

Transnational Habitus and Sociability in the City: Zimbabwean Migrants' Experiences in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Abstract

Drawing on field research and a survey of 150 Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg, this paper explores the dimensions of migrants' transnational experiences in the urban space. I discuss the use of communication platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook as well as other means such as telephone calls in fostering the embedding of transnational migrants within both the Johannesburg and the Zimbabwean socio-economic environments. I engage this migrant-embedding using Bourdieusian concepts of "transnational habitus" and "transnational social field," which are migration specific variations of Bourdieu's original concepts of "habitus" and "social field." In deploying these Bourdieusian conceptual tools, I observe that the dynamics of South–South migration as observed in the Zimbabwean migrants are different to those in the South–North migration streams and it is important to move away from using the same lens in interpreting different realities. For Johannesburg-based migrants to operate within the socio-economic networks produced in South Africa and in Zimbabwe, they need to actively acquire a transnational habitus. I argue that migrants' cultivation of networks in Johannesburg is instrumental, purposive, and geared towards achieving specific and immediate goals, and latently leads to the development and sustenance of flexible forms of permanency in the transnational urban space.

Keywords: transnationalism; transnational habitus; Zimbabwean migration; Johannesburg

Introduction: The Zimbabwe–South Africa Migration Corridor in Context

The Zimbabwe–South Africa migration corridor has been in existence for centuries and the history of Zimbabwean migration to South Africa includes contract labour migration to the gold mines in the 1950s (Wilson 1976), the flight of white Rhodesians after Zimbabwean independence in the 1980s (Peberdy 2009; Simon 1988), and the out-movement of ethnic Ndebele and Khalanga minorities during the Zimbabwean state-sponsored Gukurahundi¹ massacres in the 1980s (Hungwe 2012; Maphosa 2010; Murambadoro 2015; Ncube and Siziba 2017). There have also been other movements throughout the 1980s and 1990s, but greater numbers of Zimbabweans moved to South Africa and other destinations during the post-2000 era following the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy and increased political instability accompanied by election violence (see for example, de Jager and Musuva 2016; Makina 2010; Makina and Kanyenze 2010). South Africa has always been a preferred destination for many Zimbabweans due to its proximity, middle-income status and advanced economy in relation to other African countries (Crush, Chikanda, and Tawodzera 2015; Jacobsen 2007; Klotz 1997). According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA 2015), South Africa is home to 2.1 million international migrants and the majority (75.3%) of these are from the African continent, with 68% originating from the SADC region. Zimbabweans account for 45.2% of the SADC total and significantly, the majority live in Johannesburg, which is the commercial capital of South Africa. As such, Zimbabweans are an important segment of the migrant population in South Africa and in this paper I draw on field research and a survey of 150 Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg to explore the dimensions of migrants’ transnational experiences in the urban space. I introduce Bourdieu’s (1977) concepts of “habitus” and “social field” to understand migrant transnationalism in southern Africa. Bourdieu’s thesis of habitus and field allows for an in-depth engagement and disaggregation of the network of relationships that qualify African migrants as transnational and sufficiently embedded in the South African urban environment. Evidence from the Zimbabwean participants in Johannesburg indicates a shift in the nature and dynamics of their movement and attitudes towards settling in South Africa’s urban cities. Scholars generally assume, and often rightly so, that migrants have an affinity for their home countries and wish to return permanently at some point during their lifetime (see for example, Marschall 2017; Worby 2010). What emerges from the research, however, is that there are numerous indicators of permanent settlement in South Africa by Zimbabwean migrants, more specifically as the movement has become diverse and long standing. Settling in this regard is not only limited to the physical embedding but also to the non-physical realm such as the transnational space, for example. I have identified the conceptual tools of Bourdieu as a way of making sense of the Zimbabwean migrants’ presence in Johannesburg as the analogy adds a different dimension to the manner in which African

¹ Gukurahundi is a Shona-language word that literally means the rain that washes away the chaff before the spring rains.

