

Whose Identity [Document] Is It?

Documentation and the Negotiation of Meaning Among Zimbabwean Migrants in Johannesburg

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Research Report

Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities,
University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report in
Forced Migration Studies

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Johannesburg, 2010

CONTENTS

Title Page	1
Contents	2
Declaration	4
Abstract	6
Key Terms.	6
Documentation	6
Acknowledgements	7
Introduction	8
Research Question/s	9
Structure of the Report	9
Literature Review	10
Parameters of belonging: Re-actualisation of Fences	11
Delineation of Membership and Labelling	12
Documentation’s Dual Function: Categorizing and Imparting Unique Identities	15
Documentation in the Context of Migration	16
Rationale for This Study	20
Historical Context of Movement and Access Control in Zimbabwe and South Africa	24
Why from the Migrant’s Perspective?	25
Population under Study	27
Theoretical Framework.....	29
Methodology	30
Scope of the Study	30
Collecting Data	31
Sources of Data	31
Sampling: Finding the People	32
Interviewing as a Methodology	33
Group Discussion	34
Reflexivity: “Insider” or “Outsider” Researcher?	35
Audience	38
Analysis of Data	39
Ethical Considerations	41
Vulnerability Population and Illegality	41
Confidentiality and Anonymity	42
Collection and Storage of Data	42
Analysis of Data	43
Informed Consent and Beneficence	43

Results and Discussion	45
Section 1: Identification and Membership	46
The Passport is not for the Police	46
How to Spot an Alien: Visible Markers of Non-Belonging	48
Not of here:	48
But of Where?	50
Good Citizens and Good Migrants	52
Death and Documents	54
Section 2: On Getting Through (In Spite of What the Government Says).....	58
Undocumented Exits/ Passing/Going Unnoticed/Unchecked	58
Being versus Having: The Person v. the Person on Paper.....	58
Asylum Seeker Permits.....	59
Access to Ways of Being	62
Authorised to Enter but Unwanted	63
Section 3: Documents & Defence	66
Is this Parachute a Knapsack?!	
– When the Bulletproof Vest is Made of Paper	66
Levels of Defense: On Resisting	70
On Being Stopped by the Police	71
The Meaning of Inspection	74
Separation of State and Official	77
Separate Rules for Separate Residents: A Return to Apartheid?	79
Whose Document Is It?	81
Ownership of Identity Documents	85
A Nobody until You Die.	86
Conclusion	88
Bibliography	92
Appendix A: Guiding Questions for Formulation of Interview Questions	98
Appendix B: Sample Interview Questions	99
Appendix C: Consent Form	100
Appendix D: Excerpt from Exchange with Respondent	101

DECLARATION

I, Kathryn Takabvirwa, do hereby declare that this Research Report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Forced Migration Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other University.

Signed:

Date:

At the beginning of each of his sermons, Pastor Joel Osteen raises his bible and leads his congregation in a proclamation: “This is my bible. I am what it says I am. I have what it says I have. I can do what it says I can do...” In the individual-state relationship, the identifying document is the bible. The congregation of migrants rises, holds up their asylum seeker permits, student visas, passports and temporary residence permits (like black South Africans held up their passbooks during the Apartheid era) and chant: “*This* is my ID. I am what it says I am. I have what it says I have. I can do what it says I can do...!” Or am I? A few months ago, I travelled from Zimbabwe to South Africa. At the South African border, a young lady stood a few paces ahead of me in a line to show our modern day passbooks to an immigration official. The young lady clutched what appeared to be a corporate permit (characteristic A4 size sheet of paper). Her bible. Her permission slip. Upon closer inspection, I noticed that the photograph on the permit was that of a young man in his early thirties. “This is my ID. I am what it says I am...”

ABSTRACT

From the moment a person enters a state, whether by birth or migration, the individual-state interaction is often mediated by some form of (supposedly) official state-issued document. This is particularly the case in cross-border migration. Documentation is often viewed as an instrument of the state, with passports containing declarations within them stipulating to them being “the property” of the government issuing them. Yet, documentation is borne by individuals whose use of it in the context of migration indicates incongruence between their view of documentation and that of the state. This research examines migrants’ perceptions of documentation, what informs those views, and the ways in which those perceptions inform migrants’ views of and interaction with the nation-state, citizenship, identity and state control. It explores contestation over the ownership of and rights over documents. In an effort to explore the levels of connection and disconnection, the study contrasts migrants’ perceptions against those of the state. It moves away from the functionalist, policy-directed approach to the study of documentation that often characterises migration literature. It is informed by post-positivist, relativist commitments to examining the perspectives of individuals while adopting the constructivist recognition that meaning is created, as informed by history, context and experience. Focusing on Zimbabwean migrants resident in Johannesburg, this study draws on information gathered through in-depth interviews and group discussions, examined through discourse analysis and thematic content analysis.

KEY TERMS

Belonging; Citizenship; Control; Documentation; Identification; Identity; Individual; Meaning; Membership; Migrant; Nation-State; Nationalism; Resistance

DOCUMENTATION

In this paper, “document” or “documentation” shall be taken to mean any form of certificate originally intended for the state’s registration, documentation, enumeration or regulation of the presence and movement of people. This includes (i) official documents issued through state approved channels or through irregular means (e.g. bribery of state officials, misrepresentation of reasons for flight) (ii) documents forged in part or in whole, fashioned after official documents, which are used in lieu of official documents. Among these are birth certificates, national IDs, passports, asylum seeker permits, refugee booklets, emergency travel documents, corporate (farm worker) permits, work permits and visas. Note however, that Counelis (2000: 384) defines a “document” as “any object, artefact, behaviour, or natural material which provides symbolic meaning.” Central to this study is the recognition that the symbolic meaning that attaches to identity documents can stem both from the state (their producer) and from the individual (their bearer).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“... Blessed be the LORD, my Rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle, my Rock and my Fortress...” (Ps.144: 1-2). I thank God for everything that has led me to this point.

I am deeply indebted to the German Academic Exchange Service: Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), for their financial support during my year-long Masters programme; to Lenore, Mpumi and Mapule for being so full of heart; and to my classmates and friends – thank you for the talks pamushana.

Ingrid Palmary commented on my draft proposal. Darshan Vigneswaran introduced me to John Torpey’s work, and asked time and again: “well, what is the state?” Shero read the entire final draft, start to finish, *voluntarily*. Thank you for the emails!

I doubt I could have asked for a better supervisor. Tara Polzer’s insights, her input, her ready feedback and preparedness to comment on my work with minimal notice, her ever open door, the three minute talks in the hallway, impromptu supervision meetings – these made all the difference.

I owe so much to my family, who not only put up with me, but loved me when I am oh-so-difficult. You are my favourite people in the whole world; you remind me of who I am, who I want to be. You bring me closer to God and you make me a better me. You are the best people I know.

This research would not have been possible without my respondents. I am grateful for the long hours you gave; your openness and readiness to share your experiences and your insights. I hope these pages ring true to you.

When the South African Department of Home Affairs announced the introduction of Special Dispensation Permits for Zimbabwean migrants in April 2009, there was the hope that this would result in a decrease in the number of asylum applications. Carried in this policy change is an assumption that some Zimbabweans apply for asylum simply because it is the only legal option available to them. The state's actions are based on their assumptions about migrants' views, yet as Polzer (2004) finds in a study of Mozambican refugees in South Africa, there can be a disjuncture between the state's assumptions and perceptions and those of migrants. The actions of the young lady using a man's permit to enter South Africa, described above, are informed by an understanding of documentation and state control that appears somewhat incongruous with the state's view.

This study seeks to examine what (if any) meaning migrants attach to identity documents; what informs these meanings; and how these meanings are articulated. It explores these questions in view of documentation not only as a factor in access to services, but as a means of access to ways of being, and as an instrument of state control. It examines the relationship between identity documents and identity itself, asking whether reference to documentation as "identity documents" is appropriate, asking who and what it is that is being identified; in what ways (i.e. identified as what); and to whom. Recognising that while documents are issued by the state for its purposes, they are borne by individuals, in this case migrants, the study explores the ways in which migrants themselves conceive of documentation. It asks in what ways migrants' perspectives are informed by their experience of and relationship with (i) the state that issues the documentation (ii) their country of origin and (iii) their view of the nation-state more broadly. Consequently, how does documentation relate to migrants' understanding not only of the rights but also of responsibilities of migrants, citizens, non-citizens, and the state? What are migrants' views on the role of the state, especially in matters pertaining to facilitating and controlling movement, regulating belonging, giving and denying privileges/access? In asking to whom identification documents actually belong and how this ownership is understood, claimed, and negotiated by migrants, the question arises: who determines the boundaries of belonging and the extent and nature of their fluidity? Ultimately, to whom does the state belong? The inquiry can be summed in the following questions:

RESEARCH QUESTION/S

Main Question:

What meanings do migrants attach to documentation?

Sub Questions:

What informs these meanings? (e.g. migrants' condition as non-citizens)

How are these meanings expressed?

What are the socio-political implications of a possible mismatch between migrants' perceptions of documentation and the state's?

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

In examining the questions above, the report begins with a review of literature, first examining the nature and use of documentation in the nation-state, in order to situate the analysis within broader discourses on state control, identification, membership and belonging. It discusses documents with regards to their dual symbolic elements – both as linking individuals to states, and as identifying individuals with respect to their allotted rights and responsibilities. It goes on to look at documentation in the context of migration, when the “individuals” are non-citizens resident in foreign countries. The paper then moves from migration in general to examining why a case study of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg would be particularly illuminating, exploring Zimbabwe and South Africa's histories with regards labelling and state control of movement and access, as well as resistance against both. It then goes on to discuss how the study of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg was structured and conducted, the methodology section concluding with a brief discussion on the ethical issues that arose during fieldwork. The second half of the report presents the findings of the inquiry, examining them against the literature on documentation with regards to migration and the nation-state, organising the section thematically. The report concludes with a summative review of the general findings of the investigation as to the question of how migrants perceive documentation, what informs these perceptions, and how this affects the broader socio-political implications of documentation in the nation-state.

Before there was the document, there was the state that produced it. The debate on the history and nature of the nation-state plays itself out time and again in academic discourse. Hobbes (1651) argues that out of a state of nature, a protective political society emerges almost naturally, inevitably.¹ This central authority becomes a state when it establishes monopoly over the “legitimate” use of coercive force “within a given territory” (Weber 1919: 1). As the result of upheaval processes like wars, treaties and colonialism, the territorialisation of the “state” becomes increasingly entrenched, the state defined within specific geographical boundaries,² to the point where literature on nationalism is premised on the view of states as “sovereign, spatially discontinuous units” (Malkki 1992: 26). As the political state becomes increasingly associated with an ideological “nation,” there emerges an association of land with people and the state: the invention of the nation-state. Aided by historical short-sightedness, academic scholarship contributes to the naturalising of the nation-state as the “natural social and political form of the modern world,” what Wimmer and Schiller (2002: 302) term “methodological nationalism.” In this conception of the nation-state, borders are particularly central, so much so that Wilson and Donnan (1998) claim that as international borders lose their ability to limit movement and to serve “as markers of the extent and power of the state,” this failure of borders heralds the demise of the nation-state “as the pre-eminent political structure of modernity” (1).³

The invention of the nation-state is captured in Massimo d'Azeglio's proclamation after the Italian unification of 1871: "We have created Italy, now we must create Italians" (Billig 1995: 25, as cited in Haste 2004: 417). Haste (2004) describes how the creation and presentation of the new Italian nation-state involved the generation of “a ‘mythic’ history,” and along with it, “symbols of nationality that would coalesce the people into a new national identity” (417). Haste cites language as one of the main symbols “uniting” the new Italy. Language lends itself as a symbol not only for the Italian state but also of the Italian nation in a way that makes palatable a statement like: “I am Italian therefore I speak Italian.”

¹ Note Marx and Engels' (1845) critique of the view that society needs the state to hold it together. (Reference courtesy of Machado (1992))

² Consider the manner in which Palestine's struggle for its recognition is tied to a battle over territory.

Parameters of Belonging: Re-actualisation of Fences

In many ways, language can serve as a point of unity and as a symbol of the nation, whether by becoming part of the national myth of unity in identity as in Western states where to be Italian is to speak Italian, or as a historical point of national resistance as in South Africa, where the nation's "rainbow" quality is reflected in its embrace of its numerous languages. Documents much like language can be and are often used as tools of systematic racism and xenophobia; yet documents stand apart from language and other such symbols of the nation-state. The main point of difference is that documents are more clearly an instrument of the state in marking "belonging". Instituted by the state, the system of documentation is established and regulated by the state, supposedly for the state's purposes.⁴

Similarly, even though national anthems and flags can serve as "modern totems [of the nation-state] (in the Durkheimian sense)" (Cerulo 1993: 244), and Haste (2004) would probably agree that they help with the "creation of Italy and Italians." A critical distinguishing difference between national emblems like flags and documentation, which stems from documents' nature as state instruments, is access. Valued though national emblems may be,⁵ unlike flags,⁶ national anthems or language, the acquisition of documentation is controlled by the state and access to it is deliberately determined, upon the satisfaction of very specific state-determined requirements. Rights to documentation depend on the nature of one's relationship with the state, and its value goes beyond its symbolism.

Documents serve as fences – ostensibly to limit physical access into a territory, but also to demarcate who of those within it has rights to what. This is particularly important in the "imagined" nation-state, where the "nation" is imagined into existence. One may be *born* legally

³ In the European Union, as internal borders disappear, the borders of the EU itself become increasingly impenetrable (Gallagher 2002). Globalization's ability to promote both the opening and fortification of states in this context is still in line with Wilson and Donnan's observation that the nation-state may be ceasing to be the "pre-eminent political structure of modernity" (1998: 1). In the EU, the nation-state is being superseded by a supranational union.

⁴ There are cases where language is also used as a state-regulated instrument of identity, such as in France, where attaining French citizenship by marriage requires mastery of the language (Civil Code Article 21-2). Also, see Kamusella's (2001) "Language as an Instrument of Nationalism in Central Europe" for a more extensive discussion.

⁵ The desecration of flags and distortion of national anthems has been seen to cause considerable uproar, even in the United States (NB *Texas v. Johnson* 1989 in which the US Supreme Court held that the burning of flags was protected under the First Amendment right to freedom of speech). Currency is also a state symbol though its destruction may be viewed differently from that of flags. Unlike a flag, currency can rarely ever *belong* to a person completely but remains the property of the Treasury of the state that issues it (the same is true of many passports). In the US, destroying money is prohibited under Title 18, §333 of the US Code, if the disfiguration of the currency is "with intent to render such item(s) unfit to be reissued" (reference to currency law courtesy of MSNBC.com <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7148966/>).

⁶ There is wide variety between countries in their control over access to emblems like flags. Some countries with less liberal freedom of speech clauses, like Zimbabwe, regulate the acquisition and treatment of flags (NB the Flag of Zimbabwe Act of 1985, as do Middle Eastern countries whose flags bear the Islamic declaration of faith (like Saudi Arabia). (Wikipedia.com)

Italian, but one is *made* culturally and affectively Italian. In the making of the nation and the emergence of nationalism – in the “making of Italians” – there are three processes that occur: “the purification of culture, the universalization of chosen-ness, and the territorialisation of memory” (Smith 1996: 449). The selection and instrumentalisation of mythological narratives, geographical features and cultural artefacts produce a nation and nationalism (Ibid) then requires a tangible instrument, a marker, upon which membership to the nation is recorded, particularly in the context of globalisation. Documentation becomes that apposite symbol of the modern nation-state.

Globalisation is changing the configuration of the nation-state, and therefore the criteria for membership. According to Dauvergne (2004: 84), globalisation is “...shifting the boundaries of the insider-outsider dichotomy.” For Dauvergne, this boundary no longer coincides with political borders within which “discrete categories of “us” and “them” correspond... to legal categories of citizen and alien...” (2004: 84). In Johannesburg, for example, a city Landau characterises as a city of immigrants, local and international, belonging is not determined along ethnic lines. Rather, nationality has become “the divide between a coalescing South African nationalism⁷ and a reified foreign other,” and it is nationality that serves as the “fulcrum for conflict, exclusion, and identity formation” (Landau 2005: 7). This is in line with Nyamnjoh’s observation that globalisation has resulted in “an even greater obsession with citizenship, belonging and the building or re-actualisation of fences” (2002: 774).

Where the conceptualizations of citizenship, membership and belonging are complicated by more permeable borders (Dauvergne 2004), and other “symbols of nationality” become important, documentation’s centrality in delineating membership is highlighted, as it remains more and more the only criterion and marker of membership access to which the state retains even a modicum of control.

Delineation of Membership and Labelling

Part of the process of configuring the nation-state is labelling those who are supposedly of it. Where national borders are generally ineffective at regulating membership (except perhaps North Korea’s), documentation serves to mark belonging to the unity. While it may not “coalesce” people the way language may, to borrow Haste’s term, documentation is a form of proof of membership (c.f. Bakewell 2007: 17). Often, “belonging” requires the exclusion of some

⁷ According to Smith (2002: 6), nationalism consists of three parts: “a language and symbolism, a sociopolitical movement, and an ideology of the nation.” Also, Benedict Anderson (1983) gives an interesting account on nationalism.

“other” in order to create an entity to which one can belong.⁸ As Croucher (2003: 40) puts it, “...belonging to an “Us” necessitates the existence and recognition of a “Them.” Belonging as such necessitates and implies boundaries.” In the modern nation-state, there is need for a system for identifying and labelling who is of the “Us” and who is not. Where separators like language and borders are rendered increasingly ineffectual (Wilson and Donnan 1998), it becomes necessary to consider alternative markers of belonging – alternative “borders” – to delineate the extent of the nation-state.

Documentation lends itself to this purpose. FitzGerald and Cuesta-Leiva (1997) propose that if citizenship were to be traded, the actual item to change hands would be passports. Where migration law may be “concerned with the limit of the nation, the border... and the mythology of national identity” (Dauvergne 2004:87), the tool migration law uses to actually mark those it has endowed with rights and signal the nature and limits of those rights is documentation: visas, permits, etc. Documentation is at the heart of the propagation of the “mythology of national identity” and of the nation-state. It is central to the state’s ability to monopolise symbolic force (see Bourdieu 1989:9). According to Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 15), the Weberian state’s coercive force “includes the power to name, to identify, to categorize, to state what is what and who is who” (as cited in Bakewell 2007: 18), and documents serve all these purposes.

Each document identifies its bearer in a specific, state-prescribed way, affording to each certain rights and privileges (Vasta 2006). In so doing, the state marks even those who do not avail themselves to this element of its control as “undocumented” and therefore “illegally present.” Thus, documentation allows the state to label all those present – document-holders by virtue of their having documents, non-holders by virtue of their not having them. For Gardner (2005: 2), it is during the migrant-state encounter that individuals are assigned certain identities – aliens, residents, citizens. A case in point is the South African Government’s proclamation of their intent to issue Special Dispensation Permits to Zimbabweans illegally present in its country, effectively regularising their immigration statuses. While Special Dispensation Permits had still not been issued at the writing of this paper, that a state can change the legality of a person’s status by issuing or revoking a document highlights the fact that the power to label lies with the state. Thus, it is the state that renders one “legally” or “illegally” present; documentation being central to its ability to “name the other... as not-us or not-legal” (Dauvergne 2004: 94; c.f. Engbersen and van der Leun 2001; De Genova 2002).

⁸ For a discussion on belonging, see Hedetoft 2002, wherein he breaks down various levels of belonging, noting that “cultural belonging,” among the affective elements of belonging, “does not presuppose the existence of an “Other,” let alone a contradictory Other for its existence, viability and maintenance...” In reading through Hedetoft’s examination, it is important to recognize the frequency with which discussions on “othering” in migration literature are often linked with those on the use of arboreal metaphors (c.f. Malkki 1992).

Given the constructed nature of labelling, it should be noted that in this paper, the use of the term “identity documents” is merely as a result of convention. There is need to recognise and set aside presumptions on the nature of documentation to allow room to explore the actual relationship between identification documents and identity. A constructivist approach to the study of individuals’ perceptions of documentation requires appreciation of Brubaker and Cooper’s (2000: 15) claim, that self-identification “takes place in dialectical interplay with external identification, and the two need not converge” (as cited in Bakewell 2007: 17). As for citizenship and documentation, is citizenship merely reflected on documents or does documentation participate in the creation of that which it purports to symbolise, and how do the implications change when unofficial or fraudulent documents are concerned?

Consider that from a realist, state perspective, documentation serves as a means through which the state is able to regulate “belonging”⁹ (despite what Croucher (2003: 40) terms the individual’s “affective dimensions of attachment and identity”). By delineating membership, there is a “system of belonging and not belonging...” that is brought about by immigration regulations (Gardner 2005: 3). Within this system, documentation is the physical manifestation of the incorporeal process. It is the “adoption certificate” that attests to the existence and describes the nature of the state-individual relationship.

Documentation positions the individual in relation to the state. If asked what documentary evidence one has of the social contract, as propounded by Rousseau (1762) as a contract between the state and the individual¹⁰ were to be represented on paper, it can be argued that that would present itself in the form of identifying documents such as passports and national IDs. A case in point is the South African Government’s policy with regards to non-citizen children born in its hospitals. A record of birth is issued – the state’s acknowledgement of the existence of the new born – but not a South African birth certificate, as the latter would indicate the state’s recognition of the child as its citizen. Therefore instead, the child is positioned as an “alien” baby, its rights and responsibilities with respect to the state signalled by the record of birth and lack of a birth certificate.

⁹ It is important to recognize that “belonging” is constructed and contested, both by the person entering society, and by the receiving community. Bell (1990: 3) puts it well when she says “One does not simply or ontologically “belong” to the world or to any group within it. Belonging is an achievement at several levels of abstraction” (as cited in Croucher 2003: 41). For a discussion on the complexity of belonging from a constructivist perspective, see Cornell and Hartman (1998: 77) who describe belonging and identity as something that “people create, resist, choose, specify, invent, redefine, reject, actively defend, and so forth” (as cited in Croucher 2003: 40). Furthermore, the xenophobia witnessed in South African attests to the disconnection between state-recognized (documented) rights to be present, and the host community’s system of (non-)recognition.

¹⁰ Proudhon (1851) presents a divergent view of the social contract, suggesting that it is between individuals, and not between an individual and the state.

Documentation's Dual Function: Categorizing and Imparting Unique Identities

Documentation serves two key purposes. It categorizes individuals into groups, and it ascribes to each individual what it considers a unique identifier, representing a unique identity. That is, after grouping individuals into nationals and non-nationals, it further distinguishes between those within the same group – Mr. Smith versus Mr. Jones – its issuance of unique national identity numbers to each signifying its belief in the disaggregation of the groups. Before exploring intra-group differentiation, it is necessary to briefly examine the need to differentiate between groups, the logic for the latter feeding in somewhat to that of the former, particularly where migration is concerned.

Torpey (1998) posits that states need to distinguish between “mutually exclusive” groups of citizens (and non-citizens) and regulate movement, particularly across external borders (245). For Torpey (1998), modern, territorial states: “rest... on distinctions between citizens/nationals and aliens” (240). The ability to differentiate between individuals, as well as to monopolize “the right to authorize and regulate movement” has not only been “intrinsic to the very construction of states” (Torpey 1998: 241) but in fact “contributes to constituting the very “state-ness” of states” (240). Tilly (1985) argues that “in the classic European state-making experience... [state-making] depend[s] on the state’s tendency to monopolize the concentrated means of coercion” (182, 181). Documentation allows for this, as identity- and travel-documents are codification “devices” which became the penultimate tools of administration upon which other means of “embracing” one’s citizens (e.g. through taxation) and excluding non-citizens (visa denials, detention, deportation) came to rely (Torpey 1998: 247, c.f. 241). To extend Weber’s (1919) notion of sovereignty to documentation, Weber (1919) would agree that monopoly over movement and presence, as well as over the power to name and exclude is central to state sovereignty (1).

Salter (2002:8) notes that passports are part of “the larger discourse of sovereign statehood...” (as cited in Wang 2004: 355). This is particularly so given, as Wang (2004) and Torpey (1998: 250) would agree, that document-mediated control of movement “within and across delimited spaces... affirm[s] states’ control over bounded territories and enhance[s] their embrace of populations.” In stressing the centrality of documentation both for the state and the individual, Wang (2004: 355) writes that “the passport... embodies the sovereignty of the issuing state... [and] signifies the citizenship... of the bearer.” For him, the passport is the “nexus [on which] sovereignty and citizenship imply each other” (Ibid). Documentation therefore allows for the state to tangibly and symbolically express and exercise power and sovereignty.

As Torpey (1998) rightly points out, “if... modern states... seek to monopolize the legitimate means of movement, they must have means to *implement* the constraints they enunciate” (244, emphasis in the original). The primary means for implementation are documents

(Ibid). In his evaluation of the Lesotho-Free State border, Coplan (2001) notes the existence of individuals he terms as having “indeterminate nationality” (82). For Coplan (2001), this was as a result of originally Lesotho citizens “carrying South African passports and identity documents” (82). While it is difficult to adequately respond to Coplan, given that it is unclear whether this was a result of fraud or of naturalization, the term “indeterminate nationality” is provocative and illustrates the fallibility of the system of documentation. In a world where nation-states are presented as “spatially discontinuous units” (Malkki 1992: 26), it is such ambiguities that the system of documentation seeks to eliminate, by making legible the belief that each individual can and should be “allocated” to a state in a way that is unchallengeable (Wade 2007).

The second function of documentation is the assignment to individuals a “unique and unambiguous” identity within the groups to which they are allocated (Torpey 1998: 239). It is the logic of this first function of documentation that the young woman with a man’s permit at the border defies. Understanding that she is of the group of individuals termed “Zimbabweans” who need written authorization to enter South Africa, she uses a permit assigned to another in her group. The South African Government authorized the entry of a Zimbabwean migrant, and she enters on that permission, never mind the disaggregation of individuals within that group. A Zimbabwean enters South Africa; what does it matter whether it is a Smith or a Jones, a Mr. or a Miss. If some migrants understand documentation’s function of differentiating between groups but have a different take on the second function of linking the permit to a specific individual in the group, this could lead to discrepancies in the use of documentation. Similarly, the reverse could occur with Zimbabwean migrants using Mozambican passports, having their legal names on the documents, respecting the first function of documentation, but bearing attestation to membership in a group other than that to which states assigns them.

