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**Diaspora Citizenship and the Transnational Domain: Political,
Religious, Charitable and Familial Practices Amongst
Zimbabweans in the UK**

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**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

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Originality Statement

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another university for the award of any other degree.

Signature

29 April 2020

Date

I. Abstract

This thesis develops the notion of diaspora citizenship to analyse domains of transnational action by Zimbabwean migrants in the UK focussing on their political, religious, charitable and familial practices. I argue that diaspora citizenship is enmeshed with a sense of belonging and active practices of civic engagement in both host and homeland. The thesis proposes an extension of the usual conceptualisation of 'acts of citizenship' (Isin, 2008) by exploring transnational domains of activism. A transnational lens allows us to look at how diasporic citizenship can provide a banner of mobilization, not just for undocumented or irregular migrants in relation to rights in countries of settlement, but also for a range of diasporic activists whose formal citizenship is not fully recognised in countries of origin. Diaspora citizenship therefore becomes a recognisable sphere of practice in both the hostland and homeland. The thesis draws on 85 qualitative interviews conducted in the UK and Zimbabwe and follows a multi-sited methodology that entailed tracing and assessing UK-based diaspora groups' transnational networks and activities in Zimbabwe. It follows two specific diaspora civic activist networks, as well as practices of giving through Zimbabwean Roman Catholic organisations and familial networks. The thesis shows how a UK-based Zimbabwean professionals' civic rights initiative collaborated with and supported major human rights organisations in Zimbabwe with funds and technology. It also discusses the transnational impact of irregular migrants in the UK who have funded their own human rights organisation in Zimbabwe. At the same time, the Zimbabwean diaspora's transnational reach is also powerfully shaped by religious and familial networks, which are interconnected with transnational civic and political activism. The thesis extends prior studies of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK by illuminating understandings of citizenship, belonging and influence of diaspora members not only in the hostland, but also in the homeland. By so doing, the thesis contributes not only to scholarship on the Zimbabwe diaspora specifically, but also to broader theoretical debates by exploring the potential utility of the concept of diaspora citizenship.

II. Acknowledgements

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III. List of Abbreviations

CBO – Community Based Organisation
CIO – Central Intelligence Organisation
ERC – Election Resource Centre
ESAP – Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (Zimbabwe)
FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office
MP – Member of Parliament
MDC – Movement for Democratic Change
RBZ – Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
ROHR- Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe (International)
SPT – Solidarity Peace Trust
UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
WRC DT – Westminster Roman Catholic Church Diocese Trust
ZA – Zimbabwe Association
ZANU-PF – Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZAOGA FIF – Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa Forward In Faith
ZCCEW – Zimbabwe Catholic Community in England and Wales
ZCBC – Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop’s Conference
ZCI – Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative
ZHRO – Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation
ZIMPAP – Zimbabwe Peace Actors Platform
ZLHR – Zimbabwe Lawyers in Human Rights

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Chapter Introduction

Over the past two decades, Zimbabwe's diaspora communities have grown exponentially mainly due to the political and economic instability and crisis in the country. Zimbabwe has experienced many different waves of migration from the pre and post-independence era – labour (black) migration to South Africa, exile during the liberation war including white settlers, coloured, and Asian groups, and a very large number of black African refugees and guerrilla fighters to neighbouring countries. There was also an exodus of the white minority in the country after independence, flight during and after *Gukurahundi*¹ in Matebeleland, and flight of Zimbabweans of all social groups during the ESAP (Economic Structural Adjustment Program) period in the country. But the current phase began in the late 1990s when the economy took a nosedive and the country was thrown into political disarray and emigration reached new heights². This has led to Zimbabweans going to many different countries across the globe, from South Africa to Australia, USA to New Zealand and of course Europe and particularly the United Kingdom *inter alia*. Betts (2013) contends that such crisis-driven emigration is far from the exception in sub-Saharan Africa.

About a third of the population (3-4 million) are estimated to have left the country during this period, 2000 – 2010 (IOM, 2010). Because of its size, the Zimbabwean diaspora contributes significantly to the homeland's economy via formal economic remittances estimated to have been around US\$780 million between January and September 2016 according to Zimbabwe's then Finance Minister (Chinamasa, September 2016). Despite such contributions, Zimbabweans outside the country still cannot take part in formal decision-making within the country as they cannot vote and are not included in governmental policymaking. Notwithstanding the exclusion, Zimbabweans abroad still make efforts to influence politics, the civic sphere and to

¹ Gukurahundi refers to an operation carried out by the Zimbabwe National Army's Fifth Brigade between 1983 and 1987, where suspected anti-government elements among the ZAPU political opposition and Ndebele minority community were identified and eliminated in acts of ethnic and political cleansing by the mostly Shona military. The massacres remain the darkest period in Zimbabwe's post-independence history. An estimated 20 000 or more people are reported to have lost their lives during this period. (CCJP and LRF, 1997)

² See full discussion in Chapter 2 (also in Hammar et al, 2010)

engage with different organisations in the homeland in their bid to change the situation in the country. Much activity is through direct political engagements, but human rights civic organisations are also important, as is charitable giving through religious networks, and family remittances. These religious and family networks have a recognisable importance in helping Zimbabweans in the UK deal with hostility of the hostland and to integrate, but they also shape diasporic influences on practices of citizenship in the homeland.

Due to these diverse roots and heterogeneity, Zimbabwe's new diaspora has attracted a significant level of research interest on issues of diasporic affairs and transnationalism (Tevera 2005; Mano and Willems 2008; Pasura 2008; McGregor and Primorac, 2010; Kuhlmann 2013; Mbiba 2012; Manase 2013) These studies explore the meaning of 'diaspora,' and what individual diaspora members and associations do, mostly focussing on the diaspora itself and countries of settlement. Relatively little attention has been paid to how transnational practices contribute to the homeland in socio-political and development terms or to the dynamics of transnational political, religious and family networks. The literature available also lacks detailed studies of how citizens residing in the country of origin perceive emigrant participation in affairs of the country they left, which Gamlen (2014) claims is centrally important to understanding diasporas. Moreover, little attention has been paid to understandings of, and practices of citizenship in transnational domains – both in relationship to state policies and individual acts. Indeed, the thesis seeks to extend understandings of citizenship in transnational, diasporic contexts – both at a theoretical level and in terms of lived experience and shifting practices by specific Zimbabwean networks spanning the UK and the homeland.

Transnationalism allows us to explore migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). In the Zimbabwean context, there has been a relative lack of detailed attention to diasporic engagements - political, religious and familial – that approaches these networks on the basis of research in both homeland and hostlands. Moreover, much of the extant literature has been based on research conducted during the initial period of Zimbabwean 'crisis' emigration and settlement from 2000, rather than taking into account the protracted instability which has now persisted nearly 20 years. Indeed, the context of this study was one of

renewed political and economic crisis in 2017-8. There were dramatic changes: factionalism within the ruling ZANU-PF party, which had ruled Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 culminated in a military coup in 2017, through which President Robert Mugabe was ousted, and controversial elections in early 2018 that legitimised the party's continuation in government under President Emerson Mnangagwa. As existing studies have shown, the Zimbabwe diaspora from 2000 has been highly politicised from the outset, yet this study also reveals the ways in which political, religious, economic and familial engagements have changed over time.

1.2. Focus of Research

This study seeks to fill in these knowledge gaps on how diaspora practices relate to understandings and practices of citizenship by exploring different fields of transnational action: politics and religious engagement, charitable developmental interventions and the familial. In relation to each domain, I trace networks of activity in the diaspora back to the homeland to see how actual contributions manifest there. The key overarching research question in this thesis is: how do concepts of diaspora 'citizenship' shape political, socio-economic, religious and familial interactions with the homeland? The different empirical chapters in this thesis also answer the more specific questions which are:

- Can a broad transnational understanding of 'citizenship' beyond the purely legal domain shed light on diasporic political practices and their impact in the homeland?
- How does religious transnationalism affect diaspora citizenship and decisions to charitably give back to the homeland and, what are the effects and interpretations of these diasporic donations?
- How does the legal and socio-economic status of diasporans in the hostland shape transnational family practices and how do these practices affect diasporic citizenship?