migration has been theorised thus far. I argue that transnational migrants in the context of Bourdieu's habitus represent the internalisation of multiple externalities, including the migrants' home country environment, the host country environment and other factors influencing their daily lives (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Kelly and Lusi (2006) refer to such circumstances as the "transnational habitus" since the mobility that is inherent in the lives of migrants belies any form of static classifications but invites multi-centred forms of analysis. Thus, the habitus functions as a vehicle for the constitution of knowledge about place and the transnational landscape. As such, the transnational habitus espouses a distinctly migrant-created and migrant-centred phenomenon (Guarnizo 1997; Kelly and Lusi 2006). In this paper, I extend the analysis of transnationalism by connecting it to the concept of transnational habitus as described by Kelly and Lusi (2006) and argue that the genesis of this particular habitus draws from the migrants' intersections with different conditions in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. Such intersections position migrants not only as transient but also as transnational. It is important to understand the genesis of the transnational habitus as a habitus of transnational mobility, sustained by the socio-economic environment in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, yet not reducible to one specific context because of its hybridity. The transnational habitus therefore captures the sense of simultaneous embeddedness that characterises the different forms of existence of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. I discuss the use of communication platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook as well as other means such as telephone calls in fostering the embedding of transnational migrants within both the Johannesburg and the Zimbabwean socio-economic environments. In the following sections, I start with a discussion of the main contributions of southern African migration researchers to the conceptualisation of migrant behaviour, particularly in the context of Johannesburg. I also discuss the methods employed in this research and then turn attention to the activities of Zimbabwean migrants that constitute acts of transnational embedding such as the cultivation of networks with relatives and friends back in Zimbabwe as well as the remitting of material and social remittances.

Engaging the Transnational, Transient and Liminal Migrant Spaces of Johannesburg

Generally defined, migrant transnationalism represents a process of simultaneous and sustainable embeddedness in disparate geographical locations. Simply put, it implies immigration and settlement in the country of destination as well as the cultivation of strong backward linkages with the home country (Crush and McDonald 2000; Erdal 2013; Erdal and Oeppen 2013; Portes 2003; 2001; Schiller, Basch, and Blanc 1995). Other scholars have argued that assimilation in the destination country and the maintenance of enduring and strong linkages with the country of origin co-exist and there is no binary or contradiction between the two (Levitt and Schiller 2004). While the global transnational migration debates intensified in the early 1990s, within the southern African migration scholarship, discussions gathered currency in the late 1990s and early 2000s as increased numbers of migrants from other African countries migrated

to South Africa. Discussing this emerging discourse, Crush and McDonald (2000) questioned whether transnationalism was a new development in southern Africa or if it was just an incarnation of the age-old practice of migrants moving between the destination and source countries. Their observation was that, while movement had always occurred, it was the intensity of the exchanges, the new modes of transacting, and the multiplication of activities that required cross-border travel and contacts on a regular and sustainable basis that were unprecedented at the time (Crush and McDonald 2000).

Following the initial exchanges opened by Crush and McDonald (2000), there has been a nascent South African academic literature that conceptualises migrant space beyond the physical boundaries that have traditionally been the reference point for most of the migration scholarship. This literature includes the work of Landau, who has analysed the nature of the migration landscape in the inner city of Johannesburg and argued that foreign migrants and South African citizens have developed different and competing sets of idioms in relation to one another and to the spaces that they share in the city (Landau 2006). Landau (2006) further describes migrants as “transients” rather than “transplants,” and highlights that foreign migrants actively resist implanting their roots in Johannesburg, instead opting to access and navigate the city from a position of partial inclusion and transience. Landau and Freemantle (2010) introduced the concept of “tactical cosmopolitanism”² in describing a similar process discussed by Landau (2006). They recognised the importance of migrants’ agency within the Johannesburg context and noted that, instead of being passive victims of exclusion, African migrants in Johannesburg take ownership of their social exclusion and marginalisation in relation to South African citizens. In so doing, these migrants negotiate their place within Johannesburg on a usufruct basis. While this literature acknowledges the physicality of Johannesburg, it shows that migrants create for themselves a space that transcends immediate physicality, using the fact that they are not defined in terms of one territory as a tactical resource (Landau 2006; 2012; Landau and Freemantle 2010; 2016).

In addition to the concepts of transience and tactical cosmopolitanism, the concept of “liminality” has also been used in recent South African literature on transnational migrants. In her book, *Migrant Women of Johannesburg: Everyday Life in an In-between City*, Kihato explores the everyday lives of migrant women in inner-city Johannesburg using the notion of liminality to show how they live “between and betwixt multiple worlds, suspended between a past back home and an imagined future elsewhere” (Kihato 2013, xiii). The women Kihato refers to live in a physical space, but their identities and imaginaries are suspended between the spaces of their past and the spaces they hope to inhabit in the future. As such, the space of the present is liminal and