Documentation in the Context of Migration

The use of documentation in migration is a fertile area to examine incongruities between the state’s perspective of documentation and that of individuals, particularly given the centrality of classification of individuals in the context of migration. Even though the logic in migration literature may be that documentation is a means of “implement[ing] the constraints [states] enunciate” (Torpey 1998: 244), this does not always necessarily play out in actuality.

Documentation is at the heart of migration and migration is at the heart of the re-conceptualisation and reconfiguration of the nation-state. Migrants’ co-opting of systems of identification becomes particularly significant when considered in light of documentation’s role in defining the nation-state (Klaaren and Rutinwa 2004: 13 as cited in Bakewell 2007: 5).

Migration literature which examines documentation shows both its importance and its contentious nature. Polzer's (2007) observations on the necessity of availing documentation to migrants are echoed in most policy recommendations on migration which call for the same. Studies have shown that migrants' vulnerability to exploitation and exclusion increases when they are denied access to documentation. Polzer (2005: 10) cites Reitzes and Crawhall (1999) as arguing that without documents, Mozambican would-be refugees "exist in a legal vacuum... and... are subject to arrest and deportation" as they are viewed as "prohibited persons." Yet, even when migrants have documents, this neither guarantees them access to social services (Polzer 2004) nor serves to protect them¹¹ from police harassment (Landau and Monson 2008; Landau 2005). Not only does documentation not always provide access, state actors themselves often have a contemptuous regard of it. In Johannesburg, "police often destroy or refuse to recognize work permits or refugee identity documents in order to justify arrests" (Landau and Monson 2008: 329-330).

While Landau and Monson's (2008) observations hint at the motives behind police officials' destruction of identity documents, their discussion leaves unaddressed the question of the philosophy on which the police base their motives. Often, studies which report similar actions by South African officials simply bracket such action under corruption (Landau 2005:1123; Sisulu et al. 2007; Landau and Haupt 2007), neglecting to examine what this treatment of documents says about the officials' perceptions of the documents and of the state (c.f. Vigneswaran (2008) who underscores intentionality on the part of police officers' interference in migrants' access to documentation)¹². It is one thing for a layman to discard a migrant's documents but another altogether for a uniformed officer of the state to destroy them. Thus, while the state may have a particular concept of the purpose, symbolism and value of documentation, this may not align with that of the individual. Considering that the actual document-mediated interface between state and (non)citizen occurs at the level of the individual, between individuals, an examination of documentation ought to be conducted at the level of the individual then examined with respect to the state.

¹¹ Consider Polzer's (2005: 10) account of the way in which the availing of documentation for Mozambicans in South Africa in 1993 actually increased the vulnerability of some of them, because of erroneous assumptions made by the state about migrants' desires and views. This case illustrates that it is possible for there to be a mismatch between the state's perspective and that of the individual, particularly where that individual is a migrant and the relationship is characterized by mistrust.

¹² Vigneswaran (2008: 17) posits that this can be attributed to "the obstructionist behaviour of DHA officials [which] is an expression of a discretionary institutional culture that has become defined by the objective of excluding undocumented migrants..." Thus, Vigneswaran takes the debate beyond officers' desire for financial gain, instead suggesting that their end is immigration control. However, this does not speak to the question of how officers' actions relate to their perception of documentation. There are many ways to "exclude undocumented migrants" that do not include destroying (possibly) state-issued documents. Besides, it is something of a misnomer to call document-bearing migrants "undocumented".

The destruction of documents recorded by Landau and Monson (2008) hints at a disjuncture between the state's perception of documentation and the individual's. On the one hand, documentation is a symbol of the state's authority over the regulation of movement; on the other, it is pieces of paper an officer can simply rip up. It is possible that officers destroy migrants' documents where they perceive them to be fraudulent, thereby reclaiming the state's authority usurped by the migrant by substituting a "real/official" authority for the "false" one. Where officers destroy authentic documents, it may be that they wish to assert themselves as the dominant authority – the living flesh representative of the state's power over the flimsy documentary representative (c.f. Bakewell and Biao's (2006) "paper tigers"). In so doing, the officer presents the state's right to revoke permission – a whirlwind of a state which can change the migrant's fate on a whim, taking back what it has given. This view is more tenable where the officer actually purports to act on behalf of the state, within authority that the state has bestowed upon him/her. Otherwise, like the migrant with fraudulent documents, the officer usurps the state's authority over monopoly over the legitimate use of coercion.¹³ The complexities of arrogation of state authority and what it represents are discussed in greater depth later in the paper. Note though that the ceding of authority is complex, particularly in Johannesburg, where it may be a case of the abuse of discretion by street level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1983), or semi-authorized violation by quasi-state agents operating within a state of exception (Landau 2005), though this relies on an assumption that the state had control to begin with, in order that it may be able to cede it.¹⁴ Landau (2005: 5) posits that there exists a state of exception around documents, where "the state authorises its agents to act outside the law in an anomalous zone where they retain the power of law, but are not constrained by it" (citing Agamben 2005). The matter of who has the right to regulate belonging – private individuals or state the machinery – raises the question of to whom the state actually belongs.¹⁵ Whether officials represent the state or rebel against it, the act of destroying documentation¹⁶ has implications for the manner in which individuals (both state officials and migrants) conceive of documents and of a possible mismatch between their views as individuals and those of the nation-state.

¹³ Whether in that migrant-officer interaction, one is an officer first or a citizen is debatable. Several studies have shown the complexity of the question of who has the right to regulate belonging, and who actually controls it in practice. For Southern African examples, see Bakewell 2007; Landau and Monson 2008; Misago 2005; Nyamnjoh 2002; Polzer 2005; along with literature on the May 2008 xenophobic violence.

¹⁴ Thanks to Ingrid Palmay for raising the question of whether the state ever had control to begin with.

¹⁵ The Preamble to the South African Constitution (1996) proclaims a belief that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it." Xenophobic sentiments and actions witnessed in post-Apartheid South Africa imply that this constitutional view is not universally held, further hinting at a mismatch between the state's ideologies and the people's sentiments.

¹⁶ I recognize that this assertion depends on a Weberian view of humans as rational beings. In order to make any sort of claim about human action, there needs to be that presupposition. For a discussion on rationality, see Weber (1921) and Haberman (1884).

The examination of the perception of identity documents from the individual's perspective allows for consideration of the views of the "identified". The young lady at the Zimbabwe/South Africa border preferred to present what was obviously someone else's permit rather than not present anything at all. What does this signify about her understanding of documentation, and of the relationship between IDs and actual identity? If documentation is seen as one's guarantor of some measure of protection – that is, if it is seen as a bulletproof vest – how does one's perception of the system of documentation change when a police officer rips up the document, bringing the migrant face-to-face with the fact that the vest is made of paper?

Vasta (2006) and Scheiden (2009) both present a picture of the pragmatic migrant, who engages with notions of legality and citizenship. Vasta (2006) highlights an interesting contradiction where migrants, in an effort to retain and remain in "legal" status, undertake illegal activities, such that their contravention of the system actually stems from their desire to adhere to the law. Vasta (2006) notes that immigrants would strive to "regularize" their statuses, even through illegal means, a process she terms "irregular formality," that is, "the attempt to regularize one's status within the constraints of irregular immigration and labour market status" (2006: 7; c.f. Polzer 2008: 483).

So central are documents that Landau (2005: 14) believes the police's destruction of migration documents "... effectively denies non-nationals a legal identity, making them non-people in the state's eyes."¹⁷ For Landau, one is a "person" in the state's eyes if one is a person on paper. That is, that the identity the state recognises is that which is codified/recorded on paper.

Given the centrality of documentation in migration, as well as in the symbolism, projection and propagation of state power, there is need to develop a more pragmatic approach to the study of documentation. This is particularly so considering the possible mismatch between the state's perception of documentation and those of individuals, not least among whom are non-citizens. There is need for the examination of this individual-state interface to consider the manner in which documentation allows for the physical representation of the terms of relation between the individual and the state, exploring the relationship (or lack thereof) between identity documents and identity, from the perspective of the "identified," as well as how a tool for state control becomes the locus of resistance; and how resistance works to challenge and reconfigure the system itself. Consider Landau and Monson's (2008: 319) observation that as migrants "...move through space ostensibly regulated by the state [they] ... transform it..." and how "such behaviours... consistently fragment and destabilize localized systems of authority and power." A comprehensive examination of the destabilization of these systems necessarily involves a

¹⁷ Compare with George Orwell's (1949) description of how the (fictional) Government of Oceania could render one an "un-person" by destroying all record of that person's existence.

reconceptualisation of who it is the nation-state belongs to and how membership is negotiated. Part of this negotiation is the meanings document bearers themselves attach to identity documents. What exactly is it that is being identified? To whom does the document (read: right to control movement) belong? What are the implications of discrepancies between the state's view of documentation and those of the document bearer?

Gordillo (2006: 173) suggests that documents like passports are "...worthless without the social relations that produce them and give meaning to them as symbols of something else. The power that people invest in those documents lies there, in those relations and conventions, rather than in the physical materiality" (as cited in Bakewell 2007: 20). Gordillo's assertion may hold in states where the destruction of a document does not result in migrants becoming, as Landau puts it, "non-people" in the state's eyes (2005: 14). Yet, in Johannesburg, this is not always the case. Additionally, when documentation is possessed and used outside of the "relations and conventions" within which it finds its validity and symbolic value, it has implications for the social contract and the nation-state more broadly. Compelling though Gordillo's argument may be, it is necessary to examine the ruptures that occur when documents are used outside of or at cross-purposes with the "social relations" Gordillo claims "give meaning to them." When the assumptions behind the value of documentation are challenged, do documents really become "worthless," and what do they come to symbolise?

RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

When documentation is studied in developing countries, studies are largely policy-driven, presenting a utilitarian perspective of documentation concerned with migrant access to social services, often examining the absence of documentation (Polzer 2007; Campbell 2005). This has resulted in migration studies in Johannesburg narrowing in on low-income migrants in densely populated residential areas, limiting the discussion on migrant needs, and presenting only one aspect of the complexity of migration.

Yet, there is a dearth of literature on the perceptions attached to documentation by individuals, especially migrants. The few studies that consider the socio-political implications of documentation focus on western nations, where the state machinery is strong, documentation is almost inescapable, and the rights discourse is particularly liberal democratic (Higgins and Leps 1998; Böcker 2002; Vasta 2006; Engbersen et al. 1999; Guild 2007). Migration studies in non-Western settings is still emerging as an academic discipline. Even as literature strives to effect positive social change, there is need to engage with and develop migration theory (Landau and Jacobsen 2003).

Turton's (1996) assertion that "research into others' suffering can only be justified if alleviating that suffering" (as cited in Landau and Jacobsen 2003: 186) is compelling. Yet, this exhortation appears to connote inseparability between migration and suffering. While migrants often undergo great suffering, persistently portraying elements of their suffering without considering the strategies they employ in response denies certain elements of their agency. While presenting *oneself* as a victim may be a strategy for negotiating rights (Polzer, pers. comm.), when it is academia that consistently presents migrants in this way, it can promote the view that the only legitimate stance by which a migrant rights can be claimed is from the migrant-as-victim stance. As Shireen Ally (2009) points out, academia's portrayal of the heroic victim is problematic in migration studies when it requires that the migrant be a victim before s/he can be a hero, and the migrant becomes a hero because s/he is a victim (pers. comm.). The image of the "migrant victim" is troubling in that it can lead to the construction of a very particular image of "the true victim migrant" when it becomes the only image of migrants presented.

Migration literature's emphasis on effecting policy change is unsurprising, given the inadequacy of migration policy and the failings of African states in providing services and ensuring protection not only to foreigners but also to their own nationals. However, social science research has what Landau and Jacobsen (2003: 185) call a "dual imperative" to be both "academically sound and policy relevant." Even as research is problematic if academic rigour is compromised for the sake of policy (Landau and Jacobsen 2003), a narrow construction of migration research as merely a vehicle for policy change is also problematic.

While documentation and membership studies have been conducted in rural areas or borderlands, where communities are described as being somewhat "beyond" the reach of the state (Bakewell 2007); migration is seen more as local-local movement between related peoples (Polzer 2004); and rights to be present and to participate are determined largely by local communities without recourse to material symbols of belonging like documents (Bakewell 2007; Misago 2005; Polzer 2004), non-Western urban settings where the state machinery is stronger, like Johannesburg, are understudied.

Furthermore, the migrant perspective often goes unstudied. Even FitzGerald and Cuesta-Leiva's (1997) attempt at computing an empirical value for passports fails to consider the perceptions of document bearers from a socio-political perspective. For example, Misago (2005: 6) acknowledges the "innovative, if occasionally illegal strategies" migrants employ in order to survive in Johannesburg, and how many of these strategies often "at least partially exist outside of or in contravention to laws and regulation." Misago notes that many of these strategies involve documentation, yet he does not engage with migrants' perspectives on these tools which they modify, nor does he consider the implications of such actions on the nation-state.

Similarly, when Landau and Monson (2008) examine extra-legal practices in South Africa, their focus is on the actions of state officials like the police, such that the “reshaping of networks of corruption” (328) is done by state officials. In effect, theirs is an account of the ways in which state representatives co-opt the law and subvert the system. Even in presenting the scenario where SA police officials arrest migrants and release them in exchange for bribes, it is through the lens of the police that Landau and Monson (2008) examine this. It is the officials who “*provide* undocumented migrants with the chance effectively to purchase territorial access” (Landau and Monson 2008: 330, emphasis added) and not migrants who stake a claim to territorial access.

Bakewell (2007: 17) is one of the few to engage with migrant views. Locating his study in rural borderlands, where the state machinery is weak and people live “away from the centre of state power,” Bakewell (2007: 12) notes that among the Angolan turned Zambian migrants he spoke to, there was “no obvious link between a person’s sense of national identity and the papers that they hold.” While Bakewell’s study explores the affective elements of citizenship and identity, his discussion does not engage with the greater implications of migrants’ perceptions, nor does it consider migrants’ experience of multiple states.

Examining migrants’ perspectives is particularly important in so far as they help contextualise migrants’ actions in response to state attempts to control their presence and movement. Landau and Monson (2008: 335) stress the need to broaden the area of focus in migration studies. They caution that agentive practices “remain invisible if we solely focus on state actors, laws and border control” (Ibid). This is particularly significant not only for its recognition of migrants’ agency, but also because migrants’ co-option of state systems and their resistance of state control, if studied, has the potential to “shift how we understand sovereignty as practice” (Ibid).

Even as the “interaction of migration with the embodied state... has stimulated interesting mutations in what are ostensibly state practices” (Landau and Monson (2008: 334), so it has also affected the manner in which the nation-state, symbolism, and state control ought to be conceptualised. Migration literature needs to go beyond the tendency to examine such practices solely as emerging from within the state apparatus. Sensitive study that neither vilifies migrants (e.g. for being “fraudsters”) ¹⁸ nor propagates the discourse of victimisation allows for the recognition of migrants as pragmatic actors, whose actions, as Misago (2005: 2) records, “... are generating new ...political formations” (Misago 2005: 2). Migrants become what Haste (2004: 425) terms “active beings” involved in the construction of meaning. Additionally, an approach

¹⁸ This is particularly crucial considering, as Ingrid Palmay put it, “people live or die by those documents” (Pers. comm.).

which privileges a view “from below” in migration studies, has as a consequence “the centrality of agency by policy target groups... in creatively adapting to, rather than merely accepting, policy-driven constraints” (Polzer 2005: 4).

There is also need to examine the manner in which documentation acts as a locus of resistance and transformation. This is critical particularly since it is intended by the state as a means of control. As Landau and Monson (2008: 335) note, documentation can be an arena in which migrants “claim rights to space from which the state would formally exclude them – for instance by falsely claiming refugee status or doing so on a basis not recognized by the state....”

In reality, the state merely *attempts* at regulating access to documentation and sometimes not even that. Polzer’s (2004) account of residents of Bushbuckridge shows that it was conceivable that people could go through their lives without identification documents. This is largely because state-erected barriers (like policing) aside, obtaining documentation is within the purview of the individual. While it is the state that produces and issues documents, it is up to the migrant to apply for, collect and use them. By not doing so, migrants are able to circumvent state control¹⁹ (see Polzer 2008).

The role of documentation is different for residents of Johannesburg though, where informal forms of identification are not as acceptable as they are in places like Bushbuckridge (see Polzer 2004; Bakewell 2007). Yet, even in Johannesburg, where state’s efforts at ensuring compliance with documentation regulations are less escapable (Landau 2005: 16-18), migrants are still sometimes able to elude policing and remain outside the state’s system of documentation. Kihato and Landau (2006: 9, 12) give an elaborate account of migrants’ creative ways of evading state control and becoming “invisible” to the police, either remaining without documentation altogether or obtaining fraudulent documents, either way, navigating the system in spite of the state.²⁰

¹⁹ One could object to their assertion however, pointing out that avoiding documentation does not translate into circumventing state control. Rather, state control is exerted perhaps even more so in the absence of documents than it is when one has them, as one’s movement is influenced by a need to evade state agents and an inability to access state services. However, this reasoning while valid can be applied to all manner of resistance – that even in resisting, one is controlled by virtue of their need to resist.

²⁰ Vidal (2008) discusses Mozambicans in Johannesburg’s attempts to become “invisible” through efforts at a micro-level, attempting to evade detection by the local population more so than the state.

Historical Context of Movement and Access Control in Zimbabwe and South Africa

A study of documentation among Zimbabweans in South Africa necessitates a review of some of the historical specificities of the two countries with respect to (i) the state's imposition of labels/identities and (ii) the control of movement through documents.²¹ Central in South Africa's legislative history was the passing of the 1950 Population Registration Act, through which the state defined four racial categories into which it then required each person to be classified. One was "black" because the state said they were. The racial labels ascribed by the state were then inscribed in documents people were required to carry. Laws restricting movement and requiring the use of permits to effect racial segregation and "population control" were enacted as early as 1857.²² In 1923, the Native Urban Areas Act was passed, requiring black men in urban areas to carry passes indicating their "identities" and permission to be present. Perhaps the most significant legislation in the control of movement was the 1952 Natives (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act, which extended the requirement to carry "pass books" to all black people over 16. In these "reference books," as the legislation term them, were records of who a person was (meant to be seen as), where they could go, and what they could do – much like modern day visa-endorsed passports that non-nationals are required to carry in post-Apartheid South Africa, as required by the Aliens Control Act (1991).

Zimbabwe's history of repressive laws is similarly littered with state attempts to control presence and movement, as well as to impose identities (see Muzondidya 2002). Southern Rhodesia's Land Apportionment Act (1930) and Native Land Husbandry Act (1952) were intended to regulate the allocation and use of as well as access to land [read: space], with the former described by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 39) as having "legally institute[ed] racial segregation." From as early as 1902, Southern Rhodesia passed laws requiring "male Africans over 14 to register and carry the situpa [ID] at all times" (Austin 1975: 13). Two years later, another law was passed rendering it illegal for black people to live in urban areas except in "locations" unless they were "domestic servants" (Ibid). The 1936 Native Registration Act introduced a second pass to be borne by black men in the cities, in addition to their situpas (Austin 1975: 14). Ten years later, the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act (1946) was passed, extending the document requirement to women and allowing for the expulsion of unemployed people from towns (Austin 1975: 13). Through such laws, documentation-mediated systems of movement control were established, the 1946 Urban Areas

²¹ A major part of the control of movement was residential segregation, which was intensified in the early 1950s through a flurry of laws including the Group Areas Act (1950); the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act (1951), the Bantu Authorities Act (1951), and the Natives Law Amendment Act (1952).

²² The Kaffir Pass Act was passed in 1857 preventing Xhosa people from entering the Cape except to work (O'Malley, n. d.)

Act cementing not only the notion that one needed a piece of paper to attest to one's right to be present, but also that one's reasons for being present needed to be vetted by the state – people and activities being classified as “legitimate” and “illegitimate.”

Gussman (1953) records that in colonial Southern Rhodesia, “up to as many as fourteen different documents may be required by a [black] man leading a normal life in town. He requires a pass to have his wife in town and another for his children; his visitors must obtain a certificate if they spend the night with him, and he requires a permit to seek work or to walk in the European part of the cities... a receipt for the watch they wear or the parcel they carry as police are liable to stop and question them...” (139).

Granted, the post-colonial state with “democratically” elected officials operating under “majority rule” may appear quite distanced from the colonial regimes of Zimbabwe and South Africa, but the histories of the two countries with respect to state oppression and popular resistance form part of the context within which current individual-state interactions occur. Furthermore, neither country appears to have made a completely “clean break” from its colonial state systems. Independence notwithstanding, Muzondidya (2009: 176) records of post-colonial Zimbabwe that as early as the 1980s, “[t]here was a strong continuity with the Rhodesian state, perpetuated through the application of... [Rhodesia's] repressive laws...” As for South Africa, the continuity in the letter and enforcement of movement control laws from Apartheid is not only well documented (see Crush 1999; Peberdy 2001), but is not lost on migrants themselves, as will be seen in the discussion section of this report.

Why from the Migrant's Perspective?

In the examination of the perspective of the individual in the document-mediated interaction between the individual and the state, studying the views of non-citizens in particular can be illuminating because of their condition as non-citizens. Given that “... regimes of power and of knowledge create points of resistance” (Foucault 1982, as cited in Vasta 2006), migrants are particularly interesting in that they are a population whose survival sometimes hinges on resisting precisely in the areas where the state would control them.²³

The rights of non-nationals (excluding bona fide asylum seekers and refugees), including the right to documentation, are neither automatic in a host state nor inalienable.²⁴ Rather, rights

²³ While this may seem like a moderately anarchist characterisation of the individual as an unwilling subjugate who views state control as something to be forever resisted, it is not wholly inappropriate considering the dubious nature of migrants' position in the social contract scheme, and the recentness of Southern Africans' resistance of oppressive government. However, it is important to bear in mind that the view of the ever antagonistic migrant can quickly become xenophobic.

²⁴ Even where refugees and asylum seekers are legally guaranteed rights to documentation and certain privileges (e.g. in South Africa, as provided by the Refugee Act (1998)), de jure rights do not always translate into

and access to rights must forever be negotiated (often with an unwilling state).²⁵ In that interaction, documentation becomes a point where migrant and state meet, rendering it a locus of resistance. Whether by “legitimate”, state-sanctioned means (like applying for permits), or through “illegitimate”, non-state-sanctioned channels (bribing state officials, obtaining documents under false pretences), migrants either work the system or work around it.

Sartre (1961) would probably agree that like that of the “native” during colonial times, “the condition of [migrant] is a nervous condition.” Ironically, the post-Apartheid foreigner has moved to take the place of the Apartheid era black “native” in the South African hierarchy, while the “native” takes the place of Fanon’s “coloniser.” In South Africa, when the label “foreigner” is coupled with “black” and “poor,” it often translates to the pejorative moniker “Kwerekwere” (Mathers and Landau 2007; Nyamnjoh 2002). Thus, the negotiation of access is done, not by bearers of human rights, but by so called “Makwerekwere,” whose rights are “vulnerable to question and revision by the locals” (Nyamnjoh (2002: 767). Ironically, rights which are supposedly signified on paper are not in fact indelible. It is no wonder Bakewell and Biao (2006) asks whether documents are “paper tigers,” bearing the image of power yet impotent in reality.

Whether non-citizens are included in the social contract has been highly contested in political science, given that the “individuals” Rousseau refers to are actually “citizens” of the state to which they are bound. Some scholars have expanded on Rousseau’s theory to present a broader construction of “citizenship” which includes nominal citizenship, incorporating those not defined as “formal citizens” (see Marshall 1964, Raskin 1993).²⁶ Whether or not non-citizens are part of the social contract, their interaction with the state is also mediated by documentation which is specific in the rights and privileges it affords (visas, refugee booklets, residence permits, etc).

The migrant interacts with the host state as a non-citizen, while bearing the memory of having interacted with another state as a citizen. It is likely that the non-citizen’s perception of documentation, state control and the very nation-state itself may be both mediated by their condition as a non-citizen and informed by their experience of another state. Migrants move between two (or more) state-individual interactions where the rights/obligations relationships may differ. In addition, Zhang (2004) observes that “the [very] experience of diaspora produces a

concrete benefits. See Klaaren and Ramji (2001) for an account of ways in which protection is obviated through delays in the processing of claims as well as other faults in the asylum and immigration system in South Africa.

²⁵ The state in both South Africa and Zimbabwe earned a reputation for hostility during colonial times, the memory of which may still inform Zimbabweans’ perceptions of either or both states. The colonial governments of both countries instituted repressive laws restricting the movement of black locals (both pass laws and land apportionment laws). Such elements may have produced a view of the state not only as hostile, but as an obstacle instead of facilitator. Given perpetually unjust laws, skirting state control may not only have been acceptable but taken for granted, pervasive, permissible and laudable. The decline in democracy in post-colonial Zimbabwe may have resulted in a continuation of these sentiments.

shift in perspective... through which different cultural temporalities are re-configured against the spatial dislocation..." Foreign nationals are at once non-nationals in one land and nationals in another.²⁷

When the land in which they are non-nationals is South Africa, low-income black migrants are not simply "aliens," they are so called "Makwerekwere." They are bearers of documentation that marks²⁸ them as "not of this place."²⁹ Their "permission" slips, when they have them, have expiration dates. Non-nationals are constantly moving towards expiration dates, whether literally as marked in their passports or as recorded on the Until-Caught-And-Deported Calendar.