By answering these questions, the study also aims to contribute not only to specifically Zimbabwean and diaspora research but to broader theoretical debates over diaspora and citizenship by exploring the potential utility of the concept of 'diaspora citizenship.'

The thesis traces specific diaspora networks of political, religious, charitable and familial action between the UK and Zimbabwe. The thesis draws from concepts of diaspora, citizenship and transnationalism to explore the practices by Zimbabwean migrants based in the UK. Following McGregor, Kleist and others, this thesis adopts a conceptual understanding of the word diaspora as a claim, rather than treating diasporas as a social morphology displaying a specific set of features. Much of the literature discussing what a diaspora 'is' does not capture the vernacular 'liberalisation' of the term to encompass a far broader range of groups in the past two decades (Gamlen, 2014). The idea is that it matters that Zimbabweans living outside the country call *themselves* the 'diaspora' (Brubaker, 2005) which is a name they are also referred to by those at home despite them not fitting most of the typologies of a diaspora. Treating diaspora as a stance or a claim allows this thesis to explore in different transnational domains, how these claims to diasporic positionality inter-relate to imaginations, acts and practices of citizenship in both home and hostlands. The Zimbabweans being investigated in this thesis are claimants of rights in both the hostland and homeland which makes it an interesting case through which to explore acts of citizenship in a manner that recognises the importance of formal legal domains but is not limited to these alone.

The method of multisited fieldwork used to generate data for this research will be explored more in the methodology chapter. Suffice it to say here, that the yearlong process of collecting data between Britain and Zimbabwe, extends the extant body of research on the Zimbabwean diaspora, most of which has not been transnational in its methodology, and has not focussed on this most recent episode of diasporic engagements. Multi-sited ethnography allowed me to tease out the dynamics of complex and differentiated networks of engagement. The Zimbabweans I studied are differentiated (in terms of class, legality, age, when they emigrated, their family networks and political alignments): their understandings of citizenship is shaped by the specific contexts they find themselves in, whether in the UK or in Zimbabwe, but their imaginations are also shaped by the transnational domains of debate and action over citizenship as an ideal and its substantive workings in different places. To be able to explore these ideas and practices, it was logical to trace them from locality to locality and appreciate how perspectives differed or were similar, and the ways in which they shifted over space and time, through transnational networks. Following networks from

Britain to Zimbabwe allowed me to analyse impacts in Zimbabwe, and to corroborate or refute claims made by diasporic activists in Britain about their influence at home.

1.3. Key themes

The thesis uses the following terms which will be examined further in chapter two but are important to clarify before delving into that discussion: diaspora, diaspora citizenship, transnationalism and transnational engagements, legal status, religion, family and a term that came up in most chapters, networks.

As discussed above, on defining 'diaspora', this thesis departs from the social morphology meaning of the term and suggests a different one in which the idea is a claim and not a specific set of fixed features following Kleist, McGregor and others. I follow Gamlen (2012) in understanding diaspora from a Durkheimian point of view that the term creates a social fact (i.e. something that exists by virtue of its social meaning with the power to shape and constrain individual behaviour). By adopting this view, the thesis can therefore understand the notion of a diaspora as a political or social construct. Diaspora citizenship is a term first coined by Laguerre (1998) who sees it as 'a set of practices that a person is engaged in, and a set of rights acquired or appropriated that cross nation-state boundaries and that indicate membership in at least two nation-states' (1998: 190). Cohen (2011: 4) goes on to add that "proponents of practice-based diasporic citizenship emphasise the importance of one's active contribution to the larger community, either locally through, for example local hometown associations or transnationally by supporting the homeland from afar. This thesis argues that diaspora citizenship is enmeshed with both a sense of belonging and active practices of civic engagement in both host and homeland: unlike Laguerre, I do not restrict discussion to those who have formal rights in two states. The thesis looks both at campaigns to achieve legal citizenship in host and homeland as well as at the effects of a sense of citizenship even when not underpinned by formal rights. Indeed, I argue that the sense of diasporic citizenship is shaping the elaboration of political and civic campaigns and associational worlds, as well as shaping charitable and faith-based practices, development, and the way families are being reconfigured. The way I use the term in this thesis thus differs from those who understand diasporic

citizenship through a lens of formal rights, and those who use it loosely without scrutinising connections to legal status, often excluding irregular populations.

Moving on, the idea of transnationalism emerged as a way to explore migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Most of the scholars working on migration issues agree that migrants maintain a plethora of ties with their homeland at the same time that they are assimilated or incorporated into the countries that receive them (Pasura, 2011; Levitt and Jarwosky, 2007: 29, Basch et al., 1994). One of the key features of transnationalism is the regularity of cross-border activities, these maybe political, religious, charitable (philanthropic) or economic.

Irregularity and legal status are terms that are used frequently in this thesis, particularly in chapters four, five and seven. These issues affect how diasporas engage with the homeland in certain important ways. However, by defining diaspora citizenship in a manner that is broad enough to include those without formal rights as well as those who do possess them, this thesis brings back in the voices of irregular migrants who would have been left out of debates over diaspora citizenship. Finally, it is important to explain briefly why religion and family networks are included in this discussion of transnational diaspora citizenship. Religious transnationalism and networks were one of the ways in which Zimbabweans engage with the homeland through faith-based giving and charitable acts. I argue that a sense of diasporic citizenship is closely imbricated with practices and networks that operate through transnational church organisation. The reason I chose to discuss family in this thesis is because it came up very frequently whilst talking to respondents about their political and civic activism. Madianou (2016) argues that understanding how family is constituted in diasporic settings requires a move towards emphasizing transnational and deterritorialised conceptualisations, where intimacy does not necessarily hinge on geographical proximity. In addition, Boyd (1989) argues and advocates for a closer look and inclusion of personal networks in the study of migration as they have an effect on how people organise, congregate *inter alia*. Rarely, however, do studies of transnational political engagement or religion also explore intersections with family relationships, notwithstanding their centrality to migrants lives and diasporic sense of belonging.

These and other conceptual underpinnings are further discussed in detail in the next chapter.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

The remaining parts of the thesis are organised into seven chapters. Chapter two sets out the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of the study, starting off with the main concepts being used in the thesis before moving on to discussing the Zimbabwean case study. It is essential to discuss the specificities of the Zimbabwe case in 2017-18, as it impacted the sorts of initiatives that Zimbabweans abroad are involved in, particularly political and economic activities at a juncture when the country experienced factionalism culminating in the coup, plus exacerbated economic instability. Chapter three makes a case for the different research methodologies employed by this study. The chapter also serves as an autobiographic account of how my beliefs and assumptions impacted the research and includes reflexive thinking about the research process.

Due to the nature of the data collection for this study that included research in the UK and Zimbabwe, the most striking aspect of chapters four to seven is the fact that each is transnational in the sense of exploring connections across both locations. Each of the four main empirical chapters of this thesis start off by discussing and analysing data collected from UK-based respondents, and then follows the same networks back to the homeland to explore perspectives and effects in the homeland itself. The fourth chapter contributes to the literature on diaspora political engagement by examining transnational and political activism on the part of middle-class professionals with status in Britain. To date, authors writing on African contexts have not fore-fronted networks of this type and many have not adopted transnational lenses. The chapter explores how a certain group of civic activists within the Zimbabwean diaspora who belong to an organisation dedicated to expanding and realising their responsibilities and rights as citizens, has debated meanings of citizenship, and sought to intervene and influence civic and political spheres in the homeland. The group intervenes by challenging the government from a distance and supporting a network of formalised human and electoral rights organisations in Zimbabwe. Previous studies have shown how highly politicised the diaspora is. I argue in this chapter that there is diminution of

opposition party membership within the diaspora however, at the same time, people's political energies are being redirected into rights organisations that still connect with the opposition but do not directly take the form of party structures. This discussion of transnational middle-class civic activism explores how British-based activists sought to influence events in Zimbabwe at a key juncture – in the run-up to the aftermath of a military coup in 2017 and subsequent elections in 2018. More importantly, the chapter takes forward debates over diaspora political mobilisation in Zimbabwe and new African diasporic contexts which have largely ignored the professional middle classes with status or have explored their activities primarily in the countries of settlement without a fully transnational lens (see McGregor 2010; McGregor and Pasura 2010; Pasura 2010; Pasura 2013).

