *(pay attention to means of transport and time taken to reach destination)*
   4. How did that person communicate with family back home? *(pay attention to modes of communication)*
   5. How often did they communicate? *(pay attention to frequency of communication)*
   6. How long did they stay away before visiting or coming back?
   7. Did you ever visit them in South Africa?
   8. What happened to their children or those under their care when they migrated?
   9. What were their living arrangements? (*Relationship with caregiver*).

3. Reasons for migration

a. Why did your family members migrate (*What push/pull factors led to their migration - what (historically) was happening at the time)*?

b. Why did they leave Zimbabwe?

c. Why did they choose South Africa?

4. The experience of the functioning of transnational family

1. Has family relationships changed as a result of migration?
2. Did you experience any significant changes in your family after the migration of your family member?
3. How did your family cope with not having the migrant family member around?
4. Did migration of the family members affect the way decisions were made in your family?
5. Did you have any expectations from the emigrated member? If yes, what were they? Were they met?
6. What has been the role of the extended family in the migration process?

5. Migration and culture

1. Tell me, what used to happen when a child was born in your family in the past?
2. Has migration changed the way you handle births in your family? If so, how?
3. Tell me, what used to happen when there was a marriage ceremony in your family in the past?
4. Has migration changed the way your family conducts marriage ceremonies? If so, how?
5. How did your family conduct funerals and burials in the past?
6. Has migration influenced any changes in the way your family conducts funerals and burials? If so, how?
7. In the past, what activities did your family do together? Have these changed? If so how?

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~End of Interview: Thank the participant~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Appendix 4: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE (ACADEMICS)



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND FAMILIES - CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES ALONG PROCESSES OF SUSTAINED MIGRATION: A CASE OF TSHOLOTSHO IN MATABELELAND NORTH, ZIMBABWE

KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE (ACADEMICS)

Introduction

My name is **Gracsious Maviza,** a Doctoral student from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am conducting a study titled: ***Transnational Migration and Families - Continuities and Changes along Processes of Sustained Migration: A Case of Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe***. You are amongst those that have been selected and I am thus requesting for your permission to carry out the study. This information will help me in writing the thesis for my degree.

Procedure

You will be asked a series of questions that relate to your experience, understanding and perception of migration and families. This will take about 30 -45 minutes of your time. If you feel uncomfortable in answering any question please say so. Information gathered through this research exercise will be used only for academic purposes and sources of information will remain anonymous. You are free to opt out now or anytime during the course of the interview.

Benefits

There are no direct financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

Further Information

Should you require further information about this research feel free to contact My Supervisor, Associate Professor Lorena Nunez Carrasco on +27 (0)11-7174427at Wits University.

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:
LANGUAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: English / Ndebele
DATE OF INTERVIEW: **START TIME:** **END TIME:** **TOTAL MINUTES SPENT ON INTERVIEW:**

Confirm verbal Consent and audio recording consent

Verbal Consent	**Yes**		**No**	
Audio recording Consent	**Yes**		**No**	

KEY IMFORMANTS

1. How was/is a family defined among the Ndebele people in Tsholotsho?
2. In your view, is the extended family system important to the people in Tsholotsho? - If yes, in what way?
3. In your opinion, can you say migration has altered family composition or structures in Tsholotsho? If yes, how?
4. Are there any changes that have been observed in the performance of rituals related to marriages, births and deaths as a result of migration in Tsholotsho? What has changed?
5. In your opinion, how does distance affect parental life? *(Probe: How does being far away affect the relationship between parents and children?).*
6. Who makes major decisions concerning the children's upbringing? (School, religion, discipline etc.).
7. How does migration affect spousal life?
8. When people migrate, are there any new relationships that emerge? (Do women find new husbands and men new wives - private /public).
9. About 20 years back, did emigrants travel back home more often?
10. How different is the way they communicate from the way migrants communicated about 20 years ago?