² Defining tactical cosmopolitanism, Landau and Freemantle argue that, “as non-citizens encounter and attempt to overcome the opposition to their presence, they draw on a variegated language of belonging that makes claims to the city while positioning them in an ephemeral, superior and unrooted condition where they can escape localised social and political obligations” (2010, 380).

in Kihato's analysis, such liminality is enabled by the context of Johannesburg's inner city, which is in continual flux. Kihato also alludes to the character of inner-city Johannesburg as transitional owing to the history of legislated non-belonging for black Africans (both internal and foreign) during the apartheid era in South Africa.³ The liminality discussed by Kihato is akin to the concept of "permanent temporariness" discussed in the work of Collins (2012), who applies it to temporary migration in the Asia-Pacific cities. Collins adopts Bailey et al.'s (2002, 139) definition and posits that "'permanent temporariness' describes both the static experience of being temporary (i.e., suspended legal, geographic, and social animation, and so on) and the secretion of strategies of resistance (strategic visibility) in the acquired knowledge that such temporariness is permanent" (Collins 2012, 322).

What emerges from the South African literature, in the conceptual sense, is a characterisation of migrants as grappling with the vicissitudes of Johannesburg, and the continued theorisation of migration through lenses of temporariness and transience (for instance, Landau and Freemantle 2010; 2016). The exception perhaps being a few migration scholars who refer to Zimbabwean migrants who are disconnected from their countries of origin and do not travel or send remittances back home (for example, Maphosa 2007; Muzondidya 2010; Worby 2010). These include migrants who moved from Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) to South Africa during the Rhodesian colonial era, who worked in the mines, farms and as domestic servants and did not return, instead choosing to establish themselves in South Africa (Muzondidya 2010). These are often referred to as *umgewu* in Zimbabwean Ndebele (Maphosa 2007) or *zvichoni* in Zimbabwean Shona (Muzondidya 2010). According to Muzondidya (2010), these migrants often established themselves in South Africa, married local women and eventually cut connections with their countries of origin. A more eminent discussion, however, is introduced by Worby (2010) who engages the case of migrants who actively disconnect with their places of origin in order to avoid the burden of sending remittances and being called upon to be destination contacts for newly arrived relatives. While these are sometimes permanently disconnected from their families back home, it is difficult to categorise them as permanently settled in South Africa because they often imagine their lives terminating back in their countries of origin. Worby (2010, 421) highlights the temporality of displaced Zimbabweans, arguing that "Zimbabweans in the diaspora have lived with the eternally prolonged expectation that an end to the political and economic 'crisis' was imminent. The inevitability of a return home, while still a central pillar of most migrants' life plans, seems to be continuously and indefinitely deferred." Discussing the local (South African) burials of foreign migrants in Johannesburg, Moyo, Núñez and Leuta (2016) mention immigrants who are out of touch with their relatives

³ Apartheid refers to "the system of legalised and institutionalised race discrimination and segregation in South Africa" (Lipton 1989, 2). The system officially ended in 1994.

and end up buried in South Africa as paupers because none of their relatives claim the body or are willing to contribute towards funeral expenses.

In sum, there have been discussions of migrant permanent settlement, especially in relation to the older generations of Zimbabweans who moved to South Africa during the Rhodesian colonial era as well as in the 1980s and 1990s (Maphosa 2007; Muzondidya 2010). However, these have been in the context of migrants who are despised by relatives from Zimbabwe as *imigewu* or *zvichoni* and a category that has no stable emplacement within the Zimbabwe–South Africa migration corridor. Such theorisations of permanency as disconnection together with the theorisation of African migrants as transient and temporary within the Johannesburg context often centre the analysis more on the individual migrant and less on their transnational realities. This creates a gap in the theorisation of transnational migration in southern African studies, despite the initial promise of the opening discussion by Crush and McDonald (2000) at the turn of the millennium. As such, the southern African migration academic scholarship is yet to accept and apportion African migrants a place in the transnational urban space beyond the temporary and imagined return to their area of origin. Landau has described them as transient and Kihato has engaged them as liminal, yet there has not been extended efforts into understanding the nature of their transnational rootedness in the South African urban space.