POPULATION UNDER STUDY

The study focuses on Zimbabwean migrants resident in Johannesburg. I recognize Polzer's (2004) cautionary note, that categories like "refugee" and "Mozambican" (or in this case, "migrant" and "Zimbabwean") can be "counter-productive at the local level," and that limiting research to the experience of those in the categories is problematic when the "vulnerability, marginality, and displacement of "locals" [are only seen] as context factors instead of the very content of local (two-way) integration" (8-9). This is particularly key in examining the conditions under which people live, especially as studies have shown that the experiences of nationals and non-nationals are similar when it comes to accessing social services, housing and employment (Wits ACS, 2006). However, as this inquiry is specifically about documentation, nationality is at the heart of the issue. Additionally, non-nationals have the unique quality of interacting both with their own states (as citizens) and with a foreign state (often as non-citizens). This allows for the construction and expression of meaning both from the condition and perspective of a citizen and of a non-citizen, allowing them to be their own "control" group, in the broadest application of the term.

Zimbabweans in particular are interesting for three reasons. Firstly, they are the targets of DHA's proposed Special Dispensation Permits. While the permits do not appear to have started

²⁶ References are courtesy of Tienda (2002: 588) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/3180822.pdf>

²⁷ Not all migrants are in this condition and not all the time. For example, stateless people may not be nationals of any land, though they may at some point have been privy to this experience.

²⁸ Consider Waugh's (1982) discussion of "marking." Though Waugh's (1982) analysis is intended for the examination of semiotic items, it can be mapped onto the labeling of "insiders" and "outsiders" – "citizens" and "aliens." In this case, there is a dual system of marking – by race and by nationality. Low-income black non-South Africans are doubly marked.

²⁹ While all non-permanent resident non-citizens bear documents with "expiration dates," the significance of this is greater for low income black foreigners who are constantly reminded of the temporariness of their statuses by state officials who stop them for spot-checks, demanding to see their passports. It is the greater likelihood of harassment, detention and deportation that compounds the condition of "alien."

being issued at the time of the writing of this paper, there has been a change in the South African Government's approach to regulating Zimbabwean migration, both in terms of policy and implementation, as was signalled by the proposal of Special Dispensation Permits. As individuals whose "documented" rights to movement have recently changed, they present a case for examining the relationship between policy and perception, particularly during a period of transition. Secondly, their colonial history involves an experience of pass laws, and their history of struggle against the state machinery renders them particularly interesting. Thirdly, they were among the most targeted groups of xenophobia in South Africa. This is also the case in Botswana, where Nyamnjoh (2002: 767) describes the existence of four main categories of foreigners, among which all black foreigners are seen to fall into the fourth and lowest category, upon which the derogatory label "Makwerekwere" is applied. This group's negotiation of access occurs under such conditions. Nyamnjoh (2002: 767) notes that "the residence and immigrant status of Makwerekwere are most vulnerable to question and revision by the locals... [a]nd among Makwerekwere, Zimbabweans are those whose presence is most contested and most devalued by locals who perceive them as "monsters..."³⁰ Whether Zimbabweans have also attained the status of "monsters" over black foreigners of other nationalities in South Africa is uncertain. However, they are among the main targets of xenophobic sentiments and actions (see Landau and Monson 2008), that is, among the most "other". Yet, this is contrasted against the quasi-proximity brought about by the shared history between Zimbabwe and South Africa, the linguistic ties, and the geographical proximity (and therefore ease of access) between the two countries. The interplay between distancing and proximising factors, the "us-ing" and "othering" elements, may affect their perception of the manner in which their host country views them, and similarly their attitudes towards documents.

³⁰ Nyamnjoh (2002) takes "monster" reference from: S. Chimururi, 'The Agony of Being a Zimbabwean', Mmegi, 27 April 2001.

This study is informed by post-positivist, relativist commitments to examining the perspectives of individuals, and privileging their views of the world. While also adopting the constructivist recognition that meaning is created, and that there are multiple realities (Schwandt 1994, as cited in Ponterotto 2005: 129), it does not espouse the notion that all positions are necessarily “valid.” Rather, it recognises that meaning is informed by history, context and experience, where “the meaning of experience and behaviour [is viewed]... in context, and in its full complexity” (Robson 2002: 25, referencing Fletcher (1996) and Steinmetz (1998)). This is apt as the study’s central purpose is to explore meaning as constructed and attached at the level of the individual. Ponterotto (2005: 129) notes that one of the core elements of relativist approaches is the recognition that the researcher is not wholly removed from the process of constructing and conveying knowledge. Rather, the investigator and investigated co-construct meaning (Ponterotto 2005: 129). Relativist theoretical frameworks underline as an objective understanding “the lived experiences... from the point of view of those who live it day to day” (Ponterotto 2005: 129 citing Schwandt 1994, 2000). This hermeneutic perspective rejects the constructivist belief that there is no truth independent of interpretation, holding rather that “our understandings of reality are influenced by what happens in the world” (Liamputtong and Ezzy 1999: 28) and those understandings can only be garnered from the individuals who experience the world.

Going beyond the limiting narrative of victimisation commonly espoused in migration literature, this study seeks a more holistic view of migration, regarding the migrant as what Mead (1934) terms a “pragmatic self”: an agentic being who acts upon the world even as it acts on him/her.

Scope of the Study

The study limited itself to Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg, with the data collection and analysis period spanning four months. Because the study sought diversity of experience, respondents were selected from across racial, “ethnic”, linguistic and socio-economic lines. Similarly, variety of employment, educational and migration experience was sought. The three major exclusion areas were ability to consent; linguistic ability; and citizenship. Only people able to give informed consent unassisted were included because anonymity and confidentiality are reduced and the observer effect is aggravated by the presence of a third party such as a parent. The same is true about a translator. Hence, only people comfortable in English and/or Shona were interviewed because of the researcher’s linguistic (in)ability.

All of the participants self-identified as Zimbabwean, save for one South African woman who was not officially part of the study group but whose account proved compelling and has therefore been included in this report. At the conceptualisation of the project, it was intended that only migrants who were legally Zimbabwean citizens would be included.³¹ However, I realised during the course of my investigation that this would necessarily exclude all those who once had Zimbabwean citizenship and had renounced it. Yet, such individuals would deeply enrich the study. To opt out of Zimbabwean citizenship requires formally renouncing it and actively taking up a new citizenship, a process that is facilitated by and represented in documentation. The same is true for assuming Zimbabwean citizenship and renouncing some other citizenship. All but one of the official respondents had Zimbabwean citizenship, the exception having taken up South African citizenship while retaining Zimbabwean permanent residence and strongly self-identifying as Zimbabwean.

The study group consisted of seventeen respondents: twelve female and five male, with the majority of respondents aged between 23 and 39. All the respondents’ reasons for migrating to South Africa were either to study (5) or to work (10), except for one woman who had come to join her family and another who engaged in cross-border trading. Of those who had not migrated to study, two were unemployed but actively seeking work; the rest who had jobs worked in the formal sector (mostly as professionals) except for one woman who was a live-in domestic worker.

³¹ For the purposes of this study, if one was either a Zimbabwean citizen at the time of the study or was one at some point during their life, where they were considered as having or having had “Zimbabwean citizenship,” given that at some point they met the (current) Zimbabwean constitutional requirements for citizenship, even if they would not have been one under previous versions of the Constitution (see Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act (Act No. 23 of 1984 as amended by Act No. 7 of 1990, Chapter. 4:01: <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/population/zimbabwe/citizenship.htm>)

Thirteen of the seventeen respondents had some higher education, with nine having completed at least one college degree. The majority of respondents had been resident in Johannesburg for one to three years, and all seventeen indicated that they had family in Zimbabwe and that they travelled frequently between Zimbabwe and South Africa (i.e. at least once a year). Five respondents were married (two males, three females), and six had children (one of the males, five of the females). There was one white and sixteen black respondents. While the black respondents were from different parts of Zimbabwe and spoke different languages, primarily Shona and Ndebele, and different dialects of Shona (ChiNda, ChiZezuru, ChiKaranga), only one of the respondents expressed any strong connections with a collective identity other than their nationality, the exception self-identifying as Ndebele.

Collecting Data

Sources of Data

The initial conceptualisation of this project drew on insights gathered from semi-participant observation in Johannesburg and Beitbridge, as well as desktop research. Media coverage of Zimbabwean issues and issues pertaining to migration in South Africa were useful as context-building sources, both in form of news broadcasts on television and newspaper articles over the year that the researcher was resident in Johannesburg, though these are not drawn on directly in this report. The same is true of both Zimbabwean and South African policy documents on migration, which were reviewed cursorily, as supplementary, supporting, and comparison background information.

While some of the backgrounding data mentioned above was gathered through quantitative means, this study approach was qualitative, as this was the most fitting lens through which to examine perceptions. Ambert et al. (1995: 880) maintain that qualitative research is best suited for studies that do not hope for generalisability, such as this study, but rather “in-depth, intimate information... [which focuses] on how and why people behave, think and make meaning as they do...”

Thus, the main source of data was fieldwork conducted by the researcher. The main investigative tool was open, in-depth interviews of Zimbabwean migrants, which were conducted face-to-face. The study drew on the principles of ethnographic fieldwork which espouse observation of everyday interactions and being embedded in the study area. During the course of the four months during which interviews were conducted, it became clear just how central the use of observatory methods was both for facilitating the process of fashioning an interview guide and

for developing an eye for when best to conduct interviews. Interviews alone without participant observation would probably not have been as successful an investigative method.

Sampling: Finding the People

Two sampling techniques were used to identify respondents: snowball sampling, and convenience/spot-sampling. With snowballing, potential participants were found through referrals. This form of purposive sampling was suited for this study in that it allows for working with an “underground” population (Bernard 1988: 98 as cited in Liamputtong and Ezzy 1999: 48). Zimbabwean migrants are anything but few in Johannesburg, and they are a somewhat visible group, especially Shona-speaking Zimbabweans who “betray” themselves with a single word, and Shona is readily discernable to the researcher as I have spoken it all my life. However, my hope was to include among my respondents migrants who had contravened immigration laws. During the planning of the study, I had only anticipated the fraudulent obtaining and/or use of documents as “underground” activities. However, in carrying out fieldwork, it became evident that I had overlooked the bribing of state officials as an activity that would also drive respondents and responses “underground.” In light of this, identifying migrants was greatly facilitated by the network nature of snowball sampling, where the referral system also assisted with the initial stages of trust-building. This was illustrated by one interview in particular where the respondent was notably reticent about divulging information that could potentially land them in trouble, despite my assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. While there is a host of possible factors that probably intermingled to bring about the respondent’s reticence, it is likely that the trust-building process was infirm. Had the respondent been selected through a referral method, perhaps they would have felt more confident about openly disclosing, as the fact of there being no relationship between the respondent and the interviewer can be somewhat compensated for by a respondent having been referred by a trusted party.

The study bore in mind Liamputtong and Ezzy’s (1999: 48) caution that since snowballing pools from social networks, it may result in a sample with distinctive characteristics. Snowballing may also rapidly lead to redundancy and a deceptive appearance of similarity/uniformity between respondents largely as it involves interviewing people from within the same network. This can be particularly problematic when a study includes a small number of participants. However, people are often members of several networks that branch out in many different directions, only a few of which are closed networks. To guard against the possibility of sampling within a small closed system, potential respondents were identified from multiple “snowballs.” Perhaps the main strategy employed to counteract the above mentioned potential shortcomings of snowballing and sampling through referrals was that for potential respondents

identified through referrals, those who referred or identified them were themselves not interviewed.

The second means through which respondents were identified is what I have termed here: “spot”-sampling, where respondents were identified by the researcher during the course of conducting participant observation. Here, it was necessary for the researcher to invest time into establishing a loose relationship with the potential respondent in order to build trust and lay the groundwork for in-depth interviews.

Interviewing as a Methodology

Interviews are not without limitations, the bulk of which are associated with methodologies that rely on self-reporting. A concern going into the study was that what it would learn would be limited to some extent by participants’ ability to express themselves, which was of particular significance given the nature and purpose of the study. To minimise this, interviews were conducted in the participant’s language of choice, where it was explained to participants that they ought to feel free to use whatever language they wished and to feel free to switch languages if they so desired. This was done both overtly, through an outright invitation to enjoy freedom of language selection, and covertly, with the interviewer deliberately code-switching during the conversations before the interview, as well as during the introductory portions of the actual interview themselves (up to and including the questions on biographical data). Questions were phrased simply and succinctly (see Appendix B for sample interview questions), and the interviewer kept a close eye out for quizzical expressions, rephrasing questions where necessary.

Another shortfall associated with self-reporting is that people tend to represent themselves positively, omitting information that would cast what could be seen as a negative light on them. This was particularly pertinent in this study, given that conversations centred on documentation, the perceptions of which I believed are closely tied to its acquisition. However, this element of self-reporting became a positive attribute to interviewing as a methodology, as respondents’ surprising willingness to be forthcoming with regards to seemingly unfavourable activities became a point of analysis. The same is true of the manner in which self-reporting allowed for a clear expression/conveyance of migrants’ attitudes towards and perceptions of what is and is not favourable, what is and is not “immoral,” what is and is not acceptable, as expressed in the presentation of their narratives.

Thus, despite some of the commonly cited limitations of interviewing, self-reporting remained the best tool for this study, given that the primary objective was to ascertain what meanings individuals attach to documentation, with special emphasis on the manner in which they – migrants themselves – express those sentiments. Therefore, other factors often seen as

limitations of self-reporting, such as subjectivity, were in fact welcome in this study, as the emphasis was on the way individuals perceive symbols and express their perceptions.

The interviewer was careful to ensure that discussions did not carry undertones of a moralising discourse on ethics and legality. To encourage candidness, the establishment of rapport and the building of trust between the respondents and the researcher were key, as was conducting interviews in places conducive to privacy. This was also helped by the fact that translators and interpreters were not used (Mackenzie et al. 2007; 3045). Consider Volosinov and Matejka's (1929) assertion that "meaning is the effect of interaction between speaker and listener..." and does not simply lie within words independent of that dialogic interaction (103).

Group Discussion

While it was intended that a focus group discussion be held towards the end of the fieldwork process, in order to triangulate data, one such formal session was not held. Instead, a relatively unplanned mini-focus group discussion "generated" itself while the interviewer was attending a social event in Berea, to which she had been invited by chance and only knew the host and none of the other attendees, and was asked what she was studying in college. When she explained what her research area was, a group of four Zimbabweans expressed interest in participating. After the researcher explained issues of confidentiality, explained the study in detail, and obtained consent to record and use material from the discussion, a focus group discussion was held, with the researcher facilitating the discussion. The conversation occurred somewhat organically, was held in a kitchen, and was between people who were familiar with each other, such that the researcher was the only stranger.

The group discussion presented an opportunity to collect data in a more direct way than observation, by allowing for the asking of questions, though in a somewhat more organic way than interviews. That which is said in a one-on-one interview may differ from what comes out in a group discussion because of the influence of audience, decreased level of privacy and possible changes in the perception of shared history, shared beliefs, and commonality. During a communicative interaction, the audience is a major factor in determining what is said and what is not (note Grice's (1975) theory on communicative intentions). Expanding on Searle's (1990) notion on the cooperative nature of communication, Fussell and Kreuz (1998) note that: "...communicative intentions are generated by collaborative interaction between speaker and hearer." This interaction changes depending on who makes up the audience. In a group discussion, there are other members of the immediate audience besides the interviewer and interviewee. Similarly, meaning is constructed both at an individual (private) and group (public) level, and the expression of those meanings occurs at both levels. Thus, a group discussion

provided an opportunity to gather comparative data to allow for triangulation both of sources and of methods.

Reflexivity: “Insider” or “Outsider” Researcher?

Daniel (1996), in describing Clifford Geertz’s interpretive anthropological style, notes that in Geertz’s writings, culture became dialogic; that is, not a given but something “co-created anew by anthropologist and informer” (198). In this co-creation of knowledge and of meaning, it becomes critical to reflect on the particularities on a researcher. This is especially so considering Holmes’ (1992) claim that social distance, status and the function or goal of the interaction affect the product of the interaction (29, 30). “Social distance” is a subjective quality that is highly variable depending on the interaction. Tied in with it are notions of power (and with that, class) and “insider/outsiderness.”

Migrants are often seen as a vulnerable group, research among whom can embody hierarchical structures wherein the interviewer is cast as being in a position of authority. This is particularly true where there are racial, nationality, linguistic, educational, and “class” differences between the researcher and the informants.

Perceptions of power tie in to a broader debate on distance, and whether one is allowed into the “inner circle,” where distance can be seen as enabling or hindering access not only into a community but to people’s thoughts. Distance not only pertains to perceptions of a researcher but also to his/her ability to be an objective observer. At least, this is a concern raised about “native anthropology,” wherein a researcher is part of his/her research population. Critiques of native anthropology are in line with Emily Dickinson’s (1870) claim that “the mind is so near itself it cannot see [itself], distinctly.” Naturally, a researcher is never studying his/her own “mind,” no matter how close s/he feels to the population of interest. However, the principle behind Dickinson’s metaphor is that some level of distance is required for examination. Researchers sometimes express this concern by warning against “going native.” However, being close to the research population allows for more emic ethnography (Ponterotto 2005), and as I found during interviews, the use of linguistic devices like figures of speech and Zimbabwean-ese lingo was present, which I took as a sign that those respondents who perceived little “distance” assumed I would understand them and therefore felt free to express themselves somewhat unreservedly. This therefore allowed for some analysis of the use of metaphors with particular attention to aspects of avoidance metaphors make possible. With emic ethnography, issues of cultural relativism are also reduced. Above all, a view from the “inside” is just as legitimate as one from the “outside,” each having its own advantages and shortcomings.

Actually, the question of whether one is an “insider” or an “outsider” is deceptive in its reductionist presentation of two seemingly diametrically opposed, mutually exclusive options. Miller (1985) takes issue with the un-encompassing nature of the insider/outsider binary, where the two positions are seen as two sides of a sheet of paper, “[leaving] no room for a third element, endowed with a positive shape of its own” (16). According to Miller, all elements “tend... to be associated with one side or the other or to be nullified due to the lack of an available slot in our intellectual apparatus” (16). Rather than seeing insider/outsiderness as a zero sum either/or matter, it is more helpful to view the perception of distance as a continuum along which one moves constantly. During any one interaction, a person can be an insider at one moment and an outsider the next. Where I was viewed as an “insider” by a respondent, it was probably the aggregate perception of a series of movements along the insider/outsider slide. Besides, as I discovered when I actually conducted sit-down interviews, it is incredibly presumptive to imagine that one can predict how a person will receive you and for what reason. For this reason, the question of “insider/outsiderness” was a real learning point for me, and awareness of it was vital in my study, given that its object was the perception of meaning. For one such study, one cannot but acknowledge the subjectivity of the judgment of social distance and espouse a belief in the variation of the same.

Going into fieldwork, I expected that different elements of my biographical history would likely push me in different directions at different times along the power scale. What I did not anticipate (and what therefore caught me by surprise) was which elements that biographical history would be most relevant, when. Going in, I expected that being a black Zimbabwean migrant, who is a first language Shona speaker, my demographic elements would work as “equalizing” factors, allowing for me to be perceived as somewhat close to the research population, at least at first blush. This was true, at least in so far as one can make an accurate assessment of how they were received. However, I discovered that these factors – race, language, nationality – did not work in isolation, but formed the basis of the perception of closeness.

My greatest concern going into fieldwork was the potential effect of my less immediately observable characteristics; the other (less obvious) factors that would contribute to perceptions of difference. I thought that my status as a Masters student at a prestigious university and the fact of my entering the interaction as a researcher would have me positioned as the more “powerful” in the interviewer/interviewee interaction. I was most concerned about this for interviewees whose highest levels of education attained were lower than my own, and their financial means were not greater than mine. I expected that money would compensate for schooling in terms of positioning, as I was wary of having the aggregate perception of myself as “higher” for fear that it would impede the establishment of rapport and affect the information respondents were willing to share.

With regards to the “prestigious university” element, respondents often asked how I was paying for school. When I informed them that I had a scholarship that covered my tuition and rent, that my father was a migrant and that my parents were teachers/civil servants – that is, that I was a “regular” person and not some Zimbabwean heiress – prestige became less of an issue. However, on the whole, among the respondents whose level of schooling and income were both lower than mine, I did not get the sense that they perceived social distance in the way I expected. Instead, what became more important than education and income was the fact that I had spent less time in Johannesburg and in South Africa than they had, which positioned me as something of a novice. Also, consequently, all of the interviewees who fell into my preconceived “sub-group of concern” ended up being older than me, most of them either being married and or having children. Age, marital status, and their status as mothers or fathers, along with the attendant consequences – status as breadwinner, provider for their families, migrant providers – all worked to class me rather as a “child”³² and them as adults, as relatively new to the migration scene, and them as seasoned migrants with a story to tell. Also unexpectedly, the subject of my inquiry seemed to cement the “interviewee as provider of information” dynamic, where respondents had the upper hand and other elements of social distance decreased in importance. That is, where interviews highlighted interactions with the state, respondents appeared to assume that as a fellow black Zimbabwean migrant resident in Johannesburg, I was united with them in their criticism of the exercise of state power, as evidenced by their use of linguistic cues such as “unongozivawo” [you also just know].

Among those whose income level and/or schooling was the same as or higher than mine, the perception of social distance was relatively less. I wore jeans and no jewellery; the handbag I carried was old and had been purchased on the streets of Johannesburg. My plain R199 Nokia cellphone is about as far from a Blackberry as one can get these days. Thus, more often than not, I was less dressed-up than my female respondents. Interviews with these respondents employed a considerable amount of English and my non-descript tape recorder was sometimes toyed with but did not itself appear to be a huge distraction. That is, the fact of being recorded had a greater effect on the interview than the aesthetic attributes and monetary value of the recorder itself.

Perhaps the most interesting and telling case of insider/outsiderness that I experienced during my fieldwork was when I interviewed a white Zimbabwean resident in South Africa. Here, the insider/outsiderness element came about in relation not directly to the respondent’s

³² In what is sometimes termed Shona “culture,” systems of social ranking consider age, marital status, status as parent as outweighing education and income, and though this may be changing in some contexts with the breakdown of the “traditional” extended family structure, the ranking system remains in principle and people can draw on it during interactions.

experience, but rather to the claim to Zimbabwe.³³ That is, to who is and who is not perceived as “truly” Zimbabwean. By this, I mean that the respondent appeared mildly defensive and reflecting on the interview and reviewing the tape, the voices – both of the interviewee and the interviewer – betray some element of tension, and the tension arose during the course of the interview, largely as a result of the questions. Now, the questions asked were the exact same ones used during all the interviews. I learnt that a question like, “What makes you Zimbabwean?” is not the same question when posed to a person whose family was dispossessed of their land and whose claim to that national identity has been challenged time and again in political discourse. This is true even when it is preceded by disclaimers about not intending on challenging their right to claim Zimbabwean identity. What I did not account for was that it would probably have been both wise and beneficent to establish more trust and build better rapport before the interview. Presumptive as it may be, I reckoned that my status as a black Zimbabwean female would mean that I could inhabit a “lower” stratum where race, gender and nationality were elements of power determination; I could position myself as one seeking knowledge and not as an authority. In their exposition of the effects of Affirmative Action in the United States, Sokoloff (1987) note after all that black women are seen as having a ““doubly disadvantaged” status – being black and being female” (61). Perhaps to be seen as occupying a lower stratum would render me benign, facilitating the perception of “closeness” with Zimbabwean respondents. Yet, as I discovered, when it comes to claims to citizenship and belonging, claims to a nation, to be a black Zimbabwean is to be grouped with a more “powerful” dispossessor. It is to risk being perceived, even subtly and subconsciously, as claiming to be a custodian of national identity. The peculiarities of this interview have proved incredibly educational in matters of belonging, identity, and perception.

Audience

The effect of audience is key during ethnographic fieldwork. While the observer effect was less in interviews than it may have been had observation been the key research methodology, it still needs to be accounted for. During face-to-face interviews, the researcher constitutes an audience for the respondent. Similarly, the respondent is an audience unto him/herself. Goffman (1959) put forward the notion of the “self” as a performed character produced during social interaction for an audience of which s/he is a part of. As the respondent observes him/herself even in responding, what s/he says in an interview is also informed by what s/he considers the “appropriate” response. According to Beeman, one strives for “appropriateness” by “perceiving

³³ Here, the issue was not so much a claim to “Zimbabweanness” but rather to the country itself – the right to call it home; to consider it one’s “native” land; to stake a claim in its past, problems and future.

expected predictable behavior in interaction and monitoring one's behavior to conform to expectations" (203). Thus, even as interviewing uses, as Guba and Lincoln (1981) describe, a method of "human as instrument," so the human instrument affects what it measures.

The issue of audience came to a head during the above mentioned educational interview with a white Zimbabwean. Two aspects of audience came into play: that of an unseen but ever-present "listener" whose hearing was aided by the use of recording devices, and that of the interviewer herself as audience. After the interview, when I reiterated that the information that had been shared would not be associated with them and efforts would be made to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the respondent intoned that information can always leak. Should there ever be a time when it is decided to attempt to see who among those claiming ties to Zimbabwe is "truly" Zimbabwean, such information could be used against them. In this case, the issue of the unseen observer, present in an unknown future, affected the nature of the information the respondent was willing to share, as well as the manner in which they shared it.

As for the interviewer as audience, the respondent noted after the interview that they hoped that I had not "taken [their] comments personally." I was surprised by the utterance, as it had not occurred to me that there was the possibility of the interviewer taking comments personally. What I had not realized until that moment was the extent to which the interview is a personal interaction between individuals. The interviewer is a being with the ability to take offense and be affected by the utterances of the interviewee, and more importantly, the interviewee is aware of the interviewer – not as a detached, impartial observer removed from the material they are gathering – but as a person liable to take offence. Thus, the interviewee measures his/her responses. While the fact of the self as a performed character is a constant (Goffman 1959), during the interview, the self is that much more a performed character – and both the interviewer and the interviewee are performing selves.

Analysis of Data

What was produced during discursive interactions was then examined with Phillips and Hardy's (2002: 6) delineation of discourse analysis as an exploration of how "socially produced ideas and objects...were created... and how they are maintained and held in place over time" (as cited in Liamputtong and Ezzy 1999: 262).

This allowed for a thematic analysis of: what was said, how it was said, and what was not said. In addition to examining the content of discourse, I looked at the discursive context in which things are said, for example, the manner in which issues are framed, and the speaker's positionality.