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~End of Interview: Thank the participant~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Appendix 5: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE (LOCAL AUTHORITIES)



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND FAMILIES - CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES ALONG PROCESSES OF SUSTAINED MIGRATION: A CASE OF TSHOLOTSHO IN MATABELELAND NORTH, ZIMBABWE

KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE (LOCAL AUTHORITIES)

Introduction

My name is **Gracsious Maviza,** a Doctoral student from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am conducting a study titled: ***Transnational Migration and Families - Continuities and Changes along Processes of Sustained Migration: A Case of Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe***. You are amongst those that have been selected and I am thus requesting for your permission to carry out the study. This information will help me in writing the thesis for my degree.

Procedure

You will be asked a series of questions that relate to your experience, understanding and perception of migration and families. This will take about 30 -45 minutes of your time. If you feel uncomfortable in answering any question please say so. Information gathered through this research exercise will be used only for academic purposes and sources of information will remain anonymous. You are free to opt out now or anytime during the course of the interview.

Benefits

There are no direct financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

Further Information

Should you require further information about this research feel free to contact My Supervisor, Associate Professor Lorena Nunez Carrasco on +27 (0)11-7174427at Wits University.

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:
LANGUAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: English / Ndebele
DATE OF INTERVIEW: **START TIME:** **END TIME:** **TOTAL MINUTES SPENT ON INTERVIEW:**

Confirm verbal Consent and audio recording consent

Verbal Consent	**Yes**		**No**	
Audio recording Consent	**Yes**		**No**	

KEY INFORMANTS

1. What is a family in Tsholotsho?
2. What changes have you observed in families in Tsholotsho as a result of transnational migration?
3. Culturally, how are rituals related to marriages, births and deaths handled among families in Tsholotsho?
4. Are there any changes that have been observed in the performance of rituals related to marriages, births and deaths as a result of migration in Tsholotsho? What has changed?
5. Do people who are away take part in weddings, birth and funerals rituals? If so how?
6. In your opinion, how does distance affect parental life? *(Probe: How does being far away affect the relationship between parents and children?).*
7. Who usually takes care of the elderly and children in the event of their guardians migrating? *(What is the trend?).*
8. Who makes major decisions concerning the children's upbringing? (School, religion, discipline etc.).
9. How do emigrants from Tsholotsho maintain links with their families?
10. Do migrants participate in community activities?
11. How does migration affect spousal life?
12. When people migrate, are there any new relationships that emerge? (Do women find new husbands and men new wives - private /public).
13. How often do they migrants travel back now and how different is the way they visited home 20 years ago from the way they do now?

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~End of Interview: Thank the participant~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Appendix 6: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE (IOM)



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND FAMILIES - CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES ALONG PROCESSES OF SUSTAINED MIGRATION: A CASE OF TSHOLOTSHO IN MATABELELAND NORTH, ZIMBABWE

KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE (IOM)

Introduction

My name is **Gracsious Maviza,** a Doctoral student from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am conducting a study titled: ***Transnational Migration and Families - Continuities and Changes along Processes of Sustained Migration: A Case of Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe***. You are amongst those that have been selected and I am thus requesting for your permission to carry out the study. This information will help me in writing the thesis for my degree.

Procedure

You will be asked a series of questions that relate to your experience, understanding and perception of migration and families. This will take about 30 -45 minutes of your time. If you feel uncomfortable in answering any question please say so. Information gathered through this research exercise will be used only for academic purposes and sources of information will remain anonymous. You are free to opt out now or anytime during the course of the interview.

Benefits

There are no direct financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

Further Information

Should you require further information about this research feel free to contact My Supervisor, Associate Professor Lorena Nunez Carrasco on +27 (0)11-7174427at Wits University.