A Note on Methods and the Zimbabwean Participants

The data for this paper was collected as part of a doctoral study which focused on Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg and looked at the ways in which they construct and negotiate space in the city. The doctoral study utilised a mixed-methods approach, though the current paper relied on the qualitative aspects of the methodology as it engaged the lived experiences and transnational realities of the Zimbabwean participants. The study employed a questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed questions, in which closed questions were followed up with probing and open-ended questions to get more depth on the experiences of Zimbabwean immigrants and other information on issues that could not be answered by closed questions. The interviews for the research were conducted between 2012 and 2014 by the author and two trained research assistants who spoke both Shona and Ndebele, which are the major languages spoken in Zimbabwe. This was done in order to allow the participants to converse in their preferred languages and elicit rich data. The interviews were recorded in order to capture the responses to the open-ended questions. These were then transcribed and analysed separately from the survey responses. In order to clarify certain points that emerged from the analysis of the survey and interview data, I held two focus group discussions in 2016, one with seven and the other with 11 participants. Both focus group discussions consisted of Zimbabwean migrants who had resided in South Africa for periods ranging from one year to 21 years. The focus group discussions were held in English, though participants were permitted to speak in both Shona and Ndebele. Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the university's non-medical ethics board,

and care needed to be exercised in order to avoid exposing undocumented migrants to harm. As such, none of their real names and contact details were recorded during the interviews, and in most instances, the researcher and assistants only obtained verbal consent rather than written consent. The main method of recruitment for the research was snowball sampling, whereby the researcher and the research assistants relied on their networks and the networks of the interviewed participants. Snowball sampling refers to a technique by which new data collection units (in this case individual Zimbabwean immigrants) become the source of information that leads to the recruitment of other potential research participants (Yin 2011). The snowball procedure was utilised because of its efficacy in the Johannesburg context where sampling frames are difficult to establish and migrants generally are hard to recruit through probability sampling (see for instance, Vigneswaran 2009; Vigneswaran and Quirk 2013). One hundred and fifty Zimbabwean migrants who had lived in Johannesburg for more than a year were selected and the recruitment procedure paid attention to the diversity of the Zimbabwean population in South Africa in terms of sex, ethnicity, year of arrival and age. Of the interviewed participants, 48% were female while 52% were male. In terms of ethnicity, self-identified Ndebeles accounted for 55% of the participants while Shona participants were 45%.

Zimbabwean Migrant Embedding in the Transnational Landscape

According to Dahinden (2010, 53), “the mobility—or better, circulation—of representations, ideas, goods and services across and within national boundaries is of great importance for the production and reproduction of transnational spaces.” The conventional approach to transnational migration would often focus on the activities of the transnational migrants in terms of how they maintain the linkages with the country of origin while embedding themselves in the host country (Erdal and Oeppen 2013). This approach emerges from the global North experiences of migration where the assumption is that migrants settle permanently at the outset and desire assimilation into the destination country’s milieu. In fact, this line of research highlights that those who assimilate in the destination countries have better chances of success in terms of labour market outcomes and socio-economic mobility. While such perspectives apply to evidence from the South–North migration narratives, they still form the basis for most of the South–South migration narratives and as such, I will start with a discussion of the key characteristics that make Zimbabwean migrants transnational in the conventional sense. These include frequent communication, economic and social remittances, as well as the maintenance of a foothold within the country of origin’s socio-economic space.

The Frequency of Migrants’ Communication with People back in Zimbabwe

Communication and connection with family and other contacts based in the country of origin is often seen as a key indicator of social investment and a desire to cultivate, maintain and sustain linkages amongst transnational migrants. Such immigrant communication has been in existence for many years and most notably, transnational

migration scholars have considered the frequency and intensity of the communication in defining the key tenets of migrant transnationalism (Crush and McDonald 2000; Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992). Communication is critical to the migrants' simultaneous maintenance of presence in both the destination and origin countries. For the purposes of this research, I disaggregated the communication in terms of the contacts and the frequency (see Table 1).

Table 1: Frequency of migrants' communication with people in Zimbabwe

<i>Communication frequency</i>	<i>Immediate family</i>		<i>Extended family</i>		<i>Friends</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Once a day	47	35.1	9	10.5	34	41.5
Once a week	58	43.3	35	40.7	24	29.3
Once every two weeks	3	2.2	9	10.5	6	7.3
Once a month	23	17.2	29	33.7	17	20.7
Once a year	3	2.2	4	4.6	1	1.2
Total	134	100	86	100	82	100

Source: author's survey data

The frequency of communication was higher between migrants and their immediate family—with 78% communicating at least once a week and 35% daily. Participants of this study shared that they communicate frequently with immediate family as they consider themselves to be a part of households in Zimbabwe. They are also involved in family decision-making, which is a two-way consultation process between immigrants and the people back home, with 65.3% of the Zimbabwean participants consulting people back home when making important decisions pertaining to marriage and child support. A significant proportion (70.7%) is consulted by family back home when decisions are made and the figure is higher for male participants as opposed to female participants who seem to be consulted less when important family matters are discussed. Often, this is down to the patriarchal nature of their families where female opinion is treated with less respect compared to their male counterparts. There are, however, exceptions where the female migrant is the breadwinner in the household and also where they are the head of the household and responsible for key decisions. Importantly, there does not seem to be significant variation in terms of ethnicity where consultative decision-making is concerned.