I examine the way in which meaning is presented. That is, word choice, language choice, incidences of Shona/English code-switching where relevant (Myers-Scotton & Ury 1977), as well as the use of metaphors, allusions and analogies. This, while bearing in mind Hymes' (1974) exhortation when investigating language use, it needs to be in "contexts of situation," where context should be taken as "a community, or network of persons" such that the analysis situates itself within that community's "communicative aspects as a whole, so that any use of ... code takes its place as part of the resources upon which the members draw" (3, 4).

Metaphors and allusions are useful not only in what is said but also in what they allow the interlocutor to not say (Johnstone 2002). Thus, in the "analysis of silences," I examine the areas of avoidance. This involves looking not only at what actual topics are not embraced in certain circumstances, but also what discourses and ideologies are not called upon to explain, justify or rationalise actions or beliefs. Some of the silences are partly a result of an assumption of shared history, knowledge or belief – what "needs not be said" largely as it is seen as being obvious. While it is difficult to determine the motivations for individual silences (or motivations in general, short of what respondents actually say), it is important to remain aware of the possibility of assumptions of commonality.

While each interview is treated individually as the representation of a single person's thoughts, I am attentive for similarities, overlaps or areas of commonality, whether in word choice, ideology or even language choice.

A critical aspect of research is the presentation of findings. In his examination of the effects of writing, retelling and reporting, Daniel (1996) notes that these processes, while a means of "preserving" truth, also serve to obfuscate it. Thus, reflexivity is employed throughout this text in recognition firstly of the researcher as enmeshed in the research, and secondly of her role as an intermediary between respondents and readers (and therefore another layer of interpretation). If we accept Daniel's (1996) assertion that "no narrative... is a straightforward representation, made up of transparently decodable constatives... not a mere telling; it is a performative," then this can be true both of the narrative presented by a respondent during an interview and of a text produced by a researcher.

Some elements of the analysis described above rely on the use of recorded material, as they require verbatim transcription and translation. Such analyses were therefore only done in cases where respondents agreed to have their interviews taped. Where interviews could not be recorded, detailed notes were taken.

Vulnerable Population and Illegality

Jacobsen and Landau (2003: 187) caution that “research into vulnerable populations like refugees, some of whom might be engaged in illegal or semi-legal activities raises many ethical problems.” This raises two issues particularly relevant in this study: vulnerability and illegality. While migrants differ in the sources, nature and extent of their vulnerability, in Johannesburg, low-income, black African migrants have been found to be more susceptible to be targets of crime, police harassment, and xenophobia, and this group made up a significant part of my respondents.

Going into the study, it was likely, indeed expected, that some respondents would disclose knowledge of or participation in illegal activities, which they did. These included acquiring and using falsified documents and passports that belonged to other people, as well as bribing police officers and immigration officials. The disclosure of participation in illegal activities was a critical area of consideration given that documentation is central to migrants’ daily lives in Johannesburg, and since I was explicitly asking them to share such stories. The University of the Witwatersrand’s ethics guidelines stipulate that when working with human subjects:

“A researcher's paramount responsibility is to those studied. Where there is conflict of interest, they must come first. Researchers must do everything within their power to protect their informants' physical, social and psychological welfare and to honour their dignity and privacy.”

In keeping with this principle, I committed to not reporting illegal matters to the police, unless they are later found to pertain to crimes which endanger the welfare of other people, such as trafficking in persons. It is highly unlikely that this will happen, and at the writing of this paper, it did not appear that that would be an issue. Should cause ever arise, the decision whether to disclose will be made in close consultation with my supervisor and with Wits’ Forced Migration Studies Department, who are bound by the University’s ethics standards. While it is improbable that the Governments of Zimbabwe and/or South Africa should wish to extract information on the few issues that emerged during the course of this study for legal proceedings, if my records are to be subpoenaed by the state, I would turn them over in compliance with the law. However, my research notes are unlikely to highly endanger respondents, as the information was recorded anonymously, and it would not be possible to trace information back to any particular respondent or place.

In light of the potential implications beyond the scope of the study, ensuring confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent become particularly important. Macchiavello (2003) stresses that the confidentiality of the informant is “[t]he first ethical issue a researcher of forced migration needs to consider... during interviews” (7). Thus, the following measures were taken:

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Collection and Storage of Data

Interviews and the group discussion were conducted in locations that were both public enough to ensure some degree of security both for the participants and the researcher, yet removed enough from unintended audiences, such that discussions could be confidential. It was my intention not to ask respondents their names, but because of the multiple interactions that were necessary prior to interviews in order to establish some degree of trust and to work through the logistics of setting up interviews, this quickly became impracticable. However, during interviews, especially those that were recorded, I addressed respondents as “you” rather than by their names, so that their actual names would not feature in the recordings. Informants have therefore been assigned codes by which they are identified in place of pseudonyms. I assigned the codes based on numbers pulled out of a hat. The list of codes has not been and will not be disclosed to anyone. Codes were assigned prior to the interview, and were used to keep track of interview notes and tape recordings.

Biometric data was collected, such as age, sex and education level, the presentation of those details has been carefully considered to ensure that the combination of personal details does not render them recognisable in this text. (For example, if one were to combine my age, sex, home town and educational biography in a report, it would considerably threaten my anonymity; see Stevenson et al. 1993 as cited in Penrod et al. 2003: 101).

While some conversations were recorded, this was only done with the permission of the respondent, and tapes are identified by codes picked from a hat, as mentioned above. While taking notes during an interview is a more involved process than recording it, participants’ right to decide whether or not to be recorded is of paramount importance. Interview tapes and notes are being stored away in a secure place. All the steps taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality were explained to respondents before the conversations and re-explained afterwards.

Analysis of Data

Conversations were transcribed and translated by the researcher due to budgetary constraints. However, given that accuracy is often compromised when work is done and checked by the same person, the researcher worked in consultation with “key informant” first language speakers of Shona, English, and Ndebele on translation, to supplement dictionaries and other language texts. I have held consultative discussion sessions with migrants to review the findings of the research. However, recordings were not used in this verification process, as voice identification and association would compromise anonymity and confidentiality.

In the writing of the research report, the use of pseudonyms has been avoided. While pseudonyms mask the name of the particular person being referred to, their use often does not account for the existence of some other person (albeit unconnected to the research project) whose name might be the pseudonym selected, and who bears resemblance to the person described in the report. While the person directly referred to in the report may be protected, pseudonyms can expose other people to association with research. Thus, respondents have been identified by the researcher by their numerical codes, and are only referred to in this report, for example, as “one young lady.”

While anonymity may be best served by destroying tapes now that transcription has been done, the tapes have not been destroyed and will be kept for five years. This is to allow for data to remain useable for further analyses (e.g. a sociolinguistic examination of the incidence and nature of code-switching, particularly since interviews will centre on meaning and identity), and particularly to facilitate checking of transcription and translation during such use.

Informed Consent & Beneficence

Informed consent is a particularly important ethical issue in research involving migrants. Major concerns often surround issues such as the effect trauma, repeated abuse, and a sustained sense of insecurity on migrants’ ability to fully consent, though none of these elements factored among the respondents in this study.

Participation was on a strictly voluntary basis, where every effort was made to ensure that should people consent or decline, the decision was truly informed. The nature and purpose of the research was explained to potential respondents, along with what participation would entail. They were made aware that there was neither a penalty for declining nor a reward for participating, and that there was no expected direct benefit for the participant. Interestingly enough, the question of what respondents would benefit came up in many pre-interview interactions, which made it that

much more important to be upfront with potential respondents. Additionally, interviewees were told that they could choose to answer only the questions they were willing to respond to, and that they could stop the interview at any point without penalty. That is, consent could be withdrawn at any point, including at any time even (long) after the end of the interview.

All these terms were explained to respondents in a language they indicated they understood. The interviewer employed a consent guideline to ensure that each element of consent was covered. Interviewees were not asked to sign consent forms though, as asking respondents for signatures may reduce the sense of anonymity as well as the revocability of consent. Instead, respondents were given a copy of the consent form for their own records (see Appendix D).

At one point during the first interviews, I was startled by black respondents' willingness to talk about their contraventions of immigration laws, and I was concerned that perhaps respondents did not understand the attendant risks of disclosing potentially incriminating information. I was caught in something of an ethical dilemma. Part of me wished to reiterate the caution and perhaps almost persuade them that while all possible steps would be taken to ensure the protection of their identities, there was always some residual risk of discovery. Yet at the same time, I was (uncomfortably) aware of the fact that the richness of the study's findings depended on the extent of their willingness to speak, the very study itself hinging on gaining insight into the respondents' perceptions, which were linked to their actions.

The mandate to "do no harm" applies not only to study respondents directly, but also to those whose lives and experiences are similar to and/or captured in those presented. It is this aspect of my research that presents perhaps the greatest moral and ethical dilemma – one which remains unresolved. In their editorial introduction on "Invisible Displacement," Polzer and Hammond (2008: 418) note that "invisibility... is a survival resource for many displaced..." and studies such as this one potentially "lift the veil... inadvertently alerting powerful states ... to the ways in which their rules are circumvented, and thereby reduce the space for life-saving creativity and flexibility in remaining invisible." My only hope is that this paper is not in fact revealing practices that were completely unknown to the Zimbabwean and South African authorities, and is therefore not an uncovering of activities but rather an exploration of the meanings behind (known) actions of migrants. I hope the collective of perspectives betters the image of migrants, particularly in academia by moving away from the discourse of victimhood that presents migrants as two dimensional beings, presenting them rather as pragmatic actors who engage with notions of citizenship, membership, rights, and state control.

“The passport is not for the police...”

This second half of the report is divided into four main sections, each with thematically presents and analyses sub-sections wherein the key findings of the study are explored. Underlying and running throughout the discussion are notions of membership, ownership of documents and identity; movement and resistance to control; the relationship between the person, the paper, and the person on paper; the utility of documents in terms of access, where access goes beyond access to social services. Many of respondents’ comments around documentation were centred on state officials, primary among whom were the police. As one respondent simply stated: “The passport is not for the police...” His sentiments capture some of the general contestation around the issue. Thus, the first section on identification and membership begins with a brief look at his statement as to how and why passports are “not for the police.” The respondent objects to the manner in which spot inspections of migrants are conducted. The report therefore goes on to look at how migrants perceive selection to be conducted by the police, exploring visible markers of non-belonging, and the determination of “otherness,” which leads into a discussion of notions of “good citizens” and “good migrants” as those who are not (determinately) “other.” The second section on resistance to state restrictions examines how migrants perceive and respond to some of the limitations placed on them through documentation-mediated control, among the unexpected findings being the dually limiting and liberating nature of documentation in times of death. This leads into a discussion of migrants’ perceptions of a disconnection between identity documentation and identity, among which documents are asylum seeker permits. The paper goes on to look at the access to ways of being, concluding the section with a discussion of that which documentation does not necessarily grant access to: welcome. The third section on documentation and defence examines the role of documentation in individual-state interfaces, exploring migrants’ perceptions of the exchanges, their implications, and through that, of documentation itself. This highlights tensions in migrants’ perceptions of state officials, and how that relates to and informs their perceptions of the state. If migrants believe that “the passport is not for the police,” then who is it “for” and how does a migrant rationalise the confliction they perceive, given for example the historical context of Apartheid and the asymmetric application of regulations. This feeds into a discussion on the ownership of documentation, and with it the ownership of the right to identify and be identified, and the tension that arises when migrants exist in and make use of a system that they are able to manipulate to their marginal benefit, while remaining somewhat confined by the same. The section ends with a brief revisit of the tension between being dependent on the state while simultaneously attempting to resist it.

SECTION 1: IDENTIFICATION & MEMBERSHIP

The Passport is not for the Police

Migration literature on documentation is largely characterised by a rights based discourse, and I half expected that to ask migrants in Johannesburg about documentation is to ask them about rights. Yet, surprisingly, respondents only spoke of rights in one context: to express contempt for the requirement that foreigners carry their passports around. Their issue was not rooted in the fact that they were required to carry their passports, but that they were required to present those documents to the police, and upon demand. Migrants protested that this violated their right to freedom of movement in principle. It is perhaps fitting to begin the discussion on findings on that singular note of rights, with a brief discussion of attendant issues.

“Passport haisi yemapurisa. An immigration officer – I would understand. Kwete kuti ndichingozvifambira. That’s interfering with my freedom of movement. I don’t agree with that. South African cops in general – it’s not kuti vari kubvunza for any noble reasons but for alternative motives. Not kuti vane interest yekuti unepassport. Because kana vakakubata usinayo, ukavapa mari, vanokusiya... Hapana munhu anofanira kundibvunza passport. Kwete kuti wese wese anondimisa anongoti, “Passport?” Kana ndapara mhosva – yes. Mupurisa anekodzero. Kwete kuti ndiri kungofamba zvangu. If you see me driving, you can ask for my license, because I’m driving... [The random asking for passports] it’s morally wrong. It might be technically correct. Ende futi mapurisa amuno anobvunza in such a xenophobic way.”

- 38 year old man

“The passport is not for the police. An immigration officer – I would understand. Not when I’m just walking around. That’s interfering with my freedom of movement. I don’t agree with that. South African cops in general – it’s not that they are asking for any noble reasons but for alternative motives. Not that they are interested in whether you have a passport. Because if they catch you without it, if you give them money, they leave you alone... No one should ask about my passport. Not this that whoever just stops me says, “Passport?” If I’ve committed a crime – yes. The police have the right. Not this – that I’m just walking. If you see me driving, you can ask for my license, because I’m driving... [The random asking for passports] it’s morally wrong. It might be technically correct. And also the police here ask in such a xenophobic way.”

The objection is not against all forms of control. Rather, it is against the enforcement of the control by police officers. For the respondent, the police’s mandate ought not to extend beyond the policing of criminal activity. He allows for the officers to question him if his conduct is criminal: “If I’ve committed a crime – yes. The police have a right.” He does not see the policing of immigration as a policing of crime. Interestingly, the respondent allows for officers to ask to see a driver’s license from someone who does not necessarily appear to have committed a “crime,” for the simple fact that they are driving. One can only drive if they have permission to do so. However, officers should not ask to see a pedestrian’s authorization for “just walking.” The offense in this case is not “just walking”; it is walking *in South Africa*. Ultimately, the respondent’s greatest qualm is with the fact of the asking of passports from pedestrians and in a

seemingly unwarranted manner – the idea of one always being liable to inspection, almost perpetually vulnerable to it. Also, he objects to the manner in which policing is conducted: who does the inspecting (police officers – rendering immigration control a law enforcement activity, casting immigrants as criminals); their motives (money; self interest) and their approach (xenophobic).

The gentleman quoted above had never himself been stopped and asked to produce his passport, despite having lived in Johannesburg for almost a year. However, he carried the passport around with him everywhere he went. His assertion that “the police here ask in such a xenophobic way” is remarkable in that he had not had first hand experience of the asking. Yet, he spoke with conviction.³⁴ Interestingly, both the respondents who had been asked to produce passports by the police and those who had never had that experience, expressed discontent over the requirement. Their narratives were similar in that they underscored that they took issue with the same three things: the manner in which immigration policing was done, the police’s corruption, and the wrongs of spot-checks.

It was interesting how all the respondents presented the same three elements, albeit in varying order and with different emphasis. The point of distinction was what migrants drew upon to explain or justify their discontent. It was only migrants who had never been subjected to spot inspections who invoked a narrative of rights, complaining, as the 38 year old gentleman cited above does, that spot checks “interfere with [his] freedom of movement.” It is noteworthy that all of the migrants I interviewed who had never been inspected had valid passports and visas. Perhaps their impassioned protests were the result of having served as a conduit for others’ emotions, or of being aware that there existed a group of people subject to random inspection, and they were part of that group, as evidenced by them carrying around their passports.

These same migrants when asked whether they would vote to abolish passports altogether, vehemently said no. Passports were of great value to them. Their point of objection arose with regards the manner in which the documents were used in immigration policing in the city.

³⁴ An argument can be made that media coverage and to a lesser extent migration literature, provide a language of xenophobia, creating a discourse from which people can borrow. For an examination of xenophobic threads in media coverage in southern African countries, see McDonald and Jacobs (2005).

How to Spot an Alien: Visible Markers of Non-Belonging

Not of here:

Before a person is asked to show their identification documents in the street, they are identified as a possible “transgressor”. That is, as a foreigner, in this case a Zimbabwean, and as one who (i) may possibly not have the correct documents, and if respondents’ assessment that the police’s objective is to extort bribes (or exert power) then (ii) as one who may be coerced into offering monetary “witness” and “restitution,” (or over whom power can be exerted). It is not enough to simply be a Zimbabwean. Some people are never stopped and asked to produce documents, a case in point being one respondent who had not been accosted in over five years, even when others around her were. What then are the physical/visible markers of non-membership that clue the police in to one’s alienness, betraying their bearer? In order to get at what respondents believed to be the visible signs, I asked them in a group setting what I would have to do to mark myself as a Zimbabwean, so that I too could get stopped and asked to show my passport (having never been asked in the eleven months I have been living in Johannesburg). The women in the group responded while the men laughed and nodded. They said that I would need to:

- carry around a changan bag
- “kana uchigona kuimba nechiShona”
- “mikwende mikwende”³⁵
- walk around Jeppe Street
- carry ma-two-in-one (blankets)
- “tsvaka someone wekufamba naye anomakisa”
- wear a skirt nemasocks, woolen hat, nescarf,
- pfeka masocks eorange
- “wakasunga juzi muchiuno – wonyatso kuita bharanzi”³⁶
- carry around a changan³⁷ bag
- “if you can sing in Shona”
- “lots of large bulky bags”
- walk around Jeppe Street
- carry two-in-ones (blankets)
- “look for someone to walk with who is unseemly/scruffy (*anomakisa*)”
- wear a skirt with socks, a woolen hat, and a scarf
- wear orange socks
- “while you’re tying a jersey around your waist – so that you’re really a bushwhacker/rustic”

³⁵ “Mukwende” is defined as “piece of luggage, baggage tied in a bundle” (*Duramazwi* 1981).

³⁶ The term “baranzi” in the original is a derivative of the word “balance” where a bharanzi ironically is one who lacks balance, and is unsophisticated.

³⁷ Changan bags are rectangular bags made of what look like woven plastic strips – often red, white and blue. The etymology of the term is unclear though some respondents indicated that they believed the name was derived from the term “Machangan” meaning “Shangans”, though the association between the bags and Shangan people is unclear. A Zimbabwean respondent who lived in Botswana for many years noted that in Botswana, the bags were termed “MaZimbabwe”, as they were associated with Zimbabweans travelling back to Zimbabwe, bags filled with groceries.

The caricature of the Zimbabwean migrant woman is essentially a rural woman, because what urban woman would wear a skirt and socks, a woolen hat, and tie a jersey around her waist. Yet, she is not rural in that she is from a rural area. Rather, she is by nature a rural woman, regardless of her place of abode. She is the rural Zimbabwean woman; they are urban Johannesburg women. This woman is the anti-assimilated cosmopolitan woman who lives in Johannesburg. She wears her woolen hat like a badge of foreignness. She is the woman that they may once have been, but that they are no longer, at least to the extent that they can recognize and ridicule her.

The respondents said to walk around with a person “amomakisa.” The verb contained in that term is “kumaka”, stem “-maka-”, a Shonafied version of “to mark.” Someone “anomakisa” is one who causes to be marked, where marking is of the sense of marking a target, X marking the spot, marking an opponent in a game/sport. “Kumakisa” also implies being “uncool” or embarrassing. Citizenship and non-belonging are tied to geographical locations within the city, localizable to specific streets. They are worn by the migrant in his/her clothes.

Respondents drew both on speculative notions they had on what South Africans were/had and personal experience and what they felt Zimbabweans were not/did not have. Some respondents listed complexion, hair length and styling, and even facial features among distinguishing attributes. It was suggested that South Africans wore “colourful clothes”; had nicely styled hairdos, though apparently their actual hair was often not long. One female respondent noted that she was constantly identified as a foreigner; her foreigner-ness ascribed to her on sight. She described an incident when she went to Randburg to subscribe for DSTV for her Johannesburg home, and was asked three times by three different people, including the security guard whether she wished to subscribe for Zimbabwe. After having queued at the South African subscriptions counter, the DSTV employee behind the counter asked her if she was not instead looking for the Zimbabwe counter. Whether it was her hair, skin or dressing, this respondent like many others believed that physical appearance played a significant part in the identification of otherness. The DSTV woman and respondents like her challenge Salter’s (2004) assertion that “guilt is not written on the skin or in the passport” (87), given that people seem to read it on others’ faces, in their hair, and in their clothes even before it is read in their passports or lack thereof. Whether it is or is not, migrants and police officers walk around believing that it is, a belief that has real-life implications, whether it leaves the former paranoid and fearful, or leads the latter to single out and stop those whose appearance matches the officers’ picture of alienness/foreignness.

But of Where?

The use of physical markers of non-belonging sometimes operates on a less subjective, more institutional level. On the 22nd of April 2009, national and provincial elections were held in South Africa, the first part of selecting the fourth President of post-Apartheid South Africa. After casting their ballots, a characteristic black ink mark was made on voters' hands to prevent them from voting more than once – a common, seemingly harmless practice. However, unlike the Ash Wednesday markings on foreheads of observant Catholics, the ink dots remained visible, indelible, for several days following the election. Only South African citizens can vote; only South African citizens could get an ink marking. Thus, for several days, a certain element of the population walked around with an obvious, temporarily indelible marker of their participation, their membership, their citizenship. Marking the one marks the other as the unmarked, the antithesis of the marked group, in this case, either as non-South Africans, or as South Africans who had defaulted on their civic duty. There was a means of quickly identifying who among the adults was not “acting” South African. During the time of the election, nationalist sentiment was expectably high. This was only the third presidential election in the “new South Africa.” Television, radio and billboards proclaimed infomercials on being “proudly South African” and “home made.” While “proudly South African” reference originates in an economic initiative to promote the sale of local products (NEDLAC 2001), it is not clear from the adverts themselves what product they are promoting. Instead, the infomercials are more readily seen as marketing national pride. What is proudly South African is not simply a local agricultural product but a local person; the condition of being native. Thus, there is fashioning of the “good South African” in the media as one who is “home made,” who speaks local languages, who votes. The marking of that “good South African” at the voting booth then occurs against a backdrop of fervent nationalist sentiments, which potentially jeopardizes migrant security. At one point, I wished I could go into Hillbrow with a marker and put black dots on foreigners to protect them by helping them “blend in” and be less visibly “other.”

There exists a significantly more permanent mark of membership, etched into rather than written on the bodies of its bearers: a vaccination scar. While it is less obvious to the passer by, it is accessible to immigration official, serving as an almost inescapable witness for or against its bearer.

Before a moratorium on deportation was announced in April 2009, deportations from South Africa to Zimbabwe would occur on a daily basis, with suspected Zimbabweans delivered to IOM's Beitbridge office on the Zimbabwean side of the border. Because of an agreement between IOM and the Zimbabwean Ministry of Home Affairs, immigration officials were posted at the IOM Beitbridge Reception Center to process deportees and thereby officially receive people on behalf of the Zimbabwean Government. Only Zimbabwean citizens could be deported

to Zimbabwe. However, offloading truckloads of migrants at an already strained border crossing would have presented considerable challenges, particularly given the migrants were in deportation proceedings. Thus, South African Home Affairs vehicles, dubbed *amagumbakumba*,³⁸ did not stop for processing at the border, instead offloading at IOM's base, where Zimbabwean immigration officials had set up a quasi-border post especially for them. Given that a significant number of the migrants apprehended by South African officials either did not have or did not present state-issued identification documents, there was little or no documentary evidence to attest to their nationality. Thus, some migrants were classified as "Zimbabwean" through a document-free process. The onus was then upon the Zimbabwean state to identify who among those delivered to it were not in fact its citizens and whom it therefore did not have a duty to accept and admit into the country. One morning while I was working at the IOM Reception Centre, a *gumbakumba* arrived with around eighty migrants, all in the custody of three South African officials. The migrants alighted from the truck after their six to seven hour journey from Johannesburg, where most had spent time at the SA Government's Lindela Detention Facility. The migrants were made to line up and were taken past the first desk where a police officer recorded which province they claimed to be from, supposedly for research and statistics purposes. At the second desk, immigration officials made determinations on the migrants' citizenship. It was at this desk that two of the deportees were called aside and informed that they were Mozambicans and not Zimbabweans. Thus, Zimbabwe could not receive them as deportees and they were to return to South Africa for repatriation to Mozambique. The two men protested, insisting that they were Zimbabweans. Despite their fervent claim that they were Zimbabweans, the Zimbabwean immigration officials ruled that they were not, and the men were half dragged, half carried kicking and protesting back to the *gumbakumba*. The officers' case: the men did not speak much of any Zimbabwean language, English included; and they could not name their chief; the schools in Zimbabwe they had attended; or even a hospital, a clinic. However, the Zimbabwean officials' determination was not merely that the men were not Zimbabwean; the officers ascribed Mozambican citizenship to them. Their "evidence": marks on the men's arms. The officers inspected the men's upper arms and then their forearms. Missing from their upper arms were vaccination scars from when they would have been inoculated against tuberculosis, had they been born in Zimbabwe.³⁹ The BCG vaccine is administered at birth, leaving a small recognizable scar on the baby's right arm, essentially marking the infant from

³⁸ "Gumbakumba" is a colloquial term used to refer to the trucks the South African Department of Home Affairs uses to deport migrants to Zimbabwe, where "-kumba" is a Shona verb defined in English as "to remove completely, take away, clear away," and in Shona as "kutora zvose, pasina zvokusarudza" [to take everything, indiscriminately], (Dale 1981 *Duramazwi A Basic Shona-English Dictionary*) . (For reference to the term in a respondent's account, see www.unhcr.org/refword/docid/45eecad12html)

birth.⁴⁰ Clearly visible on their forearms were immunization scars located where Mozambican nurses inject children when vaccinating them. In the absence of documents, failing the presence of witnesses or geographical knowledge, a determination of non-citizenship was made on the basis of scars.