Chapter five fills an important gap in the burgeoning literatures on diaspora associational life on the part of insecure migrants and those within the asylum system as it discusses not only 'acts of citizenship' regarding legalisation of status in the UK, but also draws attention to transnational mobilisations and civic activism illustrating irregular migrants' sense of diasporic citizenship. The literature has largely focussed on claim-making made in situ in the hostland when discussing irregular migrants, yet diasporic citizenship and acting through a proxy human rights organisation - Restoration of Human Rights [Zimbabwe] International (ROHR) - in Zimbabwe allows this network of migrants to make their claims transnationally in reference to the homeland. I argue in this chapter that this precarious migrants' activism can be seen as a form of "unruly politics" (Khanna et al, 2013): these activists, who are seen as traitors by their homeland government and are excluded from full rights in Britain, are also the object of criticism within the diaspora and by Zimbabwean publics, and their engagements have been marked by heightened controversy, sometimes convoluted internal dynamics and acrimony over forms of accountability. I additionally argue that despite the ongoing activism, political mobilisation amongst Zimbabwean migrants has diminished in scale from the period of peak engagement due to the nature of Zimbabwean diaspora politics and Zimbabwean politics more broadly at the time of research. Both chapters four and five emphasise the importance of personal networks in shaping the links, collaborations and conflicts between civic, political and human rights organisations in the diaspora and Zimbabwe. The discussion of precarious migrants' activities at home as well as in situ, adds a missing dimension within the

literature on transnational associational activism on the part of informal migrants and asylum seekers

Chapter six analyses how religious transnationalism intersects with practices of diasporic citizenship and explores how church networks shape how Zimbabwean migrants interact and engage with the homeland. As other studies have shown, religious transnationalism helps migrants integrate within Britain: previous studies profiled a highly politicized and religious diaspora. I argue that diaspora members directed their sense of diasporic belonging into religious networks that have consolidated over time and have grown in importance, whereas the diaspora's direct engagement with Zimbabwean political parties is less prominent than in the past. I also argue that religious transnationalism encourages diaspora members to engage with and impact the homeland socially in important ways that are tangible and visible, particularly via charity, humanitarian and developmental initiatives. This is evident in the sheer scale of the charitable initiatives undertaken by Zimbabwean Catholics based in Britain. The literatures on the Zimbabwean diaspora and broader new African diasporas tends to discuss religious transnationalism as a means of integration in the hostland but the impacts it has on charitable giving in the homeland have rarely been fore-fronted, because the lens of many studies has primarily focussed on countries of settlement (cf Pasura 2008, 2012, 2016; Spickard and Adogame 2010; Adogame 2010; Gelbard 2013; Dwyer, Tse, and Ley 2013). In this chapter, I further argue that diasporic practices of charity are part and parcel of notions and expressions of citizenship and belonging.

Last of the empirical chapters, chapter seven analyses family interactions in situ and with the homeland paying specific attention to the idea of doing family instead of being a family. The aim is to explore the interconnections between practices of diasporic citizenship and transnational family networks. The chapter takes forward debates about transnational family and the body of work on the role of communications technology and social media. These have a direct impact on how families can maintain close ties notwithstanding geographical separation through these 'ambient co-presences' (Madianou, 2016). Family practices are sometimes directly linked to notions of diasporic citizenship, as belonging and rights can be debated explicitly in family communications. Moreover, there are indirect connections too: by providing

family with resources and access to mobile phones, the diaspora can also increase the capacity of family at home to engage with the political and civil spheres. Finally, chapter eight has an overview of the chapters contained in this thesis together with a summary of key findings and arguments.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

A significant body of literature examining the links between diaspora, citizenship and transnationalism already exists. These concepts add to our understanding of how diasporas keep a foot in both worlds as they attempt to maintain their lives in the hostland but also make claims in the homeland. It is important to review this literature to see how authoritarian states like Zimbabwe deal with their diasporas and in turn how politics within the homeland affects decisions by diaspora members to be political or to take part in different diaspora-based initiatives to influence the home country. This chapter reviews the relevant literature and situates this study within it, thereby also formulating the conceptual and theoretical underpinning of this thesis. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section focusses on literature relating to notions of diaspora and citizenship where I will ground my notion of diasporic citizenship and social understanding of it with specific mention to Zimbabwe which is the prime focus of this study. I also discuss irregularity in relation to regularity (insecure vs secure) and how that impacts practices and influences in the homeland as well as notions of belonging. The second section reviews literature on transnationalism in general but also specifically looks at religious transnationalism, charitable giving and transnational families. The last section reviews literature related to Zimbabwean diaspora politics and politics in Zimbabwe showing the trajectory of Zimbabwean politics during the time of research and links with the diaspora.

2.2. Diaspora and Citizenship

This section introduces and discusses some of the concepts that form the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of the study. I will first look at diaspora following Kleist, McGregor and others in arguing that diaspora is a claim. The section will also discuss the way citizenship is used in the thesis, arguing for a definition and approach to 'diaspora citizenship' that goes beyond legal/formal understandings. A move to a social understanding of citizenship means that it becomes relational. Isin's notion of 'acts of citizenship' hinges on this relational lens, but his focus is largely on migrants'

and solidarity activists' actions in relation to citizenship in countries of settlement. Here I argue that theorisations of acts of citizenship can be usefully expanded into the transnational domain to encompass diasporic claims and related acts in both host and homelands. I contend that diasporic action and engagement is also the concern of citizens in the homeland. To explore the circulation of ideas of citizenship, I draw on Boccagni et al's (2016) notion of 'political remittances' which has been elaborated to examine circuits and flow of political ideas through transnational and diasporic networks. The idea of "political remittances" recognises that boundaries of politics are changing and, rather than just being based on economic remittances from the diaspora members back to the homeland, recognises that there is a circulation of ideas from both sides. In elaborating the concept of diaspora citizenship, which is central to this research, likewise, I make a case as to why irregular migrants should also be included. The chapter furthermore provides context in the form of Zimbabwe's political crises from the late 1990s, the mass emigration and the situation of Zimbabweans in the UK, the expansion and contraction of irregularity, and the specific political-economic dynamics of the 2017-8 period.

Before understanding diaspora citizenship, it is important to discuss the meaning of the word diaspora itself. Early discussions about the term point at how the Jewish diaspora is used as the concept's defining paradigm (Safran, 1991; Cohen, 1997). Safran's (1991) argument is that the degree of force that initiates a population's dispersal is what normally defines what counts as a "diaspora", "semi-diaspora" or "non-diaspora". He further goes on to say their ancestors or they themselves have been dispersed from their original region to a peripheral or foreign region, and, they retain a collective memory myth or vision about the homeland, they believe they might not or cannot be accepted by their host society (Safran, 1991: 83-84). Cohen (1997) posits that there are five types of diaspora which are trade, labour, cultural, imperial and victim. He also cautions that these diasporas change, and their characters might overlap overtime (Cohen, 1997). Cohen's typology breaks the assumption of victimhood or violent dispersal. Of importance to note is that the concept of a diaspora is not "limited to a historical experience but rather functions as both a complex analytical discourse as well as a theoretical concept that invites a kind of theorising that is always embedded in particular maps and histories" (Pasura, 2011: 144).

As noted in the introduction, this thesis departs from some sociological concepts of diaspora and adopts a view that it is a claim rather than a specific set of features following Kleist, McGregor and others. This is because much of the literature discussing what a diaspora 'is' does not capture the vernacular 'liberalisation' of the term to encompass a far broader range of groups in the past two decades (Gamlen, 2014). Zimbabweans living outside the country call themselves the 'diaspora,' a name they are also referred to by those in the homeland despite them not fitting most of the traditional typologies of a diaspora. But this positioning matters, as it is a claim that has important social and political effects. Brubaker (2005) argues diaspora is a stance, others like Van Hear (2012) say it's a discourse or a practice (Adamson and Demetriou, 2007). I follow Gamlen (2012) in understanding diaspora from a Durkheimian point of view and arguing that the usage of the term creates a social fact (i.e. something that exists in virtue of its social meaning with the power to constrain individual behaviour). By adopting this view, the thesis hinges on an understanding of the notion of a diaspora as a political or social construct. Being labelled and acting as a diaspora is one possible way of transnational political mobilisation and has certain political consequences regardless of any fit with more conventional, fixed academic definitions. Furthermore, the thesis deems diaspora an object of organisation, shaping, and influencing political, religious and familial engagement with the homeland. But it does not just shape diasporic actions, as these diasporic engagements are also the concern of citizens within the homeland: many of the latter look up to those in the diaspora and associate diasporic claims with notions of status, creating expectations.