Social Media Platforms as an Important Medium in Immigrant Communication

Before the widespread use of social media platforms, landline and later mobile phone calls were the most commonly cited medium of transnational migrant communication (Vertovec 1999; 2004). In 2004, Vertovec (2004, 219) recognised the importance of phone calls, arguing that cheap phone calls were emerging as the “social glue of migrant transnationalism.” However, for Zimbabwean migrants, the advent of social media platforms such as WhatsApp (founded in 2009) and Facebook (founded in 2004), and access to affordable smartphones have increased both the intensity and frequency of the communication with people in Zimbabwe as well as elsewhere in the world. This is enabled by greater access to the internet in South Africa, which has recorded an increase in smartphone penetration from 43.5% in 2016 to over 80% in 2019 (ICASA 2019). Within the Zimbabwean context, mobile phone penetration rates consistently exceeded 90% between 2012 and 2018 while the figures for internet penetration have increased from 30.6% in 2012 (POTRAZ 2013) to 50.1 % in 2016 (POTRAZ 2016) and 62.9 % in 2018 (POTRAZ 2018). The use of social media platforms by Zimbabwean immigrants speaks to emerging trends worldwide where discourses of “co-presence” and “peripheral awareness” are beginning to find expression in academic literature (see for instance, Madianou 2016). According to Madianou (2016), advanced communication technologies facilitate co-presence and peripheral awareness, especially amongst transnational families, and create an awareness of what happens in distant places. Amongst the Zimbabwean migrants interviewed for this research, there is an increasing utilisation of social group functions in social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Family members, friends and sometimes people from the same village or town of origin in Zimbabwe create social groups that resemble online chat rooms where they share information about each other, their communities and local gossip. For example, information pertaining to deaths and other stories from villages or townships of origin quickly spread through the WhatsApp messaging platforms. The new features create co-presence where people engage in instantaneous conversation while in geographically disparate places. A focus group discussion held with Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg highlights the impact of social networks in the following terms (selected responses to a question on the impact of social networks, FGD 2, Johannesburg, 26/03/2016):

Respondent 5: WhatsApp makes it very easy; I can chat with my mum [mother] anytime.

Respondent 2: I think when you look at technology, it creates a different world for people. You can live in this world but practically exist in another.

Respondent 7: I can take a photograph and send it to Zimbabwe now while sitting here.

Respondent 2: You can stop communicating with all these people here and have people that you communicate with on your phone, and it does not affect you. You can be here physically but live in Zimbabwe on your phone.

Respondent 3: We are now living part of our daily lives in Zimbabwe.

Communication technologies are largely seen as transformative of the transnational migration landscape as seen in the manner in which migrants have grown accustomed to a life in which they can be physically in Johannesburg but take part in life activities in Zimbabwe. Transnational migrants in this instance, through communication technologies, are entangled or straddle the synergistic networks that exist in the coalescing of the social fields in Zimbabwe and the social fields in Johannesburg. While social network platforms dominated communication with friends, phone calls were still the most preferred channel for communication with immediate and extended family, accounting for 62.9% and 53.6% respectively. Such differentiation is down to at least two factors, namely, mobile network coverage and age. Some migrants shared that they are only limited to phone calls because there is poor internet penetration in most parts of rural Zimbabwe which rely on second generation (2G) network connectivity that does not support high speed data connections necessary for social network platforms. There is also the issue of the generational divide between the younger migrants and the elderly family members that remain in the home country. There is often a general sense amongst some Zimbabwean migrants that the elderly family members are less technologically adept and thus prefer contact through voice calls. In cases where WhatsApp video and voice calling are not possible due to poor internet connectivity, migrants only have the option of traditional mobile phone calls.