The marks which ordinarily serve to indicate that a person has been protected against peril in case of exposure to pathogens instead serve to expose one to peril, attesting to a citizenship or national-tie they may not wish discovered. One's own body is made to bear witness against oneself. Had the men had documentation, verification may not have resorted to bodily inspection, particularly where their claims corresponded to a credible story: temporary residence as facilitated by marriage to a Zimbabwean (eliminating the need to speak a Zimbabwean language). The use of vaccination marks is deeply flawed, as it implies that one's claim to citizenship is valid only if they were present in Zimbabwe at a very specific time in their lives (e.g. at birth), privileging autochthony and leaving virtually no room for citizenship attained through naturalization.

Good Citizens and Good Migrants

Strikingly, both South Africans and non-South Africans find themselves at the Lindela Detention and Repatriation Centre, a significant number of whom carry valid identification documents and are not liable for deportation, either because they have valid immigration status, or because they are citizens of the country and can therefore not be deported (Klaaren and Ramji 2001: 36). Thus, Lindela becomes more than a repatriation centre; its purpose greater than to serve as a mere holding place for those awaiting deportation. Rather, it is a place of "non-citizenship", where even a person legally recognized as a citizen can be sent because upon inspection, s/he lacks some quality. Detention allows for the carving out of an "anti-place" to which migrants are sent (McLoughlin and Warin 2008: 261), similar to what Adey (2008) terms "non-places." Detention centers and the condition of detention submit the individual to the state's authority both physically and symbolically. In the "anti-place" of Lindela, the detainee is kept outside "citizenship" itself, outside "membership." While not completely stripped to "bare life" in that detainees are at least legally entitled to some protections of the law, Agamben's (1998) homo-sacer analogy is compelling in its recognition of the "outside while inside" state.

³⁹ It is unclear in what year this immunization policy began, but people who were born in Zimbabwe at least 55 years ago were inoculated in this way, as established from respondents and from consultation with three Zimbabwean health professionals.

⁴⁰ BCG leaves a scar because it is intra-dermal, whereas other vaccinations babies receive, such as DPT, are intra-muscular or oral (e.g. polio). Note however that BCG vaccines have not always been injected into the forearm in Zimbabwe. They used to be lower down on the arm, ironically not wholly unlike the Mozambican location (confirmed by interview with Zimbabwean doctor, 24 Jan. 2010).

In theory, Lindela becomes an institution through which the state can make normative claims about citizenship, belonging and the “South African” identity. In practice, however, it is not so much the state as state officials who define the limits of belonging, being the foot-soldiers who actually effect the identification and arrest of “foreigners”. The duality of intentions raised by migrants complicates the matter somewhat. When police officers act within the law and represent the interests of the state, their determination of belonging is largely attributable to the state machinery. However, when officers act as individuals, in their own interests, they act more as private citizens in uniform, the demarcation of the limits of citizenship and belonging done by the citizenry, albeit a citizenry in uniform. The police officer becomes the locus of the interplay between the incorporeal state, “South Africa,” which sets and purports to act within the law, and the bodied people; between the supposedly impartial and the biased; the selfless and the self-serving.

Immigration enforcement involves the selection of what Chan (2006) terms “good migrants” from “bad migrants,” where a “bad migrant” is one whose constitution results in an increased likelihood of their being stopped by the police, whether it is because they walk around town with heavy loads (“mikwende mikwende”), or they wear a skirt with brightly coloured socks. Removing those who do not pass the test to detention facilities effectively “outside” the state allows for a reification of notions of “good citizens” and “bad citizens.” Chan (2006: 162) argues that in Canada, deportation is part of the process of “shap[ing] the construction of the Canadian citizen.” Similarly, in South Africa, inspection and detention of even South Africans at Lindela is a way of “shaping the construction of the South African citizen.” A “good citizen” is one who carries correct documentation, South African or foreigner, thereby showing submission to state power, and specifically, to the inspecting officer’s show of power. Thus, the non-citizen can be a “good South African” by speaking Xhosa, not wearing bright orange socks with a skirt, not being poor, and not shopping on Jeppe Street. Failing that, they can be a “good migrant” by bearing their passport and presenting it to the officer who asks to see it. Respondents’ assertions of the manner in which migrants who refuse to pay bribes are treated implies that there is a policing of “good migrancy,” where a “good” migrant is one who pays the bribe immediately and graciously, one who does not insist upon his/her rights or challenge the police and their authority.

A “good South African” is one who does not show visible markers of non-belonging, whether in their clothing, in the form of scars, in their documents, or in their demeanor when interacting with state officials.

Death and Documents

The role of documentation as credible witness extends beyond the limits of this life. An “identity document” identifies its bearer – as an individual with a specific name, birth date, etc (Vasta 2006) and as a member of a collective, as one tied to a certain state. It is in this core function that documents can be particularly beneficial or particularly inconvenient to their bearers, particularly when the person being identified has died.

Going into this study, I did not anticipate the emergence of a discourse of death and dying. Yet, respondents brought it up time and again. Unlike many studies where concerns surrounding death in migration narratives pertain to the foreign land as a place of death, debauchery and disease, here what surfaced were anxieties surrounding death and burial, presented around issues of the repatriation of the body, and the role of identification documents in this process.

When the issue was raised in the group discussion, it was by older respondents – in their mid-to-late thirties, but the respondents in individual interviews who brought up death were in their mid-to-late twenties. However, older respondents spoke of the issue more emphatically, presenting real-life experiences and anecdotes, whereas the younger respondents simply mentioned it and each time in the second half of their interviews.

While discussing the respondent’s views on the existence of passports and on requirement that migrants carry them around, a female respondent in her late-thirties underscored that documents were “good”.

“Besides nyaya dzemapurisa, especially munyika dzavamwe, kana ukafa I think zvinoita kuti zvive easier. They mean a lot.”

[Besides police issues, especially in other people’s countries, if you die I think it makes things easier. They mean a lot.]

For her, it is to the bearer that benefit accrues. So great is the advantage of having correct documentation on one’s person should one happen to die that the obligatory nature of the requirement that one carries their documents around is not consequential enough to bring up. She accepts “the bad” with “the good.” It was on the matter of death that respondents seemed to shelve objections about the compulsory nature of the requirement to bear documents. Respondents noticeably did not raise the issue of immigration policing when speaking about death.

A 38 year old man, while stressing the difficulty of acquiring documents, even when one has a legitimate claim, noted that the passport system and requirements should not be removed. He said that he understood why people resorted to lying about their immigration status and obtaining fraudulent documents, but he did not support such actions. His reason:

“Vanhu vasina maphepha vanonetsa kana vakafa. Vachiri vapenyu vanenge vari right.”

[People without papers are a problem when they die. While they are still alive, they’re alright.]

The gentleman noted that he has a Zimbabwean relative who went to the UK on a Malawian passport and died there. The deceased's Zimbabwean relatives had problems repatriating his body. The UK was only willing to have the body repatriated to Malawi, and would not issue a Zimbabwean burial order. Otherwise, the relative would have to be buried in the UK. A relative went to one of the schools the deceased had attended in Zimbabwe, and got his birth certificate number from their records, which he used to order a copy of his birth certificate, which showed that the deceased man was indeed Zimbabwean. The process took two months, and the man could only be repatriated two months after he had died.

On the face of it, the respondent's concern was the difficulty of repatriating a corpse without accurate documentation. However, given that there had been the option of burying the deceased kinsman in the UK, it would seem that the underlying fear is that of burial in a foreign country. In Shona custom, there are several burial processes and beliefs that require for the deceased to be present, to be buried in his/her ancestral burial ground, associated with the belief that the spirits of the dead are invited to return and watch over the living. For a person's spirit to wander over the United Kingdom, cut off from its ancestral line and from its living relatives, is clearly less than ideal. It is to be a foreigner in the next life: a wonderer, homeless, lost, unknown and unclaimed, without any prospect of ever "going home." Even for a person who does not believe in the invocation of the spirits of the dead, the notion of a person being buried alone, in a foreign land, does not seem desirable. Consider the importance Western belief systems ascribe to marking graves, correctly indicating one's name and dates of birth and death on tombstones.

The gentleman went on to observe:

"What I have realized is that most Zimbabweans havarase maphepha avo ekuZim pavanotenga mamwe aya efake. They know kuti one day vachadzokera kumusha."

[What I have realized is that most Zimbabweans do not throw away their Zimbabwean papers when they buy these other fake ones. They know that one day they will go back home.]

His could be a sense of nostalgia, the expression of a hope, of his desire to return to the place he calls "home." There is contained in his utterance a belief in rootedness, in the irrevocability of the tie between person and place. A foreign land can never become "home." Or perhaps it is simply that those who retain their Zimbabwean papers do so as a reflection of their desire to return to the country whose documents they do not wish to use. This echoes the notion of a simultaneous dissociation and association of identification documents and felt identity. Migrants dissociate Malawian identity for example, with Malawian papers. Thus, the Malawian passport is simply a document that allows them access to certain places and privileges without links to Malawi itself. Yet, at the same time, Zimbabwean passports, IDs, birth certificates are kept stowed away safely, so that they can be used to attest to a link between person and place.

For the respondent above, everyone ultimately returns to Zimbabwe, whether alive or as a corpse. The problem with a corpse is that it is not able to “speak on behalf of itself” and attest to its right to reenter Zimbabwe, to its citizenship. It is perhaps when one is dead that one most needs their papers to tell where they should be allowed to be buried. After all, as Torpey (1998: 254) rightly notes: “the passport indicates that the bearer has an incontestable right⁴¹ to enter the territory controlled by its issuing state.” The respondent underscored that to repatriate a corpse is incredibly difficult, especially when it comes to getting the Zimbabwean authorities to admit it into the country. This was echoed by the other members of the group discussion, one of the female respondents remarked:

“Chitunha ndochinemaphepha manje! Paperwork inoitwa pakutakura chitunha!!”

[A corpse is what really has papers! The paperwork done when carrying a corpse!!]

Among the multifarious selection of papers a corpse needs to enter Zimbabwe, is a document that indicates as close to “an incontestable right to enter” as possible. Where citizenship is concerned, documentation is one of the primary witnesses that testifies to it. It has, what Wang (2004: 359) calls, a “‘high truth claim’ regarding one’s citizenship.” The male respondent reiterated to the agreement of those present that:

“Better to falsify your status than your citizenship. At least you’re better because you remain a Zimbabwean, because kana wafa, unokwanisa kundovigwa kuZimbabwe.”

[Better to falsify your status than your citizenship. At least you’re better because you remain a Zimbabwean, because when you’re dead, you can be buried in Zimbabwe.]

By “you remain a citizen,” he meant “you remain a citizen *on paper*,” the only place for which citizenship counts when one is dead. The gentleman went on to inform the group that his younger brother had false papers. The brother was living and working in South Africa on a non-Zimbabwean passport that he obtained through extra-legal means, but more importantly, which attest to a citizenship that he not only does not have but does not wish to have. The respondent told the group that he had said to his brother:

“Munin’ina, kana wafunga kuti wava kuda kufa, ndokumbirawo kuti undiudze where your correct papers are.”

[Little brother, when you’ve decided you want to die, please could you to tell me where your correct papers are.]

Thus, documentation’s ability to tie person to place is central in concerns over dying in a foreign land, and over not being able to be buried in one’s native country. Documentation’s second function – of identifying one as a specific individual – comes to bear when death is concerned.

Separate from concerns surrounding posthumous repatriation, respondents highlighted complications that arise as when one’s documentation does not identify them correctly at the time

⁴¹ Considering the number of people who have been denied reentry into the countries whose (genuine) passports they held, perhaps Torpey’s (1998) assertion should be read as a “[*legally*] incontestable right to enter...” (254).

of their death. That is, when what Torpey (1998: 239) describes as the “unique and unambiguous identification” of the person according to their documents is inaccurate. During the group discussion, a second respondent told of a woman who had died in hospital in Zimbabwe. This story was set in Zimbabwe; the people involved were in their country of citizenship and so there were no concerns over repatriation. At a time when medical aid was difficult to get in Zimbabwe, a woman was admitted into hospital on her friend’s medical aid. She died in the hospital.

“Akafira kuAvenues. Akafa anezita remunhu mupenyu ari kufamba... Apa unenge wapinda muchipatara uri Khumalo. Wofa uri Khumalo. Wochida kubuda uri Ndlovu.”

[She died at Avenues. She died while she had the name of a live person walking the streets... There, you’ll have gone into the hospital as Khumalo. You die as Khumalo. Then you want to get out as Ndlovu.]

According to the respondent, using borrowed or forged documents is tricky, “because one day you’ll want to be yourself and it’ll be very difficult.” Younger respondents, when asked if they would ever lend their passports to friends or relatives who resembled them, and needed papers to enter or exit South Africa, resoundingly said no. Among their reasons: the person may die while in possession of their papers, leading not only to the discovery of their facilitation of fraud, but to the creation of the illusion of their own death, an illusion whose veracity would be difficult to challenge. One female respondent’s comments on what her passport is to her when she is in South Africa are apt:

“It can speak for me. It can tell someone who I am. It speaks for me when I can’t speak. It is a witness as to who I am. It’s a lawyer. It’s an advocate. My ID is my advocate on my identity.”

The 38 year old man’s sentiments are similarly understandable. When asked what his passport meant to him, he said:

“Rusununguko rwangu munyika yevamwe. Pandiri ndopane passport yangu...”

“My freedom in other people’s country/in a foreign land. Where I am is where my passport is...”

It is his freedom to forget who he is, to lose his ability to identify himself in the knowledge that he has both a credible and a present witness. It is his freedom to move; his freedom to die.

Undocumented Exits

Given the utility of passports and other documentary forms of identification, how then is it that so many individuals, some respondents included, fail to obtain correct documentation, to avail themselves of this “credible and present witness”? Upon noting that passports were “good” to have, respondents in the group discussion immediately went on to point out that problems lay with obtaining Zimbabwean passports. When asked why she thought it was as hard as it was to get a Zimbabwean passport, one respondent said:

“Havadi kuti vanhu vabude munyika. Manje havazivi kuti tinobuda takabata muswe wegarwe. Even vakatidzosa tinodzokera ne same way.”

[They don’t want people to leave the country. Now, they don’t know that we will leave while holding onto a crocodile’s tail. Even if they return us, we’ll go back the same way.]

The respondent says “we will leave,” including herself among those who would cross the Limpopo River in defiance, “holding onto a crocodile’s tail,” yet she herself had never crossed the Zimbabwe/South Africa border except through official border posts. Here, there is a clear “us/them” structuring, where “they” are the representatives of the state. The respondent makes reference to compulsion on both sides of the border, from both the Zimbabwean and the South African states. The Zimbabwean state attempts to control movement by restricting access to passports (by making them expensive); the South African state by means of forceful removal – deportation. Deportation is instantiated by the presence of passportless migrants – crocodile-tail-holders. Control of movement from both sides of the border is therefore effected through passports, directly and indirectly. In setting up an “us/them” structure, the respondent sets up a single “them” that is not overtly disaggregated; by not naming the Zimbabwean state and the South African state and instead referring to both as “them,” the respondent groups the two into one entity: the limiter of movement, whose control Zimbabwean migrants resist.

Being versus Having: The Person v. the Person on Paper

An eighteen year old boy was startled when he was asked on his tenth day at his new job: “So what’s your real name, Cliff?” Almost every waiter at his restaurant is Zimbabwean; almost every one of them has a South African ID. That is, they each remain legally Zimbabweans in that they have never renounced their citizenship nor taken steps towards changing it. Their South African IDs were obtained from various unofficial sources, none of which are likely to be sanctioned by the Department of Home Affairs. When the young man inquired what his co-workers meant by asking after his “real name,” he was told, “Tanga tichifunga kuti Cliff izita repaID.” [We figured Cliff was just your ID name.] Each waiter had a real name and an ID name.

A 29 year old respondent also in the food business informed me that she had non-Zimbabwean documentation which she used in South Africa – a South African national ID and a Mozambican passport. The names on the passport and ID were slight variations on her name, modified to sound “South African” or “Mozambican.” Depending on which document she used where, she was known by slightly different names. She had decided to acquire alternative documentation when her efforts to obtain a work permit failed. When I asked whether she would consider taking up South African citizenship officially if offered, she said she would not.⁴²

I posed the same question to several other respondents, every single one of whom said that they would not. They appreciated the fact that documentation and certain immigration statuses allowed for better benefits than others. All but one said that they would consider applying for South African permanent residence though; the exception already having permanent residence. Most respondents distinguished between “being” a permanent resident and “having” permanent residence status. Similarly, respondents spoke of friends and relatives who had obtained South African passports, but did not ever refer to those individuals as being South African. They were Zimbabweans with South African passports.

Asylum Seeker Permits

Similarly, respondents spoke of having asylum seeker permits and/or refugee papers, yet not of being asylum seekers or refugees, as though they perceived a distinction between having the immigration documentation and the status, what Bakewell (2007) refers to as “handheld” versus “heartfelt” status. In many cases, this may be because documents were obtained without the bearer meeting the requirements for the permit. The document became a piece of paper they used to “swat away” police officers during spot inspections in the city – “mosquito repellent papers” as the respondent below describes them. Speaking of asylum seeker permits, one respondent noted:

“I have not met a single person with an asylum paper who knows how to pronounce it...It’s not asylum. Chiaslum. And they all say “*chiaslum*.” It’s not asylum. *Asylum* is synonymous to sanctuary. It’s like someone anoisa mosquito repellent. You see its direct benefit, like mosquito repellent, the way that an asylum paper dzingas maporisa. But without it, in a perfect world, you don’t see the need for it.”

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⁴² In their study of Congolese migrants in South Africa, Amisi and Ballard (2005) argue that “there is no necessary overlap between having South African nationality and being a citizen in the full sense of the word,” but that the rights afforded by citizenship need to be negotiated, as explored by Mamdani (1996). Where an overlap of nationality and “being a citizen in the full sense” is concerned, the Zimbabwean migrant cited above does not desire the latter, making use of both this dissociation and that between document and identity.

Ordinarily, asylum is given to those with a “well founded fear of persecution” from which they “cannot avail themselves the protection of the state,” often as a result of the states participating in their persecution (UNHCR 1951). Asylum permits symbolize a non-citizen’s right to protection. Where Zimbabwean migrants use asylum seeker permits to “ward off” police officers, the permits serve a “protective” function, providing a defense (albeit false) during inspection – in a very different sense from its original state-intended purpose. The permit is reconfigured from a symbol of protection to an actual object of protection, where defense lies it is the actual document itself and not in what it symbolizes. While asylum papers may signify protection provided *by* a foreign state to a non-citizen, “chiaslum” protects the non-citizen *against* the foreign state, ironically shielding against the very state that produces the permit. “Persecution” becomes persistent police encounters, detention, extortion of bribes, and the threat of deportation. It is against these that the “mosquito repellent” papers protect.

If migrants dissociate the immigration status and the permit that represents where asylum is concerned, perhaps the same can be said of documents that have citizenship implications, such as passports and national IDs. None of my respondents were open to the idea of officially becoming South African citizens – that is, going through correct legal channels and obtaining bona fide South African citizenship. To do so would be to blur the distinction between inscribed and ascribed notions of citizenship, of identity. Zimbabwe does not allow dual citizenship.⁴³ However, respondents indicated that even if dual citizenship were lawful to them, a taking up of a new citizenship would somehow weaken their Zimbabwean identity. Those who had South African and/or Mozambican documents which imply citizenship (passports, national IDs) also had Zimbabwean citizenship documents. One gentleman in his mid-thirties said that this was for their eventual return to Zimbabwe, as “They know that one day they will go back home.” Their South African and Mozambican papers were acquired through fraudulent means – fake papers attesting to a fake identity, created and presented for their utility value, not because they corresponded to affective notions of membership.

However, not all documents were acquired through extra-legal means. Consider the case of a gentleman I interviewed who had been in South Africa for close to a year on an asylum seeker permit. He had been a member of the opposition in Zimbabwe, a critic of the national government who had in fact experienced intimidation at the hands of the state. His asylum claim was legally valid; his asylum seeker permit obtained through the right channels. However, he emphatically denied *being* an asylum seeker. He had applied for an asylum permit because he

⁴³ Taking up South African citizenship would necessitate renouncing their Zimbabwean citizenship. A 2003 amendment to the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act placing limits on the prohibition of dual citizenship only exempts citizens of SADC countries by decent from renouncing their SADC citizenship, *given that they have not gone on to obtain foreign citizenship* (kubatana.net <http://www.kubatana.net/docs/legisl/citamdbill030214.pdf>).

qualified for it, and compared to other visas he could have gotten, it came with the most benefits. He recognized that documents often imply a certain identity, as evidenced by his emphatic rejection of the identity his documents tried to attach to him. He presented himself to South African state officials and thereby to the state as an asylum seeker, and to everyone else as anything but. The respondent had travelled to Zimbabwe several times while in possession of an asylum seeker permit.⁴⁴ When crossing the Zimbabwe/South Africa border, he did so as a “regular” Zimbabwean travelling on a Zimbabwean passport with a 90 day visitor’s visa. When in the South African interior, he used his asylum seeker permit. While his asylum permit was not “chiaslum” in the sense that it was obtained through official channels and he had a “well founded fear of persecution,” he considered the document as a means to an end, dissociating the symbol from what the state intended it to signify. To modify Bakewell’s (2007) analogy, unlike Angolan immigrants in Zambia whose “handheld” citizenship (documents) did not appear to match at all with their “heartfelt” citizenship, the Zimbabwean migrants in question hold one set of migration/citizenship documentation in one hand and another in the other hand: left- and right-hand immigration and citizenship documentation. The respondent above holds an asylum seeker permit in one hand, a Zimbabwean passport in the other, pulling them out alternately depending on where he is, what he needs the papers to grant access to. Note however, that while dissociation of symbol from that which it symbolizes occurs with asylum papers, the same cannot be said of his relationship with his Zimbabwean passport. The same can be said of the Zimbabwean bearing a South African national ID in one hand, a Zimbabwean passport in the other. Dissociation occurs with documents obtained through fraudulent means,⁴⁵ though the direction of implication is debatable. Does dissociation occur because documents are fraudulent, or are migrants emboldened to obtain fraudulent papers because they dissociate the paper from what the state intends for it to symbolize? If the latter, is this the result of migrants’ enduring attachment to their Zimbabwean papers and Zimbabwean national identity? The disjoint between the identification document and the identity appears to lie in migrants’ perception of documentation as a means to access ways of being – as tickets – rather than as identifying documents with much bearing on their personhood or perception of self.

This stands in sharp contrast with Vasta’s (2006: 7) findings of immigrants to the UK from other European countries, whose acquisition and use of falsified documents was in an

⁴⁴ Technically, according to UNHCR’s 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees definition of “refugee,” the respondent’s claim would be somewhat shaky as the Convention requires that one be “unable or unwilling to return” to their country of origin. However, it could be argued that the respondent’s willingness to risk returning to his place of persecution, and his ability to remain undetected by his would-be persecutors for a few days does not negate the reality of the threat.

⁴⁵ It would be interesting to study Zimbabweans resident in Zimbabwe’s relationship with their documents, as well as naturalized South Africans who were once citizens of Zimbabwe in order to evaluate whether the condition of being a migrant has affects one’s perception of their documents when those documents are authentic and the symbolic relationship between document and state has not been ruptured.

attempt to obtain “legal” status, to be officially registered and legally identified as having bona fide British citizenship (c.f. Polzer’s 2004 account of Shangaan Mozambicans in Bushbuckridge). The Zimbabwean migrants above specifically reject the idea of officially becoming South Africans, using falsified documents because the documents are outside the official system of citizenship-registration and do not officially impart legal citizenship to them.

Access to Ways of Being

Migration literature deals with access to services at length, almost primarily addressing access to social services and the meeting of basic (survival) needs: food, shelter, healthcare, etc. Access to documentation is usually a central theme in this literature, where it is recognized that access to documentation affects access to other resources, as lack of documents is among the primary reasons for migrants being turned away for example from hospitals. However, not a single one of the respondents I interviewed even raised the issue of access to basic social services. Rather, respondents spoke of access to banking services – mortgages and car loans – and to freedom from spot-inspections – access to ways of being. There was resounding recognition of the role of papers in ensuring this access, yet a dissociation of papers from their nationalist or citizenship implications.

In the words of one young professional:

“I want a South African ID. I don’t want to be a citizen of another country. I love being a Zimbabwean. I just want a passport from South Africa. That’s all. All.”

Just before this, the respondent had indicated that her Zimbabwean passport was on the verge of expiring and she had neither the time nor the means to travel to Zimbabwe to renew it.

The respondent noted:

“I don’t want to be a citizen. I just want the rights. If I were a South African citizen, I’d just walk into the bank and I’d get a car loan, I’d get a house loan – even without a job with permanence. Or a citizenship that allows me to buy a house. In my country, I can’t buy a house; in the country where I work, I can’t buy a house.”

A significant number of Zimbabwean migrants struggle every day to make ends meet – to resolve the issue of where to sleep, what to eat, where to find work. Migration literature and the media rightly call attention to these issues, often in the hopes that these issues be resolved (the Central Methodist Church crisis for example).⁴⁶ However, it should be borne in mind that this is not the singular story of Zimbabwean migration to South Africa. While the need for food and

⁴⁶ The Central Methodist Church on Small Street in Central Johannesburg offers shelter to immigrants, many of whom are from Zimbabwe. The numbers of those resident at the church have risen from a few hundred in 2007 to roughly 3000 in 2010. The church has come under criticism as the numbers have spiked, the Gauteng legislature’s health and social development portfolio committee chairperson noting in 2009 that “conditions at the church were a disaster and a health hazard” (Mail & Guardian Online 30 Oct. 2009).

shelter is critical, the continual portrayal of this single story in migration literature can result in the narrow view of the Zimbabwean migrant as one whose hope is always to secure shelter – temporary shelter; whose prospects do not extend beyond the next meal, and more importantly, who is perceived as one for whom the provision of the next meal is adequate addressing of his/her migration issues.