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:
LANGUAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: English / Ndebele
DATE OF INTERVIEW: **START TIME:** **END TIME:** **TOTAL MINUTES SPENT ON INTERVIEW:**

Confirm verbal Consent and audio recording consent

Verbal Consent	**Yes**		**No**	
Audio recording Consent	**Yes**		**No**	

KEY INFORMANTS

1. How was/is a family defined in Zimbabwe?
2. In your view, is the extended family system important to the people in Zimbabwe? - If yes, in what way?
3. In your opinion, can you say migration has altered family composition or structures in Zimbabwe? If yes, how?
4. In your opinion, are there any changes that have been observed in the performance of rituals related to marriages, births and deaths as a result of migration in Zimbabwe? If yes, what has changed?
5. In your opinion, how does distance affect parental life? *(Probe: How does being far away affect the relationship between parents and children?).*
6. Who makes major decisions concerning the children's upbringing in the context of parental migration? (School, religion, discipline etc.).
7. How does migration affect spousal life?
8. When people migrate, are there any new relationships that emerge? (Do women find new husbands and men new wives - private /public).
9. About 20 years back, did emigrants travel back home more often?
10. How different was their travelling back then from today's?
11. How different is the way they communicate from the way migrants communicated about 20 years ago?
12. What has been the role of IOM in addressing the effects of migration on families in Zimbabwe?

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~End of Interview: Thank the participant~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Appendix 7: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE – BURIAL SOCIETY LEADERS



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND FAMILIES - CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES ALONG PROCESSES OF SUSTAINED MIGRATION: A CASE OF TSHOLOTSHO IN MATABELELAND NORTH, ZIMBABWE

KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE – BURIAL SOCIETY LEADERS

Introduction

My name is **Gracsious Maviza,** a Doctoral student from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am conducting a study titled: ***Transnational Migration and Families - Continuities and Changes along Processes of Sustained Migration: A Case of Tsholotsho in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe***. You are amongst those that have been selected and I am thus requesting for your permission to carry out the study. This information will help me in writing the thesis for my degree.

Procedure

You will be asked a series of questions that relate to your experience, understanding and perception of migration and families. This will take about 30 -45 minutes of your time. If you feel uncomfortable in answering any question please say so. Information gathered through this research exercise will be used only for academic purposes and sources of information will remain anonymous. You are free to opt out now or anytime during the course of the interview.

Benefits

There are no direct financial or material benefits for participating in this study.

Further Information

Should you require further information about this research feel free to contact My Supervisor, Associate Professor Lorena Nunez Carrasco on +27 (0)11-7174427at Wits University.

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:
LANGUAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: English / Ndebele
DATE OF INTERVIEW: **START TIME:** **END TIME:** **TOTAL MINUTES SPENT ON INTERVIEW:**

Confirm verbal Consent and audio recording consent

Verbal Consent	**Yes**		**No**	

Audio recording Consent	Yes		No	

KEY INFORMANTS

1. How long have you been in South Africa?
2. When was the burial society you are leading formed?
3. What is the criteria for joining?
4. What is a family among immigrants from Tsholotsho living in Johannesburg?
5. Are there any changes that you have observed in the definition of families among transnational migrants from Tsholotsho living in Johannesburg? (Explain).
6. What changes have you observed in families back in Tsholotsho due to transnational migration?
7. Culturally, how are rituals related to marriages, births and deaths handled among transnational migrants from Tsholotsho living in Johannesburg?
8. Are there any changes that have been observed in the performance of rituals related to marriages, births and deaths among transnational migrants from Tsholotsho living in Johannesburg? What has changed?
9. Do transnational migrants take part in weddings, births and funerals rituals back in Tsholotsho? If so how?
10. In your opinion, how does distance affect parental life? *(Probe: How does being far away affect the relationship between parents and children?).*
11. Who usually takes care of the elderly and children back in Tsholotsho in the event of their caregivers migrating? *(What is the trend?).*
12. Who makes major decisions concerning the children's upbringing? (School, religion, discipline etc.).
13. How do immigrants from Tsholotsho maintain links with their families?
14. Do transnational migrants living in Johannesburg participate in community activities back in Tsholotsho?
15. How does migration affect spousal life?
16. When people migrate, are there any new relationships that emerge? (Do women find new husbands and men new wives - private /public).
17. How often do transnational migrants travel back to Tsholotsho now and how different is the way they visited home 20 years ago from the way they do now?

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~End of Interview: Thank the participant~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~