The Frequency of Participants' Travel to and from Zimbabwe

The majority of Zimbabwean participants travelled to Zimbabwe at least once a year and the presence of family and other relatives back home is connected to the frequency of such visits. This indicates a strong link with the home country and a desire amongst the interviewed Zimbabweans to maintain an active connection with home. However, there was also a sizable proportion (17.3%) of the interviewed participants who had not gone back to Zimbabwe since arriving in South Africa. Half of these (50%) arrived in South Africa between 2005 and 2009 while 42% arrived between 2010 and 2014, and two male migrants arrived in 1994 and 2001. There was only a slight difference in terms of gender for the migrants who had not gone back home since arriving in South Africa, 46% were male and 54% female. Reasons given for not going back included lack of funds and the absence of relatives and immediate family members in the home country, with some migrants indicating that their entire families were based in South Africa. At least 38% of those that did not go home seemed to be completely disconnected as they did not communicate with anyone in Zimbabwe and also did not send any remittances back home. Others indicated that they did not attach importance to physically travelling to Zimbabwe and did not feel the need to do so, especially when they communicated with people in Zimbabwe on a daily basis and were aware of things that happen at home without having to be there. This is shown by the high percentage (61.5) of people who sent remittances and were also involved in consultative decision-making with people in Zimbabwe.

Table 2: Participants' frequency of travel back to Zimbabwe

<i>Frequency of travel</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Every month	2	1.3
Once every three months	12	8.0
Once every six months	43	28.7
Once a year	65	43.3
Never gone back	26	17.3
Other	2	1.3
Total	150	100.0

Migrant Transnational Embedding and Membership in Johannesburg

A number of studies have focused on the role of migrants as transnational agents who actively cultivate connections with the country of origin (see for instance, Conway and Potter 2007; Faist 2008). What is often lacking or taken for granted in these accounts of migrant transnationalism is the nature and form of connections and linkages that the participants cultivate in the destination country. In this section, I highlight the different forms of Zimbabwean migrants' embeddedness within South African society. This builds on the preceding discussions of the connections and cultivation of backward linkage networks with the home country. Essentially, the time spent in the home country, prior to migration and on periodic visits, is important as the basis and primary locus of sentimental connection to Zimbabwe. Regarding connections to South Africa, I particularly focus on the levels of integration within the Johannesburg context, for example, the nationalities of family members, friends, close friends and casual acquaintances of the migrants. I also discuss social connections within Johannesburg in the context of a socio-cultural field that is different to the socio-cultural field to which the migrants as carriers of a specific habitus are socialised in Zimbabwe. It is important to state the composition of the Johannesburg social field and the tenets that make it transnational within the context of this research.

South African citizens in their diversity possess flexible forms of power in relation to foreign migrants and could be conceptualised as the first significant stakeholders in the Johannesburg transnational social field. The transnational social field is also composed of other Zimbabweans of the same ethnicity and of different ethnicities to those of the migrants in question. There are also foreign migrants from other nationalities, predominantly from other African countries. I will limit the composition of this

particular social field to the above-mentioned stakeholders, though there are many other stakeholders who occupy varying positions and engage in different forms of contestation over the stakes available. In the following sections, I will outline the different types of relationships that the participants have within the Johannesburg context as an iterative component of the suite of relationships involving the home country, which I have discussed in the preceding sections. Notably, I will highlight the presence of family members and friends from Zimbabwe and the friendships formed with South Africans and other migrants in Johannesburg.

Family and Friends as Members of the Transnational Social Field in Johannesburg

As noted in the preceding section, friends and family members of migrants constitute stakeholders within the Johannesburg transnational social field (see Table 3 and Table 4 below). The data points to a greater Zimbabwean presence in Johannesburg, with 94.7% of the participants of this study indicating that they have relatives of the same ethnicity in Johannesburg while 51.3% reveal that they have relatives of a different ethnicity and 40% have black South African relatives. The familial relationships with black South Africans, as indicated by some participants, derive from sexual liaisons, cohabitation and intermarriages, some dating back to the early migration of male Zimbabweans to the South African mines. Others, however, are more recent and speak to the development of areas of convergence and acceptance of long-term residence in Johannesburg. The development of these relationships enmeshes participants into inextricable associations with Johannesburg and cognate familial relationships that they cannot control, especially where children resulting from intermarriages and other sexual relations begin to find their own identities as key actors within the transnational social field. These children increasingly defy conventional forms of allocating identity and belonging to states as they have dual claim to both Zimbabwean and South African citizenship, and in some instances, place their parents in situations of ambivalent and conflicted loyalties. For example, one such Zimbabwean parent (FGD2, Johannesburg, 26/03/2016) states that,

My children are South African because they were born here. As a parent, I come from Zimbabwe, but my children belong here, they have South African citizenship and as such, they cannot be called Zimbabweans.