Authorised to Enter but Unwanted

A young woman who was at the Beitbridge border on the weekend of the 2nd of January, 2010, crossing from Zimbabwe to South Africa to return to work, informed me that she had arrived at the South African side of the border on a Saturday afternoon, at around 3pm. She joined the queue to get her passport inspected and stamped. She spent the rest of Saturday, the whole of Sunday, and the better part of Monday standing in the passport queue. Her passport was stamped at 4pm on Monday. She was careful to explain that when her turn came to be inspected, the South African immigration official simply took her passport, looked at it, and stamped it – in a few seconds. The delays are there because officials chat with each other; at which point, she leaned her head back and started impersonating Sesotho-like speech. In describing her ordeal, she informed me that the sale of food by vendors is not permitted at the border. Thus, all that people had was water from the taps there to drink, “that bitter water.” Furthermore, she could not leave the queue, as she would lose her spot. Another informant, who had crossed the same border just before New Year, indicated that while he was at the border, South African “police” officers had been walking around “whipping” those standing in the passport line, “grandmothers, women with children, everyone.” This was in line with the accounts of several other Zimbabweans to whom I had spoken about the border. As per the testimony of a 28 year old software engineer who had spent close to two days in the passport queue earlier in 2009: he and the other people in the queue had been standing for so long, waiting in that line, they began falling asleep, leaning on and clutching a fence that runs alongside the line. Others sat on the ground, in their places in the line. Then, South African “guards” walked along the passport line hitting those leaning against the fence and those sitting and dozing off in the line, calling them “you Zimbabweans” and telling them that “this is South Africa.”

The Saturday-to-Monday young woman informed me that there were two queues at the border – one for Zimbabweans, and one for South Africans. She did not think there were any other nationalities present. Here, the Zimbabwean is synonymous with the “other” in her imagination. According to her, there were some Zimbabweans bearing South African passports and other travel documents. These were seized by South African officials, and their bearers were told that they were Zimbabweans and should therefore have Zimbabwean passports. After all, Mugabe has begun issuing passports. When one woman protested that her three children were

born in South Africa and even had South African birth certificates, the officers said they did not care; that they were all Zimbabweans; and Zimbabweans should have Zimbabwean passports. It is unclear whether the confiscated passports were authentic or not, but through the lens of this queue-ridden Zimbabwean, the occurrence was perturbing. Bakewell and Biao's (2006) "paper tigers" analogy comes to mind, where here, passports are "paper tigers" rather than "tiger papers" when their bearer fits the South African immigration official's notion of "Zimbabwean", of "undesirable," regardless of their documentation. These documents in which one places stock to facilitate international travel; to attest to their citizenship and therefore to their rights to enter and remain; are in fact made of paper, and they can not only fail to roar like a tiger, but can be seized and ripped up. The immigration officials' actions seem to say: these are just pieces of paper; you are Zimbabwean regardless of what your papers say; your right to call yourself South African, to enter South Africa, is not guaranteed by a piece of paper.

Those who escape the vetting processes at the border – who either pass inspection or evade it – can find once they arrive in Johannesburg that the policing of citizenship and belonging continues in the interior. For some migrants, Johannesburg is a place of being ready to either justify one's right to be present, or circumvent exclusion. Documentation facilitates this policing, allowing for the differentiation of those whose presence the state has sanctioned to those who are "unwelcome." Documentation labels the migrant, and the policing of immigration within the city means that state agents are constantly reading the permissions or lack thereof. The system of documentation attempts to tangibly "remove" the migrant through the ring-fencing of social services and separating him/her out from a class of the "desirables" (Chan 2005).⁴⁷ By labeling people as "desirable" or "undesirable" (note Salter 2004:732), documentation marks those who have been sanctioned to be present, thereby symbolically "removing" those whose presence the state has not authorized. However, the determination of "welcomeness" and the marking and regulation of insider/outsider-ness is not a strictly document-mediated process, whether on the part of the excluding local or the perceiving foreigner.

When explaining his desire to return to Zimbabwe permanently as soon as he completes his degree in South Africa, one young man stressed that he did not feel welcome in South Africa. "It is so obvious that we are not wanted here." Apart from the border, he identified two elements that cement his sense of unwelcomeness: coming face to face with xenophobic violence, and linguistic intolerance. He was in a taxi headed to Bree Taxi Rank in central Johannesburg when the May 2008 xenophobic attacks began. Clear is the memory of pulling into Bree; of seeing a mob wielding sticks, charging towards his taxi; of the driver asking whether there were any non-

⁴⁷ Note Van der Leun's (2006) account of how citizens' (i.e. non-state agents') individual "policing" of belonging operates as a parallel system of inclusion and exclusion, sometimes having more tangible effects than that of state officials. A powerful yet deeply disturbing example of this is the outbreak of anti-foreigner violence in South Africa in May 2008.

South Africans in the taxi and could they please get out because he did not want his vehicle damaged; of feeling faint with relief yet dazed and petrified as police officers descended on the mob even as the mob yanked open the door of the taxi; of running through town with police officers on either side of him and his fellow passengers; of looking up and seeing people congregated on the roofs of buildings – every other building; of running faster than he thought possible to the doors of his Braamfontein-based church. It hit him then that he was not wanted in South Africa. That was two years ago. When I asked how he could say that the sense of being unwelcome was one he carried around “constantly”, he spoke of language. He speaks fluent Ndebele and can therefore communicate well in Zulu, and so his issue with language is not that he is unable to speak. Rather, he is compelled to speak in Zulu. “If I speak English, people get upset, like oh you think you’re special.” His public transport- shopping in central Johannesburg- residing outside the suburbs- life means that he is less insulated from linguistic intolerance than car-owning suburbans. He encounters it each time he travels, trades, talks, each time remembering that he is “not wanted here.”

Yet, it is not him, the 26 year old student, so much as a class/group of people to which he happens to belong, that is “not wanted here.” In his narrative, he says: “It is so obvious that *we* are not wanted here.” The Saturday-to-Monday lady’s account is studded with “we” and “us” references. This too was a common thread running through almost all the interviews I conducted. Respondents identified unwelcomeness as a collective experience, localized on their bodies, on their persons, but otherwise a common reality dispersed beyond the individual. For the foreigner in a hostile state, when non-belonging is discussed or expressed, it is in the “we” narrative. The individual, while expressing their exclusion from one group, does so while imbedded in another – as part of a “we” rather than as an “I”.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The only respondent for whom the narrative is more “I” is one whose understanding of the bounds of their citizenship and their belonging is somewhat different from those of the rest of my respondents. As a white Zimbabwean, dispossessed and essentially exiled by the state, to “we” for them may not be as simple or as passable. Given that they were being interviewed by a black Zimbabwean (essentialist though it may sound), race is inexorably linked to the interviewee and the interviewer’s co-perceptions of each other’s possible interpretations (note Grice’s (1975) theory on communicative intentions). Perhaps fearing that to “we” would be read as “we white people” and thus invoke its anti-group: “you black people,” the respondent may have avoided “we-ing”, given that a race-based distinction of this nature would neither be politically correct nor particularly helpful. Besides, perhaps the respondent would not have wished the ellipsis in “we” to be read as “we white people” or “we white Zimbabweans” because they do not feel that they “belong” to/ identify with either group.

Is this Parachute a Knapsack?!⁴⁹ – When the Bulletproof Vest is Made of Paper

There are dual, often contradictory systems of determination of “wantedness”: official, determined at the level of the state, and unofficial, determined by individuals. In the former, state representatives make determinations based on codified laws and requirements, and endorse foreigners’ permission to enter in their passports in the form of visas or blanket waivers. In the latter, individuals (private citizens) acting apart from regulations make judgments according to their personal notion of “merit” or “right” to be present. The expression of the populous’ decisions occurs through a range of ways. On the one end of the spectrum is the individual taxi driver’s refusal to answer a commuter’s questions in English. On the other is a mob wielding sticks and carrying gasoline, beating and burning suspected foreigners (see Landau and Haupt 2007: 8; Landau 2005). As Landau and Monson (2008: 322) showed with the case of Somali refugees in Motherwell, mobs do not ask to see permits before they sear their objections into a foreigner.⁵⁰ Be that as it may, documentation remains one of the means through which rights to presence are negotiated, particularly with the state and with agents whose operations the state regulates (banks, schools, hospitals) flawed as the systems may be. Respondents’ accounts presented elements of the contestation of meaning with regards to documents as items of defense.

Even as migrants underscored the value they perceived their documents to be of to them, there was a recurring expression of concern about the infirm nature of the same. Most migrants I interviewed, in protesting the requirement that they carry their passports around whenever they left their houses, stressed the same concern: the document might get stolen or lost. Four female respondents indicated that it was inordinately risky to carry around one’s passport in Johannesburg, where petty theft is (reportedly) rampant. The document was valuable in and of itself. Besides being requisite when crossing the border to travel “home” (to Zimbabwe) and back to work and school (South Africa), it was both expensive and difficult to obtain. Priced at US \$670 as recently as April 2009,⁵¹ (a few months prior to the interviews), Zimbabwean passports

⁴⁹ This saying is courtesy of the sitcom *Friends* (1995), when “Chandler” says, “Dear God! This parachute is a knapsack!” (Season 1, Episode 23).

⁵⁰ Beyond not differentiating between legally present and “undocumented” migrants, the clumping of non-citizens into one seemingly-homogenous group – whether termed “migrants” or “foreigners,” sometimes migrants are not seen as citizens of different countries. A Democracy and Governance HSRC report (2008) argues that Zimbabweans are “increasingly conflated with all migrants to South Africa.” According to the report, a respondent at a South African focus group discussion said, “We can’t even differentiate them by their nations. They are all Zimbabweans to us” (46).

⁵¹ Curiously, the Registrar General section of the Zimbabwean Ministry of Home Affairs website indicates at the time of this writing that an ordinary passport costs \$100 000. As the website does not show when it was last updated, it is not apparent when these prices were valid/current. They are probably quoted in Zimbabwean dollars – a currency which currently does not exist. For a state where the official currency is the US \$, a notice on the Ministry of Home Affairs’ website pegging passports at \$100 000 is ironic yet... (accessed 7 Jan. 2010 http://www.moha.gov.zw/index.php?link=rg_travel_docs)

were something of a “gold helmet” – its potential value as a protective item virtually outweighed by its monetary value as a commodity. Two respondents said that after a few months of carrying their passports around, they decided that the risk of losing the document and therefore not having it when they “really needed it” was worse than the prospect of being arrested and detained. (Note though that neither respondent had ever experienced a spot inspection on the street.) One woman who had had police encounters said of carrying her passport:

“Yinkinga. Kutofamba nayo kuiisa mubraa.”

[It’s a problem. To walk around with it is to put it in your braa.]

Other insecurities surrounding travel documents included the fear that they would bear “bad witness” against their bearers. One respondent, who was in South African on a work permit, told of how a vehicle she had been travelling in was stopped by the police one night, as it had Zimbabwean license plates. When the officers asked about the citizenship of the respondents, and requested to see their passports, the respondent had informed them that she did not have hers on her. Her passport was in her handbag, on her lap. As a rule, she carried it around with her. However, she had overstayed her visa and was afraid that to present an overstayed visa would be worse than to not show any documents at all. The visa in her passport would bear true but unfavorable witness against her; it was a direct source of insecurity.

The system of documentation serves more than simply as an administrative measure to facilitate the enumeration and face-value identification of individuals as “John Brown” or “Peter Piper”. As a part of a system of immigration control, documentation like the system in which it is embedded, has as its purpose ensuring that the right to give and withhold access to the state’s territory remains with the state itself. This right, along with the determination of who does and does not “belong,” is central to the state’s expression of sovereignty and territorial control, particularly given Tilly’s (1998) notion of the state’s control over the “the means of legitimate movement” (Torpey 1998; c.f. Prem Kumar and Grundy-Warr 2004: 34) and the state’s right to name and label (De Genova 2002). Identification becomes more than “John Brown” but “John Brown: alien”; “John Brown: unwanted.” Given the state’s vested interest in making and enforcing these distinctions, the respondent recognized the manner in which producing her expired visa could affect her stay in South Africa.

Heyman (2004: 307) argues that “legal identifications are affirmed, applied or rejected through a bureaucratic police-process called “inspection.”” This occurs throughout Johannesburg but particularly at the border. During inspection, concern also arises when the validity of the document one presents is questionable. A 28 year old professional was told that his work permit was invalid when he presented his passport for inspection on his way out of South Africa. To the best of his knowledge, his permit had been obtained correctly, and at no point had he attempted to

circumvent immigration regulations. Thus, he was taken aback when the South African immigration official to whom he handed his passport proclaimed:

“Chipepa chako hachisi icho. Ndochibvarura.”

[Your little piece of paper isn't the right one. I'll tear it up.]

The gentleman could not repudiate the accusation. He had been certain until that point that his papers were in order, his permit valid. However, he had filed his application through an agent. It was not from the hands of a Home Affairs official that he had received his work permit, but from an agent. He was aware of the cornucopia of fraudulent documents used by Zimbabwean migrants, and the propensity some agents had to employ extralegal shortcuts (like “greasing” an official i.e. bribing them). He notes that while he wished to protest – especially given he felt the official just wanted a bribe – he remembered that the official could indeed destroy his permit, marring his passport, and for all intents and purposes destroying the passport itself. He needed both to re-enter South Africa after his holiday, if he was to get back to work on time. He placed R300 in his passport and slid it back across the counter.

The work permit authorizing the work he had been doing for the previous months, which he had believed to be correct, not only caused an embarrassing and aggravating run-in with an immigration official, it compromised and endangered his passport. The respondent noted that he was upset by the encounter because he felt unjustly subjected to humiliating disparagement. He had paid thousands of Rands in order to have correct documentation and be in correct legal standing, to avoid such encounters, and there was being spoken to like a lecherous dog asking for a bone. The official had referred to the permit not as a work permit but as a mere piece of paper. The official had used the disparaging diminutivising prefixed by “chi-.”⁵² The prefixing is mapped onto the person and it is not just the piece of paper that is disdainable/contemptible but the passport bearer himself – the man who attempts to shield himself with a “little piece of paper,” not understanding that it can just be torn up.

Zimbabwean passports indicate the bearer's occupation, on the bottom left hand side. In so doing, the passport signals something about the bearer's possible level of education, income level, and general basic class. Mine reads, “Student.” The gentleman in question's listed a profession comparable to that of “Medical Doctor.” The respondent noted that he had witnessed Zimbabweans having the authenticity of their documents questioned at the border, none of whom had the look of a “Medical Doctor” about them. In a 2009 Touchstone Pictures movie, Sandra Bullock is informed that her application for a Green Card in the United States has been denied and that she is to be deported. Bullock replies: “Deported?! It's not like I'm an *immigrant* or something. I'm from Canada!”

When crossing international frontiers, it is not sufficient to believe within oneself that one has a legitimate claim to enter a territory. Nor is it sufficient to be persuaded that one is who one believes to be. As Wang (2004: 357) puts it, “identity is about *both* self-recognition *and* recognition by others” (emphasis in the original). The distinction between the two, between “identifications” and “identities”, to use Heyman’s (2004) term, come about in that the former is “imposed from the outside,” the latter “self-assumed” (307, citing Heyman 2001: 130). One must be recognised as that which one purports to be, particularly given the implications of the consequences. As Wade (2007) surmises, “the record of nationality in the passport is protected by bureaucratic procedures and legal regulations... the inscription generates [not only] how a person identifies himself [but also]... how he is perceived by others” (159)

Here, there was contrariety between how the migrant perceived himself and how the immigration official perceived him, or at least, how he believed the immigration official perceived him: as one whose life is above board versus as one who attempts to circumvent regulation; as one who can afford an above board life versus as one who must supplicate immigration officials to take pity on him; as a professional, an expatriate versus as an “immigrant”; as a “Canadian” versus as a “Mukwerekwere”. His documents had failed to prove his claim, activating his second line of defense: money. The gentleman understood the officer’s threat to destroy his permit as an indication that the officer wanted a bribe. It was the focal point of the utterance, the preceding text serving to support it. The respondent read an “unless” or an “or else” into the remark: “unless you ... I will tear it up” or “... or else I will tear it up.” This respondent bribed immigration officials while in possession of authentic, valid documents, because he recognised the officer’s broad discretionary power. His documents having not only failed to attest to his right to cross the border, they failed to index him as a first class citizen/professional and not as a “migrant”; as one not subjectable to such treatment (Landau and Mathers (2007) note how of those who cross the border into South Africa, only some are “tourists” while others are “makwerekwere”). Thus, the R300 was more than to preserve the structural integrity of the passport and visa, but also to protect against further humiliation, against the moment, against inspection, against the scorn and disdain. Not only was he prompted to pay because he was unsure whether his bulletproof vest was made of correct material, but money became a defense against further humiliation and subjection in a way that his documents had failed to. Ironically, Torpey (1998) argues that “identity papers ... constitute the bureaucratic equivalent of money” (244), but in instances where identity papers fail and the process shifts to extra-bureaucratic, money becomes a substitute for papers. When one’s defense is illegible in the pages of their passports, it can sometimes be read on R100 notes.

⁵² Note Brown and Dryer’s (n.d.) account on Shona Class 14 (ka-), whose diminutive elements operate similarly to Class 7 (chi-). <http://www.linguistics.buffalo.edu/people/faculty/dryer/dryer/BrownDryerWalmanDimin.pdf>

Levels of Defense: On Resisting

The account above is illustrative of the manner in which money and documents are employed in defense of one's claim to be present in South Africa. The manner in which money and documents come to operate alongside each other as paper on which rights are written and read is complex. Yet, there appears to be some semblance of order in the "chaos", to evoke Shakespeare's (1599) adage.⁵³ One woman who was light in complexion and wore a weave the manner of which lent her a "South African" appearance (as per her own estimation), indicated that she had never been stopped by the police to be asked for a passport. Rather, people in her company were sometimes stopped, especially when it was not clear that they were with her.

She told the story of a time when she had been on a train headed to work at the crack of dawn and police officers had mounted the train, entered the compartment she was in, and gone around picking people out of the crowd for "inspection." She was not selected as a possible foreigner. Those who were selected were taken off the train and asked to produce their documents. Interestingly, she noted that of the suspected-foreigners, "Some were South Africans; others had passports." That is, in her eyes and in her understanding/construction of the matter, there were two groups: South Africans and Passport Bearers. To be a non-South African is to be a passport bearer, and the travel document is not only requisite for foreigners but a symbol of their alienness.

There was a third group in the respondent's account – those who in principle would have been Passport Bearers but did not have passports to present: passport-less Passport Bearers. Of those who did not produce documentation/documentary support or attestation, some paid off the officers. Among those who did not offer bribes (monetary attestation), was a young black Zimbabwean man who was familiar to the respondent from the journey, though they were not acquainted. The woman intoned that there was general concern over his fate, and as he was being dragged off by the police, she decided to step forward and address the officers:

Respondent: "Where are you taking him?"
Officer: "What's he to you?"
Respondent: "Ngumalume wam'." [He's my in-law.]
Officer: "Your sister's husband, or did you marry into his family?"⁵⁴

The young stranger was now her relative. The respondent went on to tell the officers that she was travelling with him; that he did not know the way on his own; and that basically, them taking him away would greatly inconvenience her as she would then have the issue of following

⁵³ "Though this be madness, yet there is methods to it." Hamlet, Prince of Denmark ([1599] 1985)

⁵⁴ It is unclear why the officers asked that, and the respondent did not offer insights into it. Perhaps it was to determine whether she was telling the truth or not; perhaps it was an attempt at friendliness; perhaps it was so that she would not have the last word. However, this is speculative at best. The respondent did not highlight the asking as a remarkable event, which is perhaps what is most interesting.

up (with them) to deal with. Even as she told the officers that their detention of an inadequately documented migrant was inconvenient to her, she herself did not have her passport on her person, notwithstanding her status as a Zimbabwean. The officers released the man, and she paid them R50. They remounted the train and continued the journey in a separate compartment. The respondent had given verbal attestation to why the gentleman ought not to be detained. He was a relative of what the police believed to be a South African; his presence was to the so-suspected-South African's convenience. This was not greatly unlike the black man who may have been permitted to be without a pass when his Madam insisted that she needed his services. Her verbal attestation was complemented by monetary attestation. Whether the money reinforced or supplemented the relational defense is difficult to tell. What is particularly curious, besides the ever present notion of officers selecting out "foreigners" through a visual appraisal process, is the fact that she was bold and unencumbered enough to step forward, herself a migrant. She pointed out to the interviewer that she had never been stopped and thereby labeled as a "foreigner", where a "foreigner" is characterized as/understood to be one whose right to be present is questionable, rather than strictly as one who is not a citizen of South Africa. With this delineation, even South African citizens can be "foreigners" – as evidenced by the fact that South Africans made up one third of those killed during the May 2008 violence, and more immediately by the selection of "South Africans" from the train – and "foreigners" like the respondent to be viewed as "South Africans." and was therefore not insecure or afraid. For the respondent, the sense of entitlement and empowerment was buttressed by the fact that (i) she had never been stopped as a foreigner (ii) her own papers were "in order." It would appear then that there is an order of attestation: documentary; relational; monetary; and verbal, where each of the non-monetary forms are sometimes supplemented by money. Consider the words of the Preacher: "A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: *but money answereth all things*" (Ecclesiastes 10:19 KJV)

On Being Stopped by the Police

A female respondent, a mother of three, who had been living between Zimbabwe and South Africa for over ten years, indicated that she did not walk around with her passport. It is this woman who had spoken up for the young man in the train. When asked what she would say were she ever singled out as a "foreigner" and asked to produce her passport, she indicated:

"Ndovabvunza nechizulu: "Passport? Chii ichocho chinonzi passport?" because vanhu vemuno havamazivika mapassport. "Lini lenthonkwenkweni ngayo?"

[I'll ask them in Zulu: "Passport? What's a passport?" because people from here don't know of passports. "What is this thing you're talking about?"]

Her resistance of the passport requirement would come by indirectly claiming South African identity, or at least claiming exemption from the requirement, exclusion or otherness from the group of whom passports can be expected and requested. When translating her retort from Shona into Zulu and restating it, the woman placed her hand on her hip, and cocked her head forward and to the side, her posture defying anyone to challenge her claim.

A young female respondent, who was constantly getting stopped, relayed her most recent run-in with the police. She was stopped near Park Station, and after paying the bribe, she asked the officers what she was to do if she were to be stopped again by other officers. She was instructed to inform them that she had already been stopped by other officers. Landau's (2005) much cited reference to migrants as "mobile ATMs" in the eyes of the police comes to mind. For this respondent, a withdrawal has already been made, the validity of which was therefore assumedly recognizable by other officers. That this could serve as a response indicates that the officers recognized that subsequent stops by different officers would not in fact be in order to effect detention and deportation but rather to extract payment. Otherwise, they would not have indicated a belief that stating that one had "already been stopped" would suffice as a defense. When a person is caught speeding and stopped, should they continue to speed, they cannot offer as a defense the fact that they have "already been fined" because they are discovered a second time still in the errant state. An inadequately documented migrant is still inadequately documented the second, third and fourth time they are stopped. The respondent had asked the officers point blank: "So if I meet other cops, what'll I do?" This she said having told them that she only had a certain amount of money on her, and having given them that full amount. Thus, she was left with no defense. They offered her a new defense.

When relaying the account, she pointed out that she had felt very frustrated and upset – at having been stopped; at having had to give the officers all her money. Inflammatory as it may be, an analogy to the experience of being robbed seems apt. The respondent added emphatically that at the time, if she had been stopped again, she would have yelled at the subsequent police officers, telling them that she had already been stopped, especially if they had given her problems by refusing to accept her defense. Her defense being: "I have already been stopped." It seems the respondent felt that she had "filled her quota." That the officers no longer had the right to stop her, or at least whatever level of right she may have allowed for in the first officers (enough to give over her money rather than scream at them); something changes in her from the first interaction to the next anticipated one. I paid you, you gave me a receipt; your receipt should be valid in the eyes of those who are like you! That is, the unofficial system should be official enough to be recognizable and acceptable as such.

Paying off a police officer does not immediately appear as a form of resistance, especially when a person's immigration status is legal. However, so effective is the threat of detention, the

state's power to strip to "bare life," that even though none of my respondents had ever been taken to a detention facility, Lindela loomed large in their psyches. The knowledge of the possibility of being taken to the detention facility, of the officers' power to detain them, and the aversion to such treatment was great. For those respondents who spoke of detention at some length, their accounts were focused on the ways in which they elude detention, how paying a bribe is better than detention, but interestingly, how they somehow classed themselves above those who are sent to Lindela. Through bribes, they resisted detention. By acquiescing to the subjection the officer exerted on them, they resisted a greater form of subjection by the state through detention facilities. They parted with a small amount of money but safeguarded their liberty; trading R50 for the ability to make it home to cook. When I asked respondents point blank why they paid bribes to police officers, one woman said:

"It's an easier way of getting away from them. Anyway, what do I lose? Than kuti ndinovharirwa ndosangana nevanhu vakawanda, ndosangana neTB."

[It's an easier way of getting away from them. Anyway, what do I lose? Than for me to get locked up and be mixed with a lot of people, and meet with TB.]

Another woman said:

"Time plus zvimwe zvandinenge ndichida kuita."

[Time plus other things I will be wanting to do.]

That is, the second woman has better things to do than to play at this game with the officer; than to keep at it. One could read from her utterance the underlying assertion: "I am willing to subject herself to this much of the official's power (bribe) but not this much (depriving me of my liberty, removing me to the Lindela "anti-place"; jeopardizing my job)." The migrant pays a bribe because a protracted interaction with the police detracts an unacceptable amount from her time, because she has "things to do." The police are presented as inconvenience; the bribe as acceptable deference to power, while prolonged detention or institutionalized detention are unacceptable.

Respondents noted that police officers' reasons for stopping them to ask for passports were not in any way related to the enforcement of the law. In her own words, one respondent intoned:

"Aim yavo ndeyekungoti timire..."

[Their aim is simply to make us stop/wait i.e. to stop us.]