Finally, diasporas can also be a population known and subject to certain techniques of power as the homeland states try to govern them (Foucault, 2009). Treating diaspora as a stance, claim and set of practices, shaped by relationships to states invites further attention to transnational domains of political practice. To be able to understand these practices, it is important to explore what sorts of cohesion are present amongst diasporans and how their sense of belonging is cultivated or influenced. It is a central argument of this thesis, that debates over diasporic identity and transnational sense of belonging can be enriched and extended if they are brought into closer dialogue with recent theoretical work on citizenship. I now turn to discuss diaspora in relation to citizenship.

In this thesis, I understand diasporic citizenship as encompassing a social as well as legal approach: it can be seen as emanating from the quest for inclusion, at home and in situ, via the use of different strategies. Laguerre defines diaspora citizenship as the practices a person is engaged in, together with a set of rights attained or adopted that cross nation-state boundaries and that indicate membership in at least two nation-states (1998: 190). Cohen (2011: 4) adds to this by contending that advocates of practice-based diasporic citizenship stress the importance of “one’s active contribution to the larger community”, either locally through, for example local hometown associations or transnationally by supporting the homeland from afar. Becoming a diasporic citizen in this view is contingent upon his or her support of or participation in loosely defined projects of national importance, usually of a political (lobbying) or economic (remittances) nature.”

This thesis argues diaspora citizenship is enmeshed with both a sense of belonging and active practices of civic engagement in both host and homeland, as argued by Laguerre and Cohen above. The thesis looks at both campaigns to achieve legal citizenship in host and homeland and how the sense of belonging even when not underpinned by formal rights is shaping the elaboration of political and civic campaigns and associational life, as well as shaping charitable work and development. These practices, civic or religious, enhance the identity and sense of belonging for these migrants (Anthias, 2008). The understanding adopted here differs from work that understands diaspora citizenship through a lens of formal rights, and those who use it loosely without scrutinising connections to legal status, and often excluding displaced or irregular populations. So, in my usage here, diasporic citizenship is not just about a sense of belonging and related practices within the diaspora. The conceptualisation I adopt encompasses Cohen’s (2011) emphasis on active contributions from the diaspora in situ and transnationally, but it extends the analytic focus back to the homeland itself, to examine the nature of the networks through which such acts of citizenship work, and their political, economic and social implications. Diaspora citizenship can therefore provide a banner of mobilization, not just for undocumented or irregular migrants in countries of settlement, but also for a range of diasporic activists whose formal citizenship is not fully recognised in countries of origin.

It is important to further understand citizenship which now stretches beyond its standard *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli* groundings. Recent work has tried to understand citizenship in a manner that can apply to multiple global settings. Turner (2009) for example contends citizenship is an exclusionary right as it creates borders between those who have rights and those who do not, in this case, those in the country legally and those who are not. The criteria for citizenship is contested in modern day politics as in some cases, citizenship is inherited from parents which makes it arbitrary and more of a 'property right' (Turner, 2009: 66). To adhere to the standard or to just the legal definition of citizenship would be limiting to a study such as this one: legal citizenship matters profoundly as it underpins rights and responsibilities, but it is necessary to adopt a social as well as a legal definition to incorporate diasporic situations, where a sense of belonging may or may not coincide with legal citizenship, and to include political acts motivated by a sense of, and claims to, citizenship while divorced from legal rights that are also reshaping the public sphere. Citizenship is a concept that has been contested long before Thomas H. Marshall's influential work in the post-World War Two context, when citizenship was elaborated as comprising social as well as civic and political rights at a time when redistribution and welfare was key, heavily influenced by Keynesian ideas of economics. Many other authors also work with legal understandings of citizenship: Faist (2005) sees citizenship as an institutionalised form of ties between a citizen and the state. However, much influential work in the field of citizenship studies departs from Marshallian, legally underpinned notions of citizenship.

The definition adopted in this thesis builds on social approaches to citizenship as developed by van Steenberg (1994), Turner (1993), Isin (2005, 2008) Glick Schiller (2005) among others. By taking citizenship as socially constructed, it means that it becomes relational, and as van Steenberg (1994) contends, supersedes understandings that hinge on legal formulations. This opens it up in a manner that makes it useful as a prism for understanding the different sorts of claims to belonging made by diaspora groups, many of which work to gain rights in countries of settlement in contexts of growing restrictionism and hostility, but at the same time also work to perpetuate and formalise their status in countries of origin. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) discusses diaspora politics narrowly as engagement in hostland politics regarding diaspora issues, as opposed to what she refers to as emigrant or immigrant politics

(for more diaspora focussed examples, see Chikanda 2005; Mbiba 2012; Brinkerhoff 2004; 2010, 2011; Kuhlmann, 2013; Pasura, 2011; Bloch 2008, 2010; McGregor, 2010; McGregor and Pasura 2010; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Wahlbeck 1999; Tevera and Zinyama 2002 inter alia). In contrast, my use of diaspora citizenship is wider: it includes all of these, as they can be interconnected. It includes engagements with the hostland over rights for migrants and refugees, as well as lobbying hostland governments in relation to the homeland, but it also includes other forms of engagement with the homeland – regarding voting rights for diasporans, but also beyond this by supporting organisations and initiatives that further broader progressive political and civic rights agendas. Additionally, the diasporic sense of belonging in host and homelands can be at odds with their legal status in one, the other or both contexts. Diasporic politics often hinges on acts in relation to both homeland and hostland spheres.

In the case of this thesis, Zimbabweans who are in the UK can try to claim rights in both the hostland and homeland: activists in this study are concerned not only with their own personal rights and legal status in both countries, but have also sought to render citizenship meaningful substantively in Zimbabwe, critiquing abuses of rights and seeking to transform authoritarian, exclusive or discriminatory renderings of citizenship. They have also sought to respond to developmental challenges and humanitarian crises. Social citizenship, as Glick Schiller (2005) argues, is when citizens claim rights to citizenship through social practices rather than through the law *via* means like contributing to the state or fighting against discrimination within the state. This understanding allows us to look at diaspora members as citizens and to include not only those with legal rights in host and homeland, but also those who lack formal status in one or both countries. It also allows us to reframe practices that would not be seen as having a connection to citizenship as also shaping the civic sphere: for example, charitable giving to development projects and humanitarian relief in the homeland, as well as remittances through family also having a bearing on the realm of citizenship because they can intervene in positive ways to try to reduce the effects of poverty on substantive citizenship. This is interesting in relation to diasporic activism today, where diasporic activists claim belonging and rights in relation to restrictionism in Europe and authoritarian homeland regimes that refuse the diaspora vote or refuse to recognise dual citizenship, yet the homeland state wishes to tap into the resources

these individuals have. Although as Spiro argues, “it is well understood that plural nationality can serve the interests of immigrant-sending states, which recognize the economic resource represented by external populations resident in developed economies” (Spiro 2011: 7), many African states have yet to allow dual citizenship.

Yuval-Davis (2000: 345) introduces us to the notion of multi-layered citizenship where “people’s rights and obligations to a specific state are mediated and largely dependent on their membership of a specific ethnic, racial, religious or regional collectivity.” This is important in that it recognises that in practice, substantive rights are not equal among citizens, as citizenship law can imply, but are differentiated. This matters for our discussion here, because diasporic activism in both host and homeland can be concerned not just with the rights and formal membership of diaspora populations themselves or sections thereof, but can also be framed as a critique of extant political settlements and socio-economic hierarchies and divisions, aimed at creating more equitable and just social relations in host and homelands. Other forms of understanding citizenship that transcend the legal have also emerged prompting framing of citizenship as a form of political solidarity, activity or identity (Bosniak, 2000), as ‘both legal institution and lived experience’ (Isin & Turner 2007, 16), and as an identification of group and individual engagement (Barry 2006, 20, 21). These understandings are useful to this thesis as they help us comprehend the different practices of Zimbabweans in the UK and diasporas more broadly.