Apart from trying to find and maintain their own identities as Zimbabwean, these parents begin to contend with the presence of children that may never see Zimbabwe as home.⁴ The contestation over belonging to South Africa versus belonging to Zimbabwe and being caught in an in-between space finds expression even closer to them as they have to live with cognate family members who are South African by birth. In other

⁴ Perhaps to add clarity here, this particular Zimbabwean parent is using a South African identity document and her children gain South African citizenship at birth.

words, what they have been experiencing from a distance and on the street or other outside space is now experienced in the home space, in close and inalienable spaces. Such relationships impose an additional layer of complexity to the Zimbabwean migrant identities and the manner in which the Johannesburg transnational social field is structured.

In addition to shaping the experiences and relationship of participants with the city, personal relationships leave an indelible mark on the habitus of the participants as they adjust to the new environment. This new habitus exists within a field that is not reducible to either the Zimbabwean context or the Johannesburg context but embodies the milieu of both contexts. The indication is that there is a greater sense of integration of Zimbabweans in South Africa and more space for interaction and contact with the South African population. Thus, the results for the spoken languages as well as the friendships formed attest to the greater contact between Zimbabweans and different residents of Johannesburg.

Table 3: Participants with family in Johannesburg

<i>Family members</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Same ethnicity	142	94.7
Different ethnicity	77	51.3
Black South African	60	40
SADC nationals	17	11.3

Source: author's survey data

Table 4: Participants with friends in Johannesburg

<i>Friends</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Same ethnicity	143	95.3
Different ethnicity	115	76.7
Black South African	119	79.3
SADC nationals	84	56
White South African	73	48.7

Coloured South African	42	28
Other	21	14

Source: author's survey data

Greater numbers of participants have friends across the different groups of people in Johannesburg as 95.3% of the participants have friends of the same ethnicity (Shona and Ndebele) while 76.7% have Zimbabwean friends of a different ethnic background. There are also strong links of friendship with South Africans as 79.3% of the participants indicate that they have black South African friends, and significant proportions have friends from other racial groups such as white South Africans, Indians and coloureds. The implication here is that, while there is a higher proportion of friendships with people with same ethnicities and from the same country, there are a correspondingly high number of friendships with people that have no cognate relationship with the participants. Friendships also indicate areas of common interest with other elements of the Johannesburg transnational social field, as they are not strictly limited to shared ethnicity and citizenship. This also indicates a greater entrenchment of the Zimbabwean presence in South Africa as friendships are often built over time and form out of familiarity between participants and the people surrounding them. Considering the nature of these social relationships and the levels of interaction within the Johannesburg context, I argue that these relationships are not always altruistic but are often instrumental and constitute the migrants' response to the demands of the Johannesburg socio-economic environment. The evidence of shared work environments (see Table 5) across different nationalities as well as other social relationships outside of friendship such as belonging to the same religious faith (see Table 6) indicate the depth of shared spaces between the participants of this study and other population groups in Johannesburg. While these associations may not exactly speak to the depth of the relationships, they however indicate a good level of immersion by participants of this study within Johannesburg.

Table 5: Nationalities of participants' work colleagues in Johannesburg

<i>Work colleagues</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Same ethnicity	93	62
Different ethnicity	79	52.7
Black South African	96	64
SADC nationals	65	43.3

White South African	81	54
Coloured South African	48	32
Other	16	10.7

Source: author's survey data

Table 6: Participants with church mates in Johannesburg

<i>Church mates</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Same ethnicity	117	78
Different ethnicity	93	62
Black South African	97	64.7
SADC nationals	55	36.7
White South African	41	27.3
Coloured South African	33	22
Other	11	7.3

The question around church association was meant to elicit another layer of integration within the Johannesburg transnational social field and as such, there was no specificity regarding the denominations and types of religion. Amongst those who indicated that they go to church, as shown in Table 6, membership cuts across different groups and there is also shared church space with South African citizens.