This was specifically in reference to passport checks conducted by the police – whether SAPS or Joburg Metro⁵⁵ – along the streets of Johannesburg. Scorn/suspicion over state officials' motives for their conduct when stopping migrants was a common theme respondents brought up in all my interviews except one, the exception being with the (white) respondent who claimed

⁵⁵ Respondents did not differentiate between SAPS and Joburg Metro.

never to have had a passport-police encounter or to even know anyone who had had one, other than at international borders. Disdain over officers' motivations was expressed with reference to two areas where inspection is done: on the streets of Johannesburg, and at the Zimbabwe/South Africa land border⁵⁶. In a separate interview, another respondent commented that South African immigration officials at the land border wish to cause delays and complications in order "to spice up their days"; to make their lives less mundane.

The Meaning of Inspection

A respondent noted that the police would arrest a person (needlessly) if they did not comply, whether their non-compliance took the form of not offering a bribe or not being extremely apologetic. That is, a migrant would be arrested if they did not acquiesce to the officers' exhibit of power and affirm their "superiority" in that interaction. I asked the respondent what would happen in a scenario where a migrant bluntly asked the police if they were trying to extort a bribe. In this scenario, officers have spent a considerable amount of time explaining the gravity of the situation to the migrant, painstakingly explaining that it would be inconvenient to the migrant if s/he were to be arrested for not having documents – the interruption to the migrant's schedule, the night spent in jail awaiting a hearing – and asking the migrant what s/he would do (to avoid the inconvenience). This scenario is drawn off accounts I had heard from several respondents on how the police ask migrants for bribes. One migrant informed me that after explaining the inconveniences to her, the police asked her what she was going to do. That being the first time she was in one such interaction, she told the officers that she would simply wait until her passport was brought to her by her friends. When the officer reiterated that it would be "hard" for her friends to go "all the way to Jeppestown Police Station" to bring her passport to her after he had taken her there, she asked him what else she could do. He asked what she thought she could do. She apologized for not having her passport with her. To this, he retorted, "You want to say sorry with mouth?!" When the young woman informed the office that she did not know how else to say sorry, he again said, "Sorry with mouth?! You can't say sorry with mouth." What could possibly be another way to say sorry to a police officer who has stopped you on Louis Botha Avenue while you were driving a car with Zimbabwean license plates, an officer whose underlying concern is presented as the inconvenience detention would visit upon you, a migrant?

Thus, I asked the respondent before me what would happen if a person bluntly asked a police officer in a similar situation whether s/he was trying to extort a bribe, given that it is clear that the officer has no real desire to arrest the migrant and have deportation proceedings initiated

⁵⁶ Only one respondent ever made reference to the airport as a point of contact, inspection and interaction. Her objective in raising the issue was to contrast the treatment received at the airport and that received at the border, where for her, the slowness of border inspections at the Zimbabwe/South Africa border reflected South African officials' disdain for Zimbabweans.

against the migrant. According to the respondent, the police officer would arrest the migrant. This she said without hesitation, without second thought. For her, it was obvious. Before I could ask why the police would arrest the person, she offered an explanation: “Vanokusunga nekuda kukusvotesa” [They will arrest you in order to spite you]. When asked why the police would wish to spite a person, the respondent retorted:

“Ndoda kukuratidza kuti inini ndiri mukuru; ndine mapowers akawanda kukunda ako.”

[I want to show you that it is me who is greater/bigger; I have more powers than you.]

One cannot say whether such words have ever escaped the mouth of a Johannesburg-based police officer or even entered into his/her mind. What is material here is that this is how the respondent perceives the officer: the officer’s motivations, and carried in those, the officer’s perception of her. On the face of it, asking the respondent about the officer’s motivations was an invitation for her to speculate about the officer’s motives. Its greater purpose was to shed light on how the respondent in face views the officer, and through that, how she perceives the officer-migrant interaction. This particular respondent had been accosted by the police nine times that she could remember over the three months prior to the interview, and was in that was somewhat anomalous, at least compared to other respondents in the study. The numerous run-ins with the police meant though that her responses, while perhaps still by and large speculative, were speculation formed over a significant number of interactions, and had numerous opportunities for revision and refinement. If not an informed opinion, they were a reinforced one.

For the respondent, the officer-migrant interaction is about power. It is an opportunity for power to be exerted on her. The respondent is a black migrant woman – a Zimbabwean woman, in her late-twenties/early-thirties. She is an ungarnished woman who dresses simply – no make up, no jewelry – in muted colours. She wears flat shoes in the interview, and has all the appearance of non-frivolity, though her pre-migrant life was not in the rural areas. She strikes me as a woman who cleans her own house. Her life straddles Johannesburg and Zimbabwe. Passports and the police are a conscious reality in her life, in this version of her life. Much can be inferred from her summation of the police officer’s object in arresting a non-compliant migrant.

Note the use of the term “powers” in the original code-switched utterance. The term “powers” here refers not only to authority and strength in the sense of “I have more power than you,” but also to institutional powers – rendered in the multiple to connote the existence of multiple spheres and sources of power. Had the respondent wished only to say, “I have more power than you” in the sense of “more authority,” she could have said, “Ndine *masimba* akawanda kukunda ako,” where “*masimba*” and “powers” are denotatively equal, being direct translations of each other, but connote different types of power. Perhaps the respondent’s use of the English term was simply for effect, or a demonstration of linguistic dexterity. The respondent

selects the English term “powers” in reference to that power yielded by an officer of a system very much established by and steeped in the English [read: colonial] project. Both the foreignness of the power and its imposition on an unwilling people are brought to mind. The term “powers” here becomes a bridge between the officer-migrant interaction and the broader colonial policing-black populous interface, at least to the hearer, if not to the respondent herself.

Hers does not ring as part of a narrative of victimhood. It is a recognition of the authority’s (perceived) desire and attempt to victimize, without either attempting to illicit a sympathetic response from the audience, or echoing some deep-seated belief in her own status as a victim. In her construction and representative of herself, the respondent is not a victim, not even in the narrow confines of the officer-migrant interaction. To view herself as a victim is necessarily to view the officer as a more powerful adversary, it is to acknowledge/claim defeat and thereby cede to the officer the power he so desired.

In the narrative she presents, the migrant specifically does not cast the narrator [read: herself/ the migrant] as victim. The lens is not trained on the migrant. Instead, it depicts the police as the aggressor, focusing on the aggressor and not on the victim, thereby indirectly casting the narrator [read: migrant; default victim] as champion in the retelling – champion for recognizing the intention of the officer; champion for rejecting the authority in the retelling; champion for not focusing on the victim status; champion for resisting both victimhood and domination through her retelling. In the positioning contained in the narrative, the officer is cast as a super-child, a petty person who clings to situational power he would not otherwise have, a power he cannot have in and of himself. This over-grown/inflated child is a buffoon in that he does not realize that his power is superficial and does not lie within himself; that he conflates the power of the state (of the office of policeman) and that of the person as an individual. She sees through his mask, through his performance, recognizing it as a performance of power, ridiculing it in her heart, in her retelling, in the archiving of her memories. It is not that the officer acts as he does because he has the power to do so. More than that. It is that he wants to *show you* that he has the power: “anoda *kukuratidza* kuti ini ndiri mukuru” [he wants to *show you* that it is me who is greater]. In the narrative, the migrant becomes the mature woman who patiently endures the inconvenience, the thrashings of a petulant child who while wielding a stick is himself infantile/idiotic. She bears it because it must be borne. This is the cost of being in Johannesburg, of being a foreigner, of not having adequate documentation. It has become a fact of life, an everyday occurrence, a thing to be endured and moved past.

Separation of State and Official

In moving from the police's action to their motives, the respondent shifts from speaking about the police in general terms: "they will arrest you", to the first person "I", where she speaks from the perspective of the police officer: "I want to show you..." This shift may have been for dramatic effect: to show that she believed she understood the officer's hidden motivations and could therefore express them; that she was able to inhabit the psyche of the officer and from there present those motivations. The respondent humanizes the officer by showing that she, a human being, can inhabit his thoughts, yet in the very act of humanizing him shows the extent of his non-humanity in that he can espouse and profess such beliefs – belief in his own superiority and unbounded rights and powers. The alien calls into question the officer's humanity.

By personalizing the utterance, the migrant personalizes the motives, presenting these motives as the officer's, as a person, not as the Office of the Police's. In this, she connotes dissociation between the officer asking for her documents, the officer arresting her in order to spite her, and the Office of the Police, or the state more broadly. The separation of person and state in the migrant woman's perception is conveyed in the "*inini* ndini ndiri mukuru" [it is me who is bigger/greater] rather than "*mutemo* mukuru" [the law is great; the law is inescapable] or "*hurumende ihuru*" [the government is great]. Thus, she says "*ndine mapowers*" [I have powers] rather than "*ine mapowers*" [*it* has powers]. Note also that the officer's narrative is presented in the single person. "It is *me* who is greater... *I* have powers." The account could have employed the encompassing "we" – "we, the police," "we, my partner and I," "we, the South Africans," "we, the officers of the state/of the law." Instead, the respondent underscores the individual nature of the officer's actions.

Both the South African officer who is being impersonated and perhaps more so the Shona-speaking Zimbabwean woman relaying the story are from societies where even greetings take the form of the plural "sanibonani" or "makadii" even when addressing one single person. The honorific "we" is used so commonly in both Shona and Ndebele conversation the narrator's decision not to use it is noteworthy. This is especially so given that her statement was delivered in Shona. In the use of the singular, non-honorific "ndi-" both for the addressor and the addressee (the officer and the woman) indicates a clear leveling of the two – a stripping away of cultural respects and claims to authority or respect. The officer is just a man, the migrant just a woman. They are neither custodians of their cultures nor subjects of the law/state. They are two individuals locked in a power struggle or negotiation encounter. They are a man and a woman; Mr. So and So and Ms. So and So; residents of Johannesburg battling over the right to access and inhabit the city – part of an age-old fight that goes beyond them while remaining strictly confined within the bounds of their individual persons: a corrupt police officer and a black Zimbabwean migrant. In her experience of individual-state interactions, the police are not there "to serve and

protect” but to control, and often unjustly so – to hinder. . Even when acting on behalf of the state, the police represent interests that run contrary to her own, a case in point being the Zimbabwean Government’s deployment of police officers to destroy the homes of just under 6% of its population⁵⁷ in the May 2005 “Operation Murambatsvina” (UN Special Envoy Report 2005). Perhaps the difference here is that for the respondent, the South African state may not be seen as being as malevolent as the Zimbabwean state.⁵⁸ Therefore, to reconcile the actions of the officers and her view of the South African state, the respondent concludes that the officers could not possibly be representing the interests of the state, nor could their actions be sanctioned by said state.⁵⁹ To her, the officer acts as an individual, and her, an individual.

Thus, when the aggressor is seen as the individual and not the state, resistance is taken to be against the unfair individual, and not the state. The personalization of resistance results in it being migrant individual against police individual. The officer is (almost) stripped of his state/official affiliations, wherein he would have gotten his authority. Therefore, he is stripped of the backing of a legitimizing state.

It is not the state’s right to ask for passports but the officer’s right to do so that is challenged. When the migrant wriggles out of a documentation situation, s/he has prevailed against an unjust agent, and not an unjust state. The state is at fault in as far as it creates or allows to go unchecked the systems within which the officer operates. The state’s ill is its laxness. It is guilty of passive facilitation, not active aggression. Using fraudulent documents is then an attempt to evade the (evil) extortive officer, and not the state. The officer is no longer a proxy but becomes the principal oppressor, the obstacle. He is that which is to be gotten over, gotten away from, or gotten around.

The existence of a system of documentation, and specifically of a situation where policing is done in the manner in which it is in Johannesburg, creates the possibility of an encounter such as that described above. It facilitates the negotiation of power, or rights of influence. The system of documentation as it is in Johannesburg indirectly produces a state where an officer and a migrant become just a man and a woman; an occasion upon which a foreigner can construe the workings of an officer of the law not as those of a representative of the state and therefore not as

⁵⁷ 700 000/ 12 746 990, the population as of 06/2005 according to www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook

⁵⁸ Bratton and Masunungure (2006) argue that based on the results of a 2005 survey of 1200 Zimbabweans, Operation Murambatsvina and the state’s use of repression and coercion “ultimately undermined the legitimacy of key state institutions, notably the police force...” (1).

⁵⁹ What remains a mystery to me is where exactly this impression derives. Perhaps it is informed by observing the manner in which the South African Government allows its citizens to demonstrate against it, with labour strikes occurring annually, while the Zimbabwean Government’s notoriety for repressing opposition is well documented. Alternatively, post-majority rule South Africa’s recent housing projects come in the form of constructing low-income housing (RDP Houses) whereas Zimbabwe’s credits include Operation Murambatsvina. (Granted, Operation Garikai attempted to construct houses after Murambatsvina’s so called “tsunami,” but very few of them got off the ground.)

backed by a legitimate authority; a situation where an officer is viewed as a private person merely cloaked in uniform, masquerading as more.

When asked whether the system of documentation is fair/right, the woman said that it was not fair.

“Vanondibvunza passport pakutenderera, why not pakutenga? They just want money.”

[They ask for my passport when I’m walking around, why not when I’m shopping? They just want money.]

Therefore, officers’ asking for passports is in line with the “they just want money” as the migrant has previously expressed a belief that police officers do not genuinely wish to police immigration but rather to extort bribes. The “they” there includes police officers and may or may not extend beyond them. The use of term “kutenderera” is interesting. It means “walking around,” but can imply ambling around almost aimlessly, though it carries an element of freedom – freedom to move around “aimlessly” or in a seemingly “directionless” way. The “va-” [“they”] here seems to encapsulate more than the police; it extends to include shopkeepers, and therefore the general South African populace (or strictly speaking, people in South Africa who would be in a position to ask for some sort of documentation (ID, credit card, etc)); but it appears that when a “they” is made to extend in general to people in South Africa, that this is actually intended to mean South Africans, which is ironic because it means that in protesting against non-inclusion, the respondent is excluding herself and drawing on and projecting the very blanketing exclusion she is protesting against.

Separate Rules for Separate Residents: A Return to Apartheid?

A South African woman who heard that I was studying documentation approached me and began narrating the following story of her experience of being stopped by the police while in a vehicle in Johannesburg. She began by declaring: “I don’t carry my ID. You’re jazz.” Apparently, a police officer asked for her ID. She told him she did not have it. She keeps it at her house and she does not even know where it is. She cannot risk losing it because she has been carrying it around. “I don’t have time to go and queue with Home Affairs. If you really want my ID, if you’re really serious about seeing my ID, you can go to my house.” The officer left her and went on to a second woman in the car, who happened to be a foreigner (whether or not she had identification on her is unclear). The officers asked her where she was from. “I’m from her house.” The woman relaying the story laughed. “They asked her where she was from and she said she was from my house! “I’m from her house and we are going to Wits University and we’re running late.”” It was the foreigner who told the officers that they were running late. She had called on associations with the gutsy South African woman (who speaks with a trace of something identifiably South African in her voice/accents); a prestigious university – a higher

institution; and she had indexed herself as an academic, an elite, above the officers and above the system (i.e. the system of harassment, not of law enforcement). To this, something in the officer's approach changed, or at least the narrator's perception of him and of the dynamics of the interaction changed, because she assumed a higher, more simpering tone to channel the officer's next words: "Oh, you are lucky guys. Are you lecturing at Wits?" It stands to debate whether the women were "lucky" to be part of Wits or whether they were "lucky" because he was not going to pursue the documentation inquiry further. In his statement is signaled a shift from official to casual, from inquisitor (higher power) to conversationalist (equal); from officer to man.

In this retelling, the police officer is presented as having moved from official to private citizen – as having actively made the transition, albeit unconsciously. This presents an interesting contrast with the earlier Zimbabwean respondent's account of officers who are presented not as actively shifting roles within the interaction but as seeming to simultaneously inhabit two roles – officer and man – with the officer role serving as a cloak for the underlying man.

Contained within the retracting of claws of the officer faced with the South African woman was a realizing and an acknowledgement of the uncertainty of his footing in the face of these women: assertive citizens/rights bearers who appeared unfazed by him and by the authority he had been claiming. Whatever his intention in changing positionality, it was read as a concession of defeat, because the reply he got was: "It's none of your business and you've already wasted a lot/enough of our time." The women drove off. The non-South African woman's passport may have been at her home, or in her handbag in the car with her, but she did have proper documentation. The South African woman in concluding her story retorted: "I don't walk around with my ID. I don't carry shit. I don't even know where my ID is, unless they're taking me back to the Apartheid times!"

The Apartheid reference was a recurring theme in interviews with Zimbabwean migrants, each time brought up by the respondent and each time in reference to the requirement to carry around and present documents upon demand. One respondent who had had several run-ins with the police said:

"Yava Apartheid? Tadzokera kunguva
yeApartheid here zvamava kuda kuti ndifambe
nemaphepha? Unoswerera kundibvunza ID kudii?"

[Is it now Apartheid? Have we gone back to the
time of Apartheid that you want me to walk around
with papers? You keep asking me for an ID, for
what?]

The parallels between the manner in which passport controls are conducted in Johannesburg and the pass system during Apartheid are startling. During Apartheid, people were required to carry documentation with them indicating that they had permission from the state to be present in a particular area, where the permission was tied to one's purpose for being present, and was granted only on the basis of very strictly defined criteria, not wholly unlike the present

day visa system. Klaaren and Ramji (2001) argue that the South African Department of Home Affairs's disregard for migrant rights enabled by their "extensive use of discretion," which the authors believe stems only in part from immigration legislation's leeway for discretion as well as lack of oversight and accountability (38; c.f. Van der Leun's (2006) discussion on discretion and oversight). The underlying cause, for Klaaren and Ramji (2006), is "the policy's essentially unchanged status from pre-Apartheid days" (38). The Apartheid government was committed to a mission to define the "nation" and ensure that the borders they set were not transgressed. It is not surprising that respondents drew a link between their experience of spot checks and temporary detention and Apartheid-era policing of movement, membership and belonging.

What sets the Apartheid Pass Law requirements apart from general visa systems and likens it more to the requirement that foreigners carry passports in South Africa is the racially asymmetric manner in which the requirement is applied and enforced. One white gentleman in his mid-thirties informed me of a time when he had crossed the Mozambique/South Africa border without so much as a passport on him, and not a single person had stopped him to ask to see his passport. In his opinion, everyone just assumed that he had the right to be there, to cross over, because he was white. This simply serves to illustrate that the breaking of immigration regulations is not limited to a single race, yet a person is disproportionately more likely to be asked to provide documentary validation of their right to be present if they are black, and appear to be of low income.

Much of the interaction, the power-play, and the interpretation of it, are dependent on perceptions. The South African woman's reading of the officer, of law enforcement, of the interaction, of his tone, of herself. The respondents' actions are informed by these perceptions.

Whose Document Is It?

Documents were described by respondents as linked to identity. For those who did not expressly indicate this view, they did however imply it through their rejection of the idea of ever lending out their own passports to those who resembled them. The only exceptions they were willing to make were perhaps to lend their passports to a sibling – a person physically and psychologically close to them. One respondent said that there was a very important relationship between what was written in ID and who she was – her "identity". In her words: "One speaks for the other." To this assertion, I asked how this would be affected if there was a discrepancy between what was in the document and what she believed to be her identity, for example if the names were slightly different. Her response:

"Hau. Inenge isisiri ID yako. It's useless."

[Hau. It won't be your ID anymore. It's useless.]

The respondent's contention is not a blanket dismissal of all incorrect documents. She is opposed specifically to those documents wherein the mismatch is a result of a clerical error or some other process the identified person has not sanctioned. This becomes clear in her subsequent response to the question "If it is no longer your ID, what is it then?" To this, she answered:

"Chimwewo chipepa chenemawords akada kufanana nezita rako. It has to be exactly **as I want my name to be.**"

[Some other little piece of paper with words which kind of look like your name. It has to be exactly **as I want my name to be.**]

The ID is "useless" because it does not identify the bearer in the manner in which she wishes to be identified. It should be noted that this respondent admitted having used a friend's passport to cross the Zimbabwe/South African border. The issue for her was not so much that the details in the passport a person used and presented to the state ought to accurately represent their identity. Rather, it was that the details in the passport one held as *one's own* had to match their actual specifics. This was in line with her general perception that one's passport belongs to them – it is the property of the person who obtains it from the government and must be used to that person's convenience and benefit, where a competing state interest to identify people is secondary to the individual passport bearer's right to determine whether or not they wished to be identified. For her, the individual goes from being a simple passport-bearer – a custodian of state property – to being a passport-owner. As the ID belongs to the bearer, it follows that it ought to serve the interests of its owner.

Another respondent who espoused similar views on it being the right of the passport bearer to determine how and when a document is used, said that she would use a passport with a name different from her own: "...I don't care whose name it says, as long as I remember the name on the passport when I go to the bank... I would buy a passport that doesn't bear my name." For this respondent, the function of a passport to a resident of Johannesburg was to "open doors." In her words:

"It's my justification, my ticket, my right of way. It makes available to me things like opening a bank account. It's very important. My passport means getting a bank loan; kusahaswa nemapurisa. I would use a passport with a different name."

"It's my justification, my ticket, my right of way. It makes available to me things like opening a bank account. It's very important. My passport means getting a bank loan; not getting harassed by the police. I would use a passport with a different name."

In light of such sentiments, the young woman in the Preface who presented a man's permit when attempting to enter South Africa becomes a little less astonishing. She was informed by those who had crossed into South Africa before her that the Department of Home Affairs required the presentation of a valid permit in order to enter the country. Her objective was to

enter South Africa; she had a valid permit in her hand, even if it did not belong to her – could not have belonged to her.

The respondent above, for whom her passport is her “ticket, [her] right of way,” was an educated young professional with two college degrees. She had recently had an unsuccessful series of encounters with the Department of Home Affairs, where her application for a work permit had become a complex and expensive ordeal which had resulted in her both overstaying her visa and not having a valid passport for a length of time. The respondent had had a handful of encounters with the South African police, where she had been stopped and asked to show her passport, each of which had occurred prior to her slipping into irregular status. As to the question of ownership of documents and the state’s right to require them of people, the respondent recognized the fact that it was possible for a government to attempt to confiscate a person’s passport. However, she vehemently claimed that she would not surrender her passport.

“Government ikauya kwandiri ikanditi ndipe passport yako? Ha! Iwe ungavapa yako?! Ndichivapirei passport yangu? I need it. I need my passport... You have R20 in your pocket, handiti. Would you give it to the Government? You wouldn’t give it to them! The passport is mine. It’s like money. The money also says “this belongs to the government” but me, I’m not going to give no government my money! The money in my pocket?!”

[If the Government comes to me and says give me your passport? Ha! Would you give them yours?! Why would I give them my passport/for what would I give them my passport? I need it. I need my passport... You have R20 in your pocket, right. Would you give it to the Government? You wouldn’t give it to them! The passport is mine. It’s like money. The money also says “this belongs to the government” but me, I’m not going to give no government my money! The money in my pocket?!]

This respondent is aware of the regulations, and she knowingly disagrees with them. She is aware of the fact that when the question of surrendering passports to governments arises, it is for the most part the government that issues the passport that would require it – the Zimbabwean Government. Her objection may therefore not be so much with governments’ rights to reclaim passports (and money) so much as with this particular Government’s right. The respondent, who has worked and paid taxes in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, specifically sets apart “the money in the pocket.” When money is in one’s pocket, ownership is direct, immediate. Withholding this money from a government that already systematically taxes its citizenry is possible when the money is in one’s pocket rather than in the employer’s budget, earmarked as income tax. Similarly, the passport in one’s pocket, in one’s handbag, is close enough to the individual for there to be hope of withholding it, especially from a government that seemingly does not return that which it has taken. The passport obtained at great pain to begin with becomes all the more the property of the individual specifically because it is almost irreplaceable; it is valuable, like money.

Not only is the document seen as belonging to the bearer, the identity and the right to present or withhold said identity belong to the individual. That is, it is the individual's prerogative to be identified or not. When asked whether the government had the right to make her carry her ID around, the as-I-want-my-name-to-be respondent emphatically said no.

"It has no right! Then, the ID is no longer serving me. It must be to my convenience. I must have a choice kuti ndoda kufamba neID yangu kana kuti handisi kuda...It's mine. It shall speak when I cannot speak... it's me who determines when I shall be identified or not. They shouldn't force me to carry it. Why should it be forced out of me? Yah, ok – kana ndapara mhosva, they can ask for my ID, but it's me who decides whether to give it. Hear what I say. If I say I'm John, I'm John. Why should you believe a piece of paper? Pamwe ndatora yanhingi. How do you know?"

[It has no right! Then, the ID is no longer serving me. It must be to my convenience. I must have a choice whether I want to walk with my ID or I don't want to...It's mine. It shall speak when I cannot speak... it's me who determines when I shall be identified or not. They shouldn't force me to carry it. Why should it be forced out of me? Yah, ok – if I've committed a crime, they can ask for my ID, but it's me who decides whether to give it. Hear what I say. If I say I'm John, I'm John. Why should you believe a piece of paper? Maybe I've taken so and so's. How do you know?]

That is, documentation is as unreliable/infirm as evidence as verbal testimony, if not more so. Its unreliableness results specifically because people can corrupt it. For the respondent, a person's assertion of who they are ought to suffice, especially considering that in her view, the document ought to attest to an identity its bearer desires. Therefore, if it is the bearer who provides the government with the name to be recorded on her passport, how is the document more reliable than her verbal claim that her name is John? How much more credible is the corruptible document that people can lend to each other and alter? Ultimately, the respondent's point is not so much that documentation is completely unreliable as that it should be the individual – the identified – who determines when and how s/he will be identified. The state's right to compel testimony is limited to instances where the individual has committed a crime and thereby forfeited their right not to be compelled to produce "independent" identification.

This argument would be quite compelling if the respondent were speaking as one resident in her country of citizenship, limiting the state's right to arbitrarily police her. However, her complaint is raised against governments in general, including the foreign government of the country she is present in but not a citizen of. That is, she does not recognize a modification of her rights as induced/produced by her crossing of an international border, of her transition from citizen to non-citizen.