Struggles over political inclusion in both home and hostland that diaspora members are a part of can be referred to as “acts of citizenship” following Isin (2008). In this thesis, I argue that it is useful to expand Isin’s discussion of such practices transnationally. This idea can be used to understand diasporas as actors: their political ideas, sense of belonging and related practices (Boccagni et al, 2015). Boccagni et al’s framework allows for us to look at diaspora members’ political and legal positions in the hostland and social status in the homeland as well as their sense of belonging and entitlement, and actions that stem from this even in the absence of formal citizenship rights. It means investigating diasporic actors as claimants of rights and responsibilities for themselves as well as trying to intervene to shape membership and substantive citizenship more broadly. I explore citizenship beyond the formal legal domain as a status conferred by states, to explore how citizenship is socially

constructed and how ideas of belonging shape political engagements. Isin (2008) argues that acts cannot be regarded as inherently homogenising or diversifying, exclusive or inclusive as these are the qualities that arise through the acts themselves. And indeed, as the following chapters will show, the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK is not a homogenous group, and their activities in relations to citizenship are not exclusively aimed at challenging exclusions either in the UK or Zimbabwe: rather, there are different understandings and practices about family life, politics and religion *inter alia*. Isin suggests three principles of understanding and investigating acts of citizenship which are useful to this thesis.

Firstly, interpreting acts of citizenship through “their grounds and consequences which includes subjects becoming activist citizens through scenes created” (Isin, 2008:38). The main argument here is that there is a difference between “active citizens” and “activist citizens” in the sense that activist citizens engage in writing scripts and constructing the scene and active citizens act out already inscribed scripts. Following this terminology, the two political networks that I consider here include both ‘activist citizens’ and ‘active citizens’: namely, the leaders and the members of the Zimbabwe Vigil or members of the Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative that this research finds interesting. It is also important to note that some of the diasporic mobilisations do hinge centrally on how the migrant can gain “legal” status in the country of settlement or hostland. Sassen (2004) argues that undocumented members take part in practices that are the same as formally defined citizens which then creates a social contract between them and the ‘community.’ By extending this transnationally, we can see its importance, not only to look at how diasporic citizenship can foster such communities in countries of settlement, but also in countries of origin.

Secondly, acts generate actors that become liable to justice or against injustice (Isin, 2008: 39). Isin argues here that acts of citizenship involve calling into question and in some cases, breaking the law (Isin 2008). It is important to bear in mind the consequences of such an idea on the claimants themselves. They can also be irresponsible, and call established forms of ‘responsibilisation’ into question (Isin, 2008). Isin is referring mainly to actions within a given hosting country on the part of citizens and non-members, and this sort of activism is one aspect of Zimbabwean diasporic activism in Britain, which has been emphasised in prior studies that look at

rights campaigns in relation to legal status in countries of settlement. But, Zimbabwean migrants in the UK have also been engaged in acts and activism that question the norm in the authoritarian homeland state of Zimbabwe, seeking to bring about regime change and lobbying on human rights. I also draw from Khanna et al (2013) that this form of activism can usefully be seen as unruly politics which they define as “political action by people who have been denied voice by the rules of the political game, and by the social rules that underpin this game[...]" (Khanna et al. 2013: 14). These migrants have been rendered powerless by the state through a denial of rights in the political system but take steps in transgressing some of these rules as discussed by Khanna et al (2013) using what they think is just and right in some cases being not legally sanctioned. Unruly politics also allows us to explore the internal tensions that are sometimes associated with Zimbabwean diaspora associations as I shall discuss in chapter five. Moreover, particularly important for this thesis, they have not only tried to change the constitution, law and policy to recognize dual citizenship, but have also tried to act on their on-going sense of political belonging in Zimbabwe in various ways in a context when constitutional recognition has yet to be translated into law and state practice. Their charitable giving and development work, often channelled through religious networks can also be conceptualised as a form of diasporic citizenship in the sense that it aims to create a more equitable and just socio-economic order at home, rendering substantive citizenship more meaningful to those seen as in need or impoverished.

Thirdly and related to the above, acts of citizenship do not need to be founded in law or enacted in the name of the law (Isin, 2008). Citizens, outsiders, strangers emerge not as being already defined but as beings (who have claims) acting and reacting with others (Isin, 2008). Diaspora members are the outsiders in this case, who are coming together with citizens in the homeland to influence the political and civic sphere in the homeland so as to gain certain rights not only for themselves but for others in the homeland as well. This is based on the portability of their sense of belonging, which diaspora members have maintained when abroad, and which has inspired their activist claims and practices with the homeland (Boccagni et al, 2016). Ultimately, Isin defines acts of citizenship as:

“..those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales of struggle.” (Isin, 2008: 39).

These acts of citizenship are important as they allow us to investigate the actions of diaspora members particularly as they translate into forms of political mobilisation. The idea of political acts of citizenship not necessarily needing to be founded in legal rights means that undocumented members of diasporas who are also excluded from rights in situ and at home can be conceptualised as participating in making claims and transforming civic and political spheres. Equally interesting is the idea that this thesis explores how specific claims of citizenship of the diaspora have an effect not only on individual membership and status, but on citizenship as a whole in the homeland via influences on the civic sphere. The diaspora makes specific claims from the hostland based also on other contributions for example, the ones explored by this research like politics and philanthropy and the process of this claims making can influence the public sphere in the homeland.

In addition, Rutherford (2008: 403) argues that “modes of belonging are the routinised social practices and institutional arrangements through which people make claims for recognition and rights [...]” and that this is then incorporated into aspects of everyday lives for people. Of importance to note is that these practices of belonging or citizenship are performed in multiple ways, and arenas, mostly informal (Gaventa, 2006) at local, translocal, transnational and global scales. These practices are shaped from everyday experiences, and influence or define their belonging (Yuval-Davis 1999; Laguerre, 2008). This emphasis on the importance of everyday experiences, as argued by the likes of Lister (1998), is also stressed in this thesis. The everyday is partly about the law, politics, work, social life (including with diaspora members and friendship), engagement with news and social media, and how this shapes a sense and practices of inclusion/exclusion, but it is also constituted by everyday workings and practices of family and faith, concerns over which are often centrally important (Laguerre, 1998; McGregor 2010, Fortier 2016).

Notwithstanding my social approach to diasporic citizenship, it is necessary nonetheless to remember that the legal understandings of citizenship, are also important for this thesis and the lives of my research subjects. Legal status remains an important differentiator and impacts how diasporas engage with the homeland (Bloch 2008a): the chapters that follow explore the similarities and differences that follow this divide as well as crosscutting it. Zimbabweans who are regular migrants, as we shall see in the chapter about Zimbabwean professionals based in Manchester, have a somewhat stronger influence on the homeland, which is a reflection of their socio-economic status in the hostland which usually is based on the legal right to stay in the country. Those with legal status find it easy to take part in political mobilisations, they do so with lower risks, and can readily travel back and forth between the hostland and homeland. But my social elaboration of diaspora citizenship, also allowed me to bring back in the activities and voices of irregular migrants. According to Cohen's (2011) understanding, citizenship in a diasporic setting then becomes more than simply a double process of racialised identity and successfully claiming and securing rights in situ. What this thesis shows is that a broader and more transnational conceptualisation is necessary, without prejudging the success or otherwise of claims to rights in either host or homeland.

It is important to consider the context in which these Zimbabwean migrants are finding themselves in the UK which has produced this distinction between regular/irregular legal status. The liberal migration policy in the UK has been in retreat since 1962 and since then, a number of laws have been implemented that added restrictions to the migrants (Solomos, 2003, Chimienti, 2011). However, in the past few decades, it was the 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act that was centrally important in introducing new penalties for illegal entry (Triandafyllidou, 2010, Chimienti, 2011). The new visa restrictions on Zimbabwean entry in 2002 however, was the driver for most irregularity amongst Zimbabweans as it forced many would-be regular migrants into irregular routes, and also made it difficult for those already in the country to regularise their stay. Schuster (2011) argues that it is these restrictive circumstances that migrants find themselves in hostlands, that turn them into irregular migrants.

The bureaucratic system in the UK however did afford these irregular migrants some form of leeway. There are no laws that require compulsory registration nor any need

to carry a national identity card in the UK as Jordan and Duvell (2002) note. One is free to use many different forms of documentation as proof of address for example pay slips, income tax receipts, bank statements, additionally, one is not obligated to prove their immigration status to police for example unlike in the case of countries like South Africa where a lot of Zimbabweans reside illegally (Chimienti, 2011). This then shows us that it is possible for those who are not regularised or with insecure status to fall in-between the cracks and carry on with their business without being noticed.

De Genova (2002: 249) aptly notes that irregularity, 'is the product of immigration laws.' A lot of attention was paid to irregular migration patterns in the US from Mexico in the 1990s and early 2000s but growing research has been conducted in different parts of Europe (Chavez, 1994; De Genova, 2002). This has revealed that through the use of penalties, restrictions on accessing asylum processes, would-be migrants have now resorted to using varying routes that gains them entry into countries (Bloch et al, 2011). Adding to this, Bloch et al (2011: 1288) contend that 'status is not static' as people move from various statuses with varying degrees of agency (Anderson and Rogaly, 2005). Whilst states do attempt to control the numbers of migrants flowing in, they also do accept the cheap labour they offer to the economy with no strain on social services as most of these migrants cannot access such services nor social rights (Castells, 2000; Bloch et al, 2011).

This section has outlined my conceptualisation of 'diaspora citizenship', as an extension of Isin's conceptualisation of 'acts of citizenship' by exploring transnational domains of practice. It discussed the notion of diaspora and how it needs to be understood as a claim, and elaborated the importance of understanding citizenship socially rather than only in terms of the law, in a manner that includes irregular migrants in countries of settlement and diaspora activists whose formal citizenship is not recognised in countries of origin. Through this conceptualisation, diaspora citizenship allows us to examine migrant mobilization politically and socially across transnational space and its broader effects within host and homelands. The section has also introduced and discussed the idea of irregularity and how that came to be important amongst Zimbabweans in the UK. The next section will discuss transnational religion and family and their connection to diasporic citizenship.

2.3. Transnational Diaspora, Religion and Family

In this section, I discuss transnationalism in general but also elaborate a rationale for including chapters on religious networks and family. The section reminds us that transnationalism is about simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society and discusses migrants' transnational practices. I argue that not all diasporas are transnational following Pasura (2011) as those without homeland connections sometimes do not attempt to engage the homeland. In addition, I stress the importance of arguments that say whilst transnationalism is important, it also needs to be understood in relation to integration (Erdal and Oeppen 2013). I begin with a discussion of transnationalism in relation to religion before turning to diaspora philanthropy, charitable giving and family practices.

Yeoh, Willis and Fakhri (2003: 2015) argue that “the field of transnationalism is still a fragmented one and no one conceptual frame has emerged to define the shape of transnationality, or the quality and nature of the projects, relations and practices that it encompasses.” The idea of transnationalism emerged as a way to explore migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). The agreement among scholars that a plethora of ties with their homeland are compatible with assimilation or incorporation into the countries that receive them (Pasura, 2011; Levitt and Jarwosky, 2007: 29, Basch et al., 1994) has made it hard to differentiate between a diaspora and a transnational community. If we are to do so then it is important to analyse what transnationalism is and then differentiate it from diaspora. Transnationalism can be referred to as “the rise of a new class of immigrant economic entrepreneurs or political activists who conduct cross border activities on a regular basis, that lies at the core of the phenomenon that this field seeks to highlight and investigate” (Guarnizo et al 2003: 1213). One of the key features of transnationalism is the regularity of cross-border activities.

Other authors however have chosen to broaden transnationalism and include migrants who are engaged in intermittent cross-border activities. The concept of core transnationalism and expanded transnationalism then comes into play. Core transnational activities are sustained, patterned, regular and an integral part of every individual's life while expanded transnationalism is to do with occasional practices

(Guarnizo, 2003). Within these practices, the activities of those who stay behind must also be added into this as they are in a larger network of shared identities, political and economic culture (Levitt, 2001). In addition to this, Smith and Guarnizo (1998) introduce the concept of transnationalism from above and transnationalism from below. In short, transnationalism from above is that of corporations and states and transnationalism from below is that of international migrants.

Østergaard-Nielsen, (2003: 760) argues migrants' transnational practices are shaped through a multilevel "process of institutional channelling constituted by the converging or differing interests of political authorities in not only the country of origin but also the country of settlement, global human rights norms and regimes, as well as the network of other non-state actors with which migrants' transnational political networks often are inter- twined". This argument is in line with what both Gamlen et al. (2013) and Boccagni et al (2016) argue when they say that there are different forces at play that influence how diaspora members and groups take part in diaspora affairs or transnational practices. The literature discusses how and when migrant practices become transnational, Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) argues that they can include diverse activities and motivations from migrant rallies against injustices in the country of origin or demonstrations to defend it, transnational election campaigns and cross border voting. They may also include indirect participation via political institutions of the host nations (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003) as we shall see in the case of Zimbabwean migrants who try and lobby governments of their host countries to act against injustices in the homeland.

Pasura (2011: 254) goes on to make a good conclusion regarding the diasporas and transnationalism by arguing that it is sensible to elaborate the notion of a transnational diaspora:

"[...] Zimbabweans abroad who identify themselves as belonging to a diaspora might be transnational migrants if they share a sense of belonging to a homeland, they are not living in. Hence, it is sensible to talk of transnational diasporas. However, not all diasporas have continuing transnational relations as some diasporas have ceased to maintain homeland linkages. It can be inferred that diasporas with no

homeland connections cannot be defined as transnational.” (Pasura, 2011: 254).

Some of the diasporas then become assimilated into the societies of the receiving nations and lose connection with the homeland therefore these diasporas stop being transnational as they become to a certain extent ‘naturalised’ in their host nation.

Brubaker (2005) argues that we should not exemplify diasporas as objects but understand them as a standpoint deployed “ideologically by participants in social contestation.” This argument by Brubaker (2005) should therefore point research towards understanding diaspora as a mode of political organisation as well. According to Betts and Jones (2016), much work on the diaspora is still looking at the diaspora as an entity or a population which has borders. This thesis puts together arguments about politics, family, religion and legal status and investigates how diasporas, particularly from authoritarian sending states can be viewed as modes of political claims-making that may challenge the state as well as investing in other philanthropic and developmental activities. Østergaard Nielsen (2003) argues that through such claims-making, diasporas work towards the institutionalisation of their transnational status as residents abroad who are politically, socially and economically engaged in their country of origin. She too sees diasporas as constituted through claim-making, as adopted in this study.

Erdal and Oeppen (2013: 879) discuss transnationalism in relation to integration arguing “the two are both constituents of a social process, and that the nature of the interactions (between them) is further shaped by human and personal considerations of key actors – migrants and those whom they choose to interact with.” They understand integration as “a process whereby actors negotiate membership in a place” and transnationalism as “both ways of being and ways of belonging (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013: 873). They argue that integration and transnationalism are both forms of a social process whereby people adapt to changing circumstances due to spatial movement, they are similarly about interactions and negotiations between migrants and non-migrants (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013). This is particularly important as it brings out how migrants then straddle two societies and, shows how successful integration occasionally enables funding of transnational activities (Levitt, 2003). Economic

success in the hostland can encourage members of the diaspora to engage transnationally and in this case also raise expectations from the homeland as shall be discussed further in chapter six. Additionally, actors within this social process act according to their feelings which can be related to self-esteem, security etc. These matter, and I interrogate them here via the notion of diasporic citizenship, which is interwoven with not only some transnational civic engagement but is also deeply personal. Erdal and Oeppen (2013) create a typology that helps us understand this process of ‘balancing acts’ between transnationalism and integration (2013: 874). I find the ‘additive’ conceptualisation of the relationship to be particularly useful to the arguments in this thesis.

It is important for this thesis to spell out how religious transnationalism impacts diasporic citizenship. There are quite a few other studies that have looked at religious transnationalism, defined as “a process by which immigrants forge and sustain their religious practices and identities across borders” (Mensah, 2008: 312). Biri (2014) quoting Wuthnow and Offut (2008) explains that “although religion exists in local communities and is distinctively influenced by a national cultural and political context, it has connections to the wider world and is influenced by these relations” (Biri, 2014: 141). This means there is now an interest as well in the effects of migration on faith communities. The literature tends to discuss religious transnationalism as a way to integrate in the hostland but the impacts it has on charitable giving as discussed in this thesis have rarely been fore-fronted, because the lens of many studies has primarily focussed on countries of settlement (cf Pasura 2008, 2012, 2016; Spickard and Adogame 2010; Adogame 2010; Gelbard 2013; Dwyer, Tse, and Ley 2013).

Studies have now been done that connect religion to transnational economic, cultural and social issues (see Levitt, 1998, 2008; Mahler and Hansing, 2005; Pasura, 2012). African Pentecostal churches for example have profoundly reformed African Christianity and transformed religious landscapes in global contexts, helping to spread gospels of prosperity that mesh with migrants’ aspirations to gain wealth that are prominent with most of the church goers (Biri, 2014). Despite this, Counted (2019) advocates for studies that show the multidimensionality of religion within and amongst African diasporas. Some studies of the Catholic Church in relation to diasporic communities have emphasised how faith fosters remittances from the diaspora to the

homeland due to embeddedness, altruism and the idea of “good deeds” (Levitt, 2008). Such good deeds are part of what I discuss in this thesis regarding the charitable work in the homeland sponsored by members of the Zimbabwe Catholic Chaplaincy in London. Adogame (2004) argues that mother churches in Africa have been sending representatives strategically to Europe promoting missionary expansion. The Zimbabwean Catholics fellowships I discuss here were not primarily about mission, but contributed in very important ways to a sense of diasporic citizenship as well as of religious transnational community, as they work hand in hand with the mother churches in the homeland. Levitt (2004) asserts that migrants construct new arenas that permit them to fit in two places by magnifying already-global religious institutions. As argued by Counted (2019), this can also help diasporans integrate in the hostland, though it can also foster self-segregation, as particular migrant groups relate to themselves primarily rather than to broader UK as contended by Pasura (2014, 2016).

In addition, churches can give migrants a sense of belonging as they allow congregants to engage in the same activities that they did before leaving the homeland – being part of Guilds in the Catholic Church, attending services in the mother tongue etc. – which can encourage such groups to come together for one cause (Biri, 2014, Pasura, 2012). This would seem to reinforce an additive, or mutually reinforcing argument about the relationship between integration and transnationalism (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013) as migrants feel a sense of belonging in both home and hostlands through the Zimbabwe fellowships of the church, notwithstanding the caveats noted above about self-segregation in relation to broader UK congregations. Additionally, Levitt and Jarwosrky, (2007) argue that the flow of people, money and social remittances within the spaces of churches are so dense and widespread that non-migrant’s lives are also transformed, even if they do not move.

Religious transnationalism clearly thus impacts the homeland as well (see Levitt, 2008), as the case of Zimbabwean migrants giving via church-based initiatives shows. Members of diverse churches including ZAOGA Forward In Faith Ministries International, Catholic Church, Family of God, United Methodist Church *inter alia* come together to donate and give back to those in need in the homeland using their networks. Additionally, as argued by Adogame (2004) and Burgess (2009), religious transnationalism contributes to civic engagement in the homeland through the use of

social, spiritual and financial capital by diaspora-based Zimbabwean Catholics. This civic engagement is part of the social process involved in the interaction between integration and transnationalism as migrants straddle two societies (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013) with an economic leg in the hostland and another one in the homeland.

Newland et al (2010) argue that when migrants combine resources and give back to the homeland, the act of giving transcends the private sphere and creates a significant new channel of “nonelite” philanthropy. This is an important alternate flow of resources from the traditional philanthropy that is practiced by wealthy foundations, individuals, corporations etc. Other authors have argued that giving is not necessarily driven solely by need in the area where the diaspora members come from but can be due to being embedded with other diaspora members (Gerharz, 2012). Johnson (2007) combines all the aspects named by Flanigan (2016) and defines diaspora philanthropy as the transfer of resources back to home countries “as investments for the social good.” Newland et al (2010) argue that occasionally diaspora members prefer to use intermediaries usually because it is convenient, or they feel like they achieve greater impact.

In the next few chapters, I will show further how diaspora groups use proxies, or partner institutions in the homeland. Intermediaries for diaspora transnational charity also include internet-based platforms like *GlobalGiving* and *Kiva* and also *GoFundMe* where (in the case of the Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative and indeed the Catholics) diaspora members can give to a specific cause back home using the simple click of a button. These discussions of diaspora philanthropy overlap with those on diaspora humanitarianism in which diasporas are seen as more ‘heterodox’ humanitarian actors “acting less out of generalised, globalised altruism than out of concrete loyalties to the homeland” (Rubyan-Ling, 2019: 220). Newland et al (2010) attribute the growth of diaspora philanthropy to the organisational revolution where communication technologies have changed the way people interact through the use of the internet, email, mobile telephony that makes community organising easier. These communication technologies are also helpful in family practices as they bridge the transnational gap between families in the hostland and homeland.

Boccagni (2010) argues that sometimes diaspora members give not only for the sake of altruism but because they want to show successful integration in the hostland. This wish to display that things are going well as Boccagni (2010) argues, is the reason why diasporans make charitable gifts as members try very hard to show what they have accomplished. Brinkerhoff (2008) also says some members of the diaspora feel obligated to give due to comparatively high incomes in the hostland. Erdal and Oeppen (2013) argue that human beings act according to feelings which can include self-esteem or security. The sense of occupying an economically privileged position in the hostland may also contribute. Boccagni (2010) through his research on the Ecuadorian diaspora also adds that the practice of giving back stems out of pre-existing solidarity practices among co-nationals. This can reinforce ideas of embeddedness in the hostland since these practices stem from the need to help each other out amongst the diaspora. This can also in turn reinforce transnational belonging to the homeland when likeminded people put their minds together and decide to give to a community project in Zimbabwe. Almost all the literature on this subject recognises the heterogeneity of practices (Koff, 2016; Brinkerhoff, 2014; Flanigan, 2016; Johnson, 2007).

In addition to debates over religious transnationalism and charitable giving, the thesis also elaborates family networks as important in both shaping and reflecting diaspora citizenship. As Morgan has argued, understandings of family should not be static, but need to focus on practice, such that it is possible to see relationships as dynamic and changing over time (Morgan, 1996). The way we understand family should therefore change from the traditional notion of a 'given' set of relationships and this is perhaps particularly important in relation to diasporic and transnational contexts. Madianou (2016) argues that understanding how family is constituted in diasporic settings requires a move towards emphasizing transnational and deterritorialised conceptualisations, where intimacy does not necessarily hinge on geographical proximity. The thesis thus follows Morgan (1996) in arguing that family can and should be understood as a verb – doing family rather than being family. This is an approach followed by other studies that focus on relationships diasporans have with intimate others in situ as well as at home and how this affects language, children and care (Boyd (1989); Mazzucato et al. (2015); Caarls et al. (2018); Mingot and Mazzucato (2019) and Ndlovu (2010).

Transnational family is defined by Mingot and Mazzucato (2019: 141) as “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other yet hold together and create some-thing that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, i.e. “familyhood”, even across national borders.” The literature is awash with arguments like those of Caarls et al (2018) who stress the importance of upbringing backgrounds in how African diaspora families survive in the hostlands. There are connections to faith and religious practice, as the church and diaspora fellowships can provide guidance over problems related to bringing up children in the UK. Parenting and raising children take place not just in the hostland but also transnationally for those who would have left their children back in Zimbabwe. However, as Mignot and Mazzucato (2019) argue, forms of parenting vary based on socio-economic backgrounds – those who have legal status in the hostland and are gainfully employed can usually offer forms of social protection to their families back home and visit more frequently. In general, the “emotions of missing and longing motivate kin to produce [...] physical copresences that can manifest physically as they visit one another” (Baldassar, 2008: 50). When parents based in the homeland die, however, transnational connections greatly weaken (Carling, 2012).

The use of technology can bridge the gap between homeland and hostland and brings families closer. Madianou (2016: 186) argues “the proliferation of new communication technologies has given rise to new, potentially rich interactions at a distance, which largely overcome some of the constraints associated with earlier forms of mediated communication” (Madianou 2016, 186). Transnational families rely heavily on communication technologies as a way of maintaining relationships at a distance (Madianou 2016), issues I explore in relation to Zimbabwean transnational family in chapter seven. Adugna (2018) further adds that due to the connectivity through digital communications by transnational families, communication in general has increased and there is a connection between the forms of communication and remittances received for example. Homeland-based recipients are easily in touch with the diaspora-based family members and can easily request money thus recipients can also control how remittances are used through ready communication with family abroad (Adugna, 2018).

This section has discussed how debates over transnational religion and family are relevant to my elaboration of diasporic acts of citizenship and transnationalism. I argued that simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society can enhance ideas of diasporic citizenship or belonging through the various transnational practices that diaspora groups are engaged in, including those based on faith and family. In the next section, I introduce the Zimbabwe case and show how the thesis extends the existing literatures on diasporic political, religious and family engagements in host and homelands.

2.4. The Zimbabwe Case Study

In this section, I introduce and examine the relevant literature on the Zimbabwean case study. I review the trajectory of, and debates over Zimbabwean politics recently, during the time of research and Zimbabwe diaspora politics in the UK. It is important to survey this literature for a several reasons. Firstly, it provides the context for my research, and I build directly on this research in elaborating acts of diasporic citizenship. A lot of research was conducted on Zimbabwe's 'new diaspora' in the early 2000s (see Pasura, Bloch, McGregor, Kuhlmann, Mbiba and others) when there was an influx of Zimbabweans arriving in the UK. This body of research has already shown how highly politicised the Zimbabwean diaspora was, and this thesis explores continuities and changes in this political engagement in the empirical chapters. The 'crisis' provoking the 2000-2008 exodus was aggravated by the ruling party's response to the emergence of a significant political opposition in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), ushering in an era of violence particularly around elections, repressive state legislation, populist land policies and economic mismanagement. The period was followed first by a brief episode of relatively stable 'power-sharing' (2008-2013) and thereafter by renewed political instability in the form of disputed elections and a military coup, further financial plunge and hyperinflation (on Zimbabwe's political economic history, see Alexander et al 2013). This shifting context also affects diaspora political engagements, yet there is scant literature analysing these post-2013 shifts in diaspora politics, mobilisation and associational life. The diasporic affairs of Zimbabweans have remained fluid, not least because the situation in the home country has remained unstable and crisis ridden.

Secondly, the studies that have been conducted in the past have mainly looked at Zimbabwean diaspora politics and activities and struggles in situ, how they were fighting mostly for their rights in the hostland. But these studies do not really analyse impacts of transnational engagements in the homeland Zimbabwe (for reference, see Pasura 2012a; Kuhlmann 2013; Bloch 2008; Mbiba 2012; McGregor and Primorac 2010). To understand the levels of involvement in diaspora politics and mobilisations, I follow Pasura (2010) who through a critique of earlier formulations and empirical investigations came up with a heuristic tool to classify members of the diaspora. He classifies members into “visible,” “epistemic,” “dormant” and “silent” groups of the diaspora with words being self-explanatory (Pasura, 2010: 106). What I found in this research is that epistemic and visible members can be closely connected, as my empirical chapters on political and religious engagements show (four, five and six). Thirdly, it is important to show the unstable environments in which the Zimbabwean diaspora has been navigating in the homeland determines some of the initiatives and activities of Zimbabweans in the UK. It is very important to understand this context when analysing the activities of the diaspora. The aim is to explore effects of these shifts in both contexts and below I start off with the power-sharing agreement.

In addition to charting the exodus from Zimbabwe following the political and economic crisis of 2000-8, much literature also examines the activity surrounding the period of power-sharing between ZANU-PF and the opposition MDC formations, formalised through the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) paving way for the Government of National Unity (GNU) between ZANU-PF and the two MDC parties (MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC-M led by Arthur Mutambara in 2008.) This period ushered in some hope for Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans at home and abroad who had watched in dismay as the situation in the country got worse and worse. Diasporans argued that this was also a moment to celebrate with some even contemplating returning home. The period did witness ‘improvements and developments in key areas on the political spectrum’ (Muchemwa, Ngwerume, and Hove 2013; Rutherford 2018; Chigudu, 2019). However, ZANU-PF retained key ministerial portfolios, including the security sector which according to Rutherford (2018), allowed it to recoup its support and further get a grip in the wider political economy. Historically, as a party, ZANU-PF has always been entangled with the army, which is an important element of its rule.

Some of the key reforms that took place during the GNU period were the drafting of the new constitution and also national healing. As part of the GPA, Article VII established the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) which was mandated with addressing political violence, the very reason that had driven some Zimbabweans out of the country as they sought asylum elsewhere pre-GNU (Muchemwa, Ngwerume, and Hove 2013). This organisation is important as I shall discuss in detail in chapter four and five, as national healing and peace are among some of the initiatives targeted by diaspora associations. The constitution was also important as it allowed for dual citizenship which would be useful for Zimbabweans based abroad to vote in elections in Zimbabwe. Prior to this, Zimbabweans had to renounce their Zimbabwean citizenship upon acquiring a new citizenship. Under section 67 (3) of the 2013 Constitution “every Zimbabwean citizen who is of or over 18 years of age has the right to vote in all elections and referendums³” and section 155(2)(b) says “The State must take all appropriate measures, including legislative measures” to ensure that every eligible citizen has an opportunity to vote.

Most of the UK-based diaspora members however, had by this time, acquired British citizenship, while not renouncing their Zimbabwean citizenship and passports, despite this being against the law (Pasura, 2011). Yet domestic legislation has not been harmonised with this new constitution. Unfortunately, the Government of Zimbabwe still does not allow the diaspora vote despite them having citizenship in terms of the constitution. Other states like the Philippines, India, Haiti and Turkey have tried to gain support from migrants living abroad by granting them participation in their internal political activities. Mobilising for the diaspora vote is one ‘act’ that Zimbabweans abroad have been actively pursuing. As we will see in the following chapters, mobilisations remain underway to lobby the Government using recently formed associations like the Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative and the older established Vigil and ROHR International (explored in chapters four and five).

³ See the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) also available here: <https://www.veritaszim.net/node/315>

Before the GPA was signed in 2008, much of the activity amongst the migrants in the UK comprised protests against the Robert Mugabe regime. Some authors focussed on the Zimbabwe Vigil Coalition⁴ which is “a regular vigil against the illegitimate regime in Zimbabwe as an effective way to raise awareness in the UK to the plight of the Zimbabwean people” (Zimbabwe Vigil Website, 2019; see Pasura 2010). This was one of the most visible forms of formal protest or activity seen in the UK, and the great majority of supporters were asylum seekers and those without status. It is important to revisit this literature and see what has carried on and what has not amongst these forms of protests. Arguably, the focus on the Vigil and irregular migrants’ activism has diverted attention from other forms of engagement by the middle classes who have status. The occlusion of middle-class activism in the existing literature was why I chose to examine the motivations and activities of Zimbabwean professionals based in Manchester discussed in chapter four.

During the power-sharing period in Zimbabwe, there were a variety of Zimbabwean diasporic initiatives including mobilizations to reform national institutions and to participate in the constitution making process and national healing (Pasura, 2010). One of the technical experts on the constitution making committee was a UK-based Zimbabwean academic, indicative of the direct links between homeland politics and the hostland as he went back to Zimbabwe for the entire period to consult on the process, on behalf of the opposition MDC formations. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum also conducted a number of consultative workshops in the UK and in Europe, which called for the removal of repressive institutions in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, 2012). Diasporans were motivated to persuade the homeland to formalise diaspora roles in decision-making via a diaspora vote or other formal mechanisms.

McGregor and Pasura (2014) argue that during this period of the GNU, there