Language Competency as Capital in the Johannesburg Transnational Social Field

The languages spoken by migrants in Johannesburg (see Table 7 below) demonstrate the operation of a different order and a new set of relationships that are not entirely reducible to the home environment in Zimbabwe or to the new environment in Johannesburg. While amongst the Shona-speaking participants it is common to speak English as a second language when in Zimbabwe, the socio-economic environment of Johannesburg demands that they replace Shona with English as the first language. For instance, speaking in English is better and safer for some participants as it does not immediately reveal one's identity as a Zimbabwean. If you speak in English, you may not be readily identifiable as a Zimbabwean and one has to go further beyond the English-speaking subject to uncover the real identity. It is better to speak in English;

“you cannot go about speaking in Shona, using words like *sadza* (thick porridge), *muriwo* or *maveggie* (vegetables)” (FGD2 participant, 26/03/2016). Such language, which immediately distinguishes one as a foreign national, exacerbates the risks of prejudice, and possibly xenophobic violence. As such, there are changes in the mindset, in the habitus of a Shona Zimbabwean due to the requirements of the new social field. For the Shona Zimbabweans, for example, English becomes the dominant language in primary interactions with South Africans and other migrants, including the Ndebele-speaking Zimbabweans.

Table 7: Languages spoken with different population groups in the city

<i>Languages spoken</i>	<i>Same ethnicity</i>	<i>Different ethnicity</i>	<i>Black South Africans</i>	<i>White South Africans</i>	<i>Coloured South Africans</i>	<i>SADC nationals</i>	<i>Other</i>
Ndebele	68	12	10	0	0	0	0
Shona	40	21	0	0	0	0	0
Shona and Ndebele	3	25	0	0	0	0	0
Ndebele and English	11	18	4	0	0	0	0
Shona and English	22	16	0	0	0	0	0
English	1	37	39	104	79	95	30
Zulu	0	0	40	0	0	3	0
Zulu and English	0	1	29	0	0	2	0
Other South African languages	0	0	13	0	0	0	0

Bourdieu refers to different forms of capital or stakes in the field and notes that, within the social field, there are contestations for capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). In this case, the contestations may not be obvious but the possession of South African language competencies places one in a better position to access specific resources within the Johannesburg context. For example, one Ndebele participant (survey participant, ID060, Rosettenville, 09/10/2013) highlighted that he is able to pass as South African at work, stating the following:

At times, I do not identify as Zimbabwean because of tribal politics from back home. Sometimes they think that I am Zulu because of the language similarities. *Wena* (referring to the interviewer who speaks Ndebele), you can tell that I am not Zulu when we talk, you can tell that, this is not Zulu, it is Ndebele but some of my workmates it takes them up to three months to know that I am not South African.

Such language competencies also assist in the negotiation of relationships and cultivation of social networks with South African citizens and the way that Zimbabwean

migrants experience the city. Within the pool of languages, Ndebele and Shona languages dominate interactions with co-ethnics and a combination of Shona and English and Ndebele and English, and English is significant, especially with people of different ethnicity. Interaction with black South Africans mainly happens in Zulu, English and a combination of Zulu and English. A few participants speak other South African languages other than Zulu when interacting with black South Africans while interaction with white South Africans and coloured South Africans happens exclusively in English. The same applies to immigrants from other countries outside of the pre-determined categories. Interaction with immigrants from the SADC region other than Zimbabwe and South Africa also happens mainly in English, with a few speaking Zulu and a combination of Zulu and English.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the different dimensions of Zimbabwean migrants' relationships in both the destination and country of origin contexts. While transnationalism is a vital frame through which the activities of migrants can be understood, in its conventional form and conceptualisation it does not do enough to encapsulate the full remit of Zimbabwean migrant experiences as they navigate both the Johannesburg and Zimbabwean social fields. In this paper, I have discussed the operation of a transnational habitus amongst Zimbabwean migrants, which develops from simultaneous exposure to both the Zimbabwean and South African socio-economic contexts. I have also discussed the operation of a transnational social field, which operates with the transnational habitus of migrants. This partly responds to the ambivalence of Southern African migration studies regarding the status of African migrants who have moved from their countries of origin. Thus, the transnational habitus and transnational social field in this context take into cognisance the need to understand the transnational permanence of migrants in Johannesburg and the circumstances that allow such flexible forms of permanency to develop as well as the conditions that are needed for the migrants to survive and find comfort in their experiences of the city. The transnational presence of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg and Zimbabwe is sustained by access to communication technologies and social networking platforms such as WhatsApp which foster their embedding within both socio-economic environments. However, access to and use of these technologies does not seem to enable new relationships but intensifies the frequency of communication, especially with friends and close family. The advent of new forms of communication has also lessened the need to physically travel to Zimbabwe as shown by the significant number of people who have never gone back home but still maintain frequent communication, send remittances and take part in family decision-making.

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