Her non-discriminatory view of the universality of unfettered rights not to be compelled to testify against herself was not shared all respondents. In the group discussion, the following exchange occurred:

PQ: “Papers are an insult to Zimbabweans! Why should we walk carrying a paper? Why? I can carry many papers in my bag, but passport –? I’m also a human being. Aren’t South Africans human beings? So why should I carry a paper?”

RS: “**Kuratidza kuti unemvumo yekuva pano.**”

PQ: “Hanti ndiri pano.”

RS: “But kuva pano hazvirevi kuti wava nemvumo yokugara zvachose. **Haisi nyika yako.**”

PQ: “Haisi nyika yangu asi ndiri pano. Saka ndakapinda sei? I should use a passport when I’m crossing and when I’m coming only. That’s when I should see my passport.”

PQ: “Papers are an insult to Zimbabweans! Why should we walk carrying a paper? Why? I can carry many papers in my bag, but passport –? I’m also a human being. Aren’t South Africans human beings? So **why should I carry a paper?**”

RS: [**To show that you have permission to be here.**]

PQ: [I’m here aren’t I?]

RS: [But to be here doesn’t mean you now have permission to stay here forever. **It’s not your country.**]

PQ: [It’s not my country but I’m here. So how did I get in?] I should use a passport when I’m crossing and when I’m coming only. That’s when I should see my passport.”

Ownership of Identity Documents

When I asked the respondent why she felt her passport belonged to her and not to the government, she said:

“Because it’s mine. Just because it’s mine. Madetails aripo ndeangu. Ndini ndinoichengeta; ndinoitakura. I *pay* for it. If it’s lost, it’s me who gets into trouble. So it’s mine. Hanti kana ndikafa – dai yanga iri yavo, vaiti ndafa *vaiipa* kunomumwe [laughs]. Manje havadaro. Kana ndikafa, ndoenda nayo.”

[Because it’s mine. Just because it’s mine. The details on it are mine. It’s me who keeps it; who carries it. I *pay* for it. If it’s lost, it’s me who gets into trouble. So it’s mine. Hey if I die – if it was theirs, they would *give it* to another when I died [laughs]. But then they don’t. If I die, I go with it.]

The respondent challenges the taken-for-granted notion of the ID as the state’s property. It is the state that issues the document; it can revoke it or demand it. Under “Conditions of Use,” Zimbabwean passports proclaim: “This passport is the property of the Government of Zimbabwe and may be amended, withdrawn or cancelled at any time” (p3). Immediately following the declaration of ownership, the passport continues: “The holder or bearer of this passport shall forthwith surrender the passport when so required by an authorized official.” That statement is made with no qualifications, no room for the bearer’s objection or discretion. Ownership is not shared, according to the passport. However, the respondent above, like many others, suggests instead that it belongs to the bearer, the one who “purchased” it, who bears it, in whose possession it remains, whose details are inside it. While [fraudulent] documents are purchased on the parallel market, the legal acquisition of authentic documents from the Government also requires the exchange of money for the papers. For her, a passport *purchased* from the Zimbabwean Registrar General’s Office belongs all the more to the bearer – especially when s/he has paid US \$670 for it.

The idea of the document belonging to its bearer goes some way to explain another element of respondents’ exception to the manner in which policing of immigration is conducted in Johannesburg. Each respondent save for one objected to the random stopping of suspected

migrants by the police. While respondents embraced the utility of documents in identifying them when they are dead, the manner in which documents defend them when their rights are called into question – that is, the general utility of documents in serving their interests, they resoundingly objected to being asked to present their passports by the police. That is, they objected to instances in which documents were used against them, either to mark them as immigrants, or to necessitate the bribing of officials and instantiate contestations of power. Where it is accepted that passports and national IDs belong to the state, and the state reserves all rights to demand their presentation, such objections would be misplaced.

A Nobody until You Die

While it was by far the majority opinion among my respondents that documents ought to serve the interests of their bearers, who had obtained this right through the fact of having acquired the documents and being their designated bearers, not all respondents privileged this idea. There was recognition of documents sometimes serving a purpose other than for their bearers' convenience. Here, documents went beyond serving as means to an end – whether as means to access services, to access spaces, to access certification of identity, or to access ways of being. Documents were seen as symbolic in and of themselves, apart from what they accrue to their bearers, even when this was detrimental to individuals.

One respondent, who stated his emphatic belief in the existence of documentation and in governments' right to control movement, added that he was persuaded that ultimately, the system of documentation could not completely prevent one from returning to their country, given that school records, IDs and other such alternatives to passports could be used. I pointed out to him that there were some who did not have any documentation whatsoever attesting to their Zimbabwean-ness. For example, people who moved from Mozambique and grew up in Zimbabwe but had not formally obtained Zimbabwean citizenship. His response:

“Havana kumbobvira vaita maphepha ekuZimbabwe? Saka they are Mozambicans. They should have made efforts.”

[They've never had Zimbabwean papers? So they are Mozambicans. They should have made efforts.]

For him, they are not Mozambicans because they do not have Zimbabwean papers. They are Mozambicans because they have not made a demonstrated effort to officially become Zimbabweans. Documentation stands as a physical indication of one's national allegiance – an expression of one's desire to be considered a citizen of a certain country. He disavowed the practice of using fraudulent documents, stressing that even though he had close relatives who had committed various immigration infractions, he did not condone the practice. I asked him about cases where one was unable to call upon documentary evidence to one's citizenship, as with street kids, orphaned or born to homeless parents, who live almost completely

undocumented lives – with no school registration records, hospital records, or other documentary verification of their claims to citizenship.⁶⁰ His response:

“That’s the most unfortunate part. **You are a nobody kusvika wafa.**”

[That’s the most unfortunate part. **You are a nobody until you die.**]

This respondent would agree with Torpey’s (1998) assertion that “people... have become dependent on states for the possession of an “identity” from which they cannot escape and which may significantly shape their access to various spaces” (239). It is not only for the possession of an identity document but for an identity itself that people have come to be “dependent on states.” A case in point would therefore be those whose lives do not come with documentary evidence of their existence and identity, who are not “linked” to a state on paper in a way that delineates their rights – as evidenced when they attempt to legally cross international boundaries.

However, the majority of my respondents would disagree with this categorical perspective that unless one is a person on paper, one is “a nobody until [they] die,” and that in order not to be a nobody, one needs their identity to be given to them by the state. They would hold rather that what is critical is not the *possession* of a formally recognized, documented identity, but the ability to *present* one such identity, disagree though they may with the conditions under which the presentation of identities is instantiated. Given the existence of a documentation-mediated international “filing system” that classifies people according to citizenship (Brubaker 1992: 31, as cited in Wang 2004: 357), it is up to the migrant to determine how s/he would best be identified, particularly if the migrants in question do not conceptualize the impetus behind identifying migrants in terms of the good of the nation-state but view it as a contestation between individuals acting outside the interests of the state. Migrants are aware of the implications of the identities states attempt to impose on them, with document-enforced categories like “citizen” and “alien” being understood as a starting point for negotiation of identity. Documentation, while instrumentalised by the state to enforce these categories, serves as the very means through which the labels are reworded, reread and re-instrumentalised.

⁶⁰ In July 2004, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that “nearly a third of all children [in Zimbabwe] do not possess a birth certificate” (IRIN).

CONCLUSION

Zimbabwean migrants resident in Johannesburg are constantly grappling with questions of identity, membership and resistance. While there remains an urgent need to ensure migrants' access to basic services (food, shelter, healthcare, etc), it is imperative that discourses surrounding documentation and "access" in migration literature evolve beyond an elemental "access to services" approach to one that makes room for examining access to ways of being. One such approach would need to acknowledge migrants' pragmatism – their capacity to read themselves in the South African story and redefine themselves by carving out spaces for themselves even if in ways and places that are not necessarily sanctioned by the state. An approach that privileges examining migrants' views – as agentive participants in the processes surrounding the formation of the nation-state and the limits of state power – is necessary in addressing the incongruence between the disembodied state's perspective of its instruments and that of individuals. Documentation lends itself to such study because of its dual enabling and limiting role; the debatable nature of its ownership; its significance as a primary means of state control; and as a symbol of both state power on the one hand and migrants' ability to resist and exploit that very power, on the other.

A form of proof of membership, documentation provides a systematic albeit imperfect means of indicating citizenship, codifying rights and "testifying" for or against its bearer. Issued by the state for its purposes yet borne by individuals who are either unaware of or disinclined to espouse the state's agenda, documents are both a nexus for individual-state interaction and a locus of renegotiation of meaning and rights. For Zimbabwean migrants, passports are obtained at great cost and effort and serve as a requisite item allowing for lawful exit from Zimbabwe and entry into South Africa. Passports come to symbolize access, to serve as one's "ticket [and] right of way," as one of the respondents above put it. As such, migrants understand passports as commissioned to their bearers' interests, wherein the bearers have almost exclusive rights over them, even when these interests run counter to the intended nature of documents as per the state. However, even as the migrant pursues his/her ends, the state retains an interest in the identification of individuals, regulation of movement, and control over access, the object of regulation being the same document. Documentation becomes the locus of tug-of-war, the meeting point of the individual's pursuit of his/her interests and the state's pursuit of its own. When the state exercises control through documentation, when the disjuncture between the migrant's perceptions and the state's intended purposes surfaces, a tension is created and the document becomes a fault line.

The nation-state's delineation of its borders and its power to control movement and access are called into question. It is evident that the state's power to exclude non-citizens is not

wholly unfettered. International law and humanitarian principles of non-refoulement (Abell 1999) present constraints, particularly to states that wish to be considered liberal democracies. Similarly, countries of repatriation can refuse to readmit migrants, even if it violates international agreements (Roig and Huddelston 2007). Such constraints to states' sovereignty are generally on a national and international level, emerging from the competing sovereignties of other states, and international agreements. However, it is often the state that ultimately determines what constraints it will and will not accept (see Dauvergne 2007: 535; Prem Kumar and Grundy-Warr 2004: 35-6).

However, on some level, there is a challenge to the exercise of sovereignty that states are less able to contest: the limits imposed at the level of the individual by migrants who challenge, resist, and therefore stress the boundaries of state power. Whether through evading inspection upon entry; using parallel market documents; or withholding their authentic papers, there is a plethora of subversion options, each one illustrative of migrants' ability to challenge and effectively limit the state's power to exclude. If indeed as Torpey (1998) asserts, the state's monopoly over the "legitimate means of movement" is integral to the exercise of its sovereignty, then the evasion of this control challenges sovereignty one infraction at a time, albeit like chipping at an iceberg.

The non-citizen is often seen and treated as "other" and "outside" the process of democracy, outside the social contract, yet s/he is intrinsically involved in the redefinition of state limits and therefore of the state. Even as the state exerts its influence on the individual, dictating the boundaries of his/her freedom of movement, his/her life-space, his/her membership, so the individual works back on the state, the points of contact becoming the points of resistance, the points of abrasion and co-construction, of co-definition. Granted, the state can strip some individuals to "bare life" (Agamben 1998), but for each migrant who is made into a homo sacer, there is a multitude of migrants whom the state does not locate, detain and deport. The state's power to exclude comes to exist for the most part in performances of power and shows of force – in the threat of spot-checks, in Lindela, in go-slows at the border. The state-migrant interaction that results in this resistance and redefinition is centered on documents. Thus, the examination of document-mediated individual-state interactions is pertinent to understanding migrants' perception of the exchanges and the implications of those exchanges, particularly given the importance of understanding what it is that is being resisted and what is being challenged, from the perspective of the migrant.

As shown in this paper, state officials' acceptance of bribes indicates to respondents that officers' objective is not to weed out undocumented migrants; they act in their own interests, not as agents of the state. Thus, migrants' resistance is not against the state but against its non-representatives. Resistance does not reflect whole scale rejection of states' rights to control

movement. As respondents indicated, they do not object to Home Affairs officials demanding the presentation of passports. It would probably be inaccurate to conclude that the Zimbabwean migrants interviewed here are cognizant of the implications of their actions on the state. Rather, they see themselves as individuals engaged in a struggle to assert their rights to access services, space, and ways of being in the face of inhospitable regulations but more than that, in spite of hostile quasi-state agents who target them as “opportunities”. Documentation, primary among which is the passport, when present, serves as a defense, a locus of resistance and self representation. If the frustration of the state’s legitimate efforts to control movement has negative implications for sovereignty, what is troubling is the fact of circumstances resulting in the perception of state officials as private citizens disguised in uniform, rather than as genuine representatives of the state. This is particularly so considering that it is under these conditions that the meanings attached to documentation are contested.

Because the state is disembodied and calls upon human agents to represent it and pursue its ends, the migrant-state interaction is translated from a migrant-state to a migrant-officer interaction. Zimbabwean migrants interviewed in this study have come to hold a particular view of South African police officers as disingenuous state representatives, as “free agents” pursuing their individual agendas rather than as legitimate representatives of the state. Inspection becomes a personalized process almost outside the state. Their responses to police officer initiated spot inspections are informed by this view. Resistance of movement control is understood as meted against the “free agent” police officer/s in question, not necessarily against the state. The manner of contestation that occurs can be said to be made possible and even brought about by the existence of a system of documentation and by the nature of policing of membership in Johannesburg.

Where state instituted documents such as passports are meant to grant their bearer certain protections by making him/her something of a “diplomatic representative” of his/her state (Torpey 1998: 250), defending him/her against foreign states, as well as standing in his/her defense against the issuing state, official legitimate documents strip some migrants of protections, attesting to a citizenship that renders them more vulnerable to victimization from both state and non-state agents. Fraudulent documentation then provides some defense (or a veneer of protection) against both the foreign state and its (non-)representatives, and against what is sometimes an undesirable association of the individual with a particular state. The reversal of protections is not limited to state-imposed documents, or country-of-origin documents, but also occurs with migrant-solicited documents like asylum seeker permits.

Respondents rationalize their conviction of the state-officer dissociation by noting the police’s acceptance of bribes in place of documents, their catch-and-release practice indicative of an insincere interest in immigration policing. Zimbabwean migrants are not physically

removed from South Africa, in part because of the continued moratorium on deportation even if Special Dispensation Permits have still not been issued months after the announcement of their introduction. Yet, there is a consistent singling out of a portion of the population and ritually exercising membership policing by asking to see passports the lack of which does not legally empower officers to have Zimbabwean migrants deported. The persistence of inspection almost removed from the system of deportation in which it was once embedded results in inspection being a policing of membership, psychologically reinforcing within the unwanted a sense of outsider-ness, of an other-ness that seemingly cannot be reversed by the possession of immigration papers or by a change in immigration law officially redrawing lines to include them. Zimbabwean migrants are legally/officially within the bounds of the state, yet remain affectively outside. Fraudulent documents are used to resist these exclusionary exercises. Officers' motivations are seen as superficial, and the document-mediated migrant-officer interaction as a personal contestation between individuals, the exchange suspended outside the law, outside the state, outside the regular system of immigration policing whose end is the removal of those whose presence has not been sanctioned by the state.

It is in such spaces that a young Zimbabwean woman attempting to enter South Africa would produce a sheet of paper – a corporate permit – with the photograph of an unknown male and think to present it as her own. She probably does not believe that she could pass for the man in the picture, or that an official could believe that her name was “John” or “Philip.” Rather, she has considered the policing of immigration at the level of the individual and surmised that what is required of non-citizens is documentation attesting to a claim to enter and be present in the Republic of South Africa. Whose document ought it to be? – Its bearer's. She is a migrant; in her left hand is a permit; she is its bearer. Concealed in her right hand is one or both of two things: a Zimbabwean passport without a visa, and/or a R100 note, both awaiting the time they will become necessary for her permissions to be read off them. In this moment, at this time, the man's corporate permit is her permit. She claims the rights it avails. The state might have its own notions of what the document ought to symbolize and how it is meant to be used, but when the woman's turn comes to show her passport and visa to the official at the entrance to the bus, she hands over the corporate permit, the man's face solemn in the photograph. Her actions say: “*This* is my ID. I am what *it* says I am. I have what *it* says I have. I can do what *it* says I can do...”

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APPENDIX A: *Guiding Questions for Formulation of Interview Questions*

Main Questions

- What, if anything, is the relationship between identity documents and identity from the migrant's perspective?
- What meaning do migrants attach to identification documents as a form of state control, both as citizens (e.g. of their countries of origin, or some other country) and as non-citizens (in host countries)?
- How do migrants' experiences of their countries of origin inform their view of documentation both as issued by the country of origin and by their host countries?
- Does the meaning depend on the relationship between the migrant and the nation/state issuing the document?
- Is there a morality that attaches when talking about documents? From whence does this morality come, what form does it take on, how is it expressed, and what does it dictate?
- How does documentation relate to migrants' understanding of rights and responsibilities of migrants, citizens, non-citizens and the state?
- What are migrants' views on the role of the state (e.g. and especially where facilitating and controlling movement, regulating belonging, giving and denying privileges/access, issuing passports, visas, permits, etc are concerned)?
- How does documentation relate to migrants' understanding of citizenship?

Sub-Questions

- How and why are identification documents obtained by migrants?
- How is the process of attaining documentation related (or not) to migrants' perception of documentation, citizenship and identity?
- Do those documents confer a certain identity to their holders?
- How is identity created/produced and negotiated?
- What informs all these views?
 - e.g. education, migrants as products of (other) states and as products of the (failed or successful) nation-building/state-building projects of their home countries; migrants as agentive; migrants as constructors of meaning; migrants as products of migration/experience of migration; migrants as David facing Goliath state – identity documents as stones/sling/Goliath/nothing
 - conceptions of state and of documents (as form of state control to be manipulated for migrant benefit wherever and however possible) as informed by conceptions of state and state control from home country, i.e. as informed by migrant history and experience of citizenship and experience as subject (especially Zimbabweans). (Interaction with host-state as informed by xenophobia/ reception by locals)
- How do migrant conceptions compare with those of nationals of their host countries, and to their own perceptions when depending on their perspective (as nationals or non-nationals)?
- What bearing may all this have on nation-building, sovereignty, conceptualisation of the nation-state, and on service provision?

APPENDIX B: *Sample Interview Questions*

1. Do you feel like you understand what this study is about and what your role is?
2. Having understood, would you still like to participate in the study?

Biographical Data

1. Respondent's sex?
2. How old will you be on 31 Dec. 2009, in years?
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
4. How would you describe your race?

Migration & Economic History

Is this the first time you've been in Johannesburg?

How long have you lived in Johannesburg?

What is your main source of income?

Are you currently employed/earning a living?

Please describe how you earn a living.

What countries have you ever been a citizen of?

How did you become a citizen?

Experience of Documentation & the Law

What documents have you ever had in South Africa?

What documents do you have at the moment?

What documents do you need on a day to day basis?

How do you manage without documents?

What documents have you ever tried to get/applied for?

How did you try to get them?

Did you encounter any problems?

How did you manage to work around the issue/resolve it?

Have you ever had a passport from any country?

Which international borders have you ever crossed?

Which documents did you use/not use to cross the border?

Have you ever had to grease an officer – like a police officer, soldier or home affairs person?

Have you ever had to grease anyone else while South Africa? And while in ...? And in Zim?

Have you ever been asked to produce an ID by an officer in Johannesburg? What happened?

Beliefs & Opinions

Do you think people should be asked to show ID by officers in the street? Why?

Do you think people should ever be required to show ID? When/where/why?

Do you think people should be required to have passports or visas to cross the border? Why?

Is it ok for someone born in to get an ID from another country, like?

Are there some cases where it's ok/not ok? Why?

If you have an ID from Mozambique/SA does that make you a Mozambican/South African?

What if a person decides that they now want to be a South African – how do they become a South African?

Do you consider yourself a Zimbabwean?

Have you always considered yourself a Zimbabwean?

What does it mean to you be Zimbabwean?

Would you ever want to become South African?

This is going to sound like a strange question, but what is it exactly that makes one a Zimbabwean or a South African? So, if I wanted to become a South African, what would I have to do?

And how would I stop being a Zimbabwean?

Can I be a Zimbabwean and a South African at the same time?

So, if I've never had a passport or a Zim ID, can I still be a Zimbabwean?

I hear a person needs a passport to cross back into Zim. What happens if someone tries to go back home but they don't have a passport? Will they just let them through? Should they?

Why do you think the government has rules about papers (documents)? Is it right?

Ok, so say you have a passport. Whose passport is it – is it yours, or the government's? How come?

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Interviewee's Copy

Documentation Study, Wits University FMSP

Principle Investigator: Kathryn Takabvirwa (071.688.6829)

Supervisor: Tara Polzer

Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand

Purpose:

To get a better understanding of the way people view and understand identity documents like passports, IDs, etc

Procedures:

Participation in this study will involve being interviewed by Kathryn. I expect the interview will last about 45minutes to an hour.

Expected Risks and Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to participants, and participants will not be compensated financially. However, because the interview is a bit long, participants will be offered a small snack. At the end of the interview, there will be information available from the interviewer on legal methods of accessing migration documents. It is possible that in participating in this interview, past experiences may be brought to mind, which might not be pleasant to remember. Another risk of the study is that the participant might disclose activities that are not permitted by the law. However, all the information collected in this study will be held in the strictest confidence and the interviewer will take measures to protect the identity of the respondent.

Confidentiality:

All responses will be kept and recorded anonymously. No identifying information will be collected. The participant will be asked not to even mention their name, and will be referred to by a pseudonym even during the interview. The participant will not be asked for their contact details.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate without any penalty, and you are free to stop the interview at any point. You are also free to withdraw your consent even after the interview, which means that even after the interview, you may contact the researcher and ask that your information be excluded from the interview. You may withdraw your consent for any reason.

Questions and Concerns:

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to ask them at any point. If you would like to contact the investigator after the interview, you can reach me at:

Kathryn Takabvirwa

kathryn.documentation@gmail.com

Or on 071.688.6829

If you have any questions you do not wish to address to me directly, please feel free to contact my supervisor:

Tara Polzer

Forced Migration Studies Programme

University of the Witwatersrand

P. O. Box 76, Wits 2050

Johannesburg

+27 (11) 717 4032

info@migration.org.org.za

Please note, by agreeing to participate, you do not waive or forfeit any rights or protections accorded you by the laws of South Africa. The interviewer is also bound by the guidelines of the University of the Witwatersrand's Code of Ethics for Research on Human Subjects, which you can access at <http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/Research/Ethics.htm>

APPENDIX D

Excerpt from Exchange with Respondent: Original Transcription

Respondent is a 50 year old Zimbabwean woman; married with children; has white collar job and higher education

“What does your ID mean to you?”

“It can speak for me. It can tell someone who I am. It speaks for me when I can’t speak. It is a witness as to who I am. It’s a lawyer. It’s an advocate. My ID is my advocate on my identity.”

Do you feel that there is a relationship between an ID and your identity?”

“Yes! A very important relationship. One speaks for the other.”

“So how is that affected senge kana zita racho riripa ID riri different from yours?”

“Hau. Inenge isisiri ID yako. It’s useless.”

“Inenge yava chii saka?”

“Chimwewo chiphepha chenemawords akada kufanana nezita rako. It has to be exactly as I want my name to be.”

“Does the government have the right to make you carry your ID everywhere?”

“It has no right! Then, the ID is no longer serving me. It must be to my convenience. I must have a choice kuti ndoda kufamba neID yangu kana kuti handisi kuda.

“Well, whose document is it? Does the ID belong to the government or to you?”

“It’s mine. It shall speak when I cannot speak... it’s me who determines when I shall be identified or not. They shouldn’t force me to carry it. Why should it be forced out of me? Yah, ok – kana ndapara mhosva, they can ask for my ID, but it’s me who decides whether to give it. Hear what I say [i.e. let that be enough]. If I say I’m John, I’m John. Why should you believe a piece of paper? Pamwe ndatora yanhingi. How do you know?”

“So the ID belongs to you? Not to the government?”

“No. It’s mine.”

“Why is it yours?”

“Because it’s mine. Just because it’s mine. Madetails aripo ndeangu. Ndini ndinoichengeta; ndinoitakura. I pay for it. If it’s lost, it’s me who gets into trouble. So it’s mine. Hanti kana ndikafa – dai yanga iri yavo, vaiti ndafa vaiipa kunomumwe [laughs]. Manje havadaro. Kana ndikafa, ndoenda nayo.”

Excerpt from Exchange with Respondent: Translated Transcription

Respondent is a 50 year old Zimbabwean woman; married with children; has white collar job and higher education

“What does your ID mean to you?”

“It can speak for me. It can tell someone who I am. It speaks for me when I can’t speak. It is a witness as to who I am. It’s a lawyer. It’s an advocate. My ID is my advocate on my identity.”

Do you feel that there is a relationship between an ID and your identity?”

“Yes! A very important relationship. One speaks for the other.”

“So how is that affected say if the name on the ID is different from yours?”

“Hau. It wouldn’t be your ID anymore. It’s useless.”

“What would it have become then?”

“Some other little paper/piece of paper with words that resemble/kind of look like your name. It has to be exactly as I want my name to be.”

“Does the government have the right to make you carry your ID everywhere?”

“It has no right! Then, the ID is no longer serving me. It must be to my convenience. I must have a choice whether I want to walk with my ID or I don’t want to.”

“Well, whose document is it? Does the ID belong to the government or to you?”

“It’s mine. It shall speak when I cannot speak... it’s me who determines when I shall be identified or not. They shouldn’t force me to carry it. Why should it be forced out of me? Yar, ok – if I’ve committed a crime, they can ask for my ID, but it’s me who decides whether to give it.

Hear what I say [i.e. let that be enough]. If I say I'm John, I'm John. Why should you believe a piece of paper? Maybe I've taken so and so's. How do you know?"

"So the ID belongs to you? Not to the government?"

"No. It's mine."

"Why is it yours?"

"Because it's mine. Just because it's mine. The details in it are mine. I'm the one who keeps it; I carry it. I *pay* for it. If it's lost, it's me who gets into trouble. So it's mine. Hey if I die – if it were theirs, they'd give it to someone else/another when I died? [laughs]. But they don't do that. If I die, I take it with me/I go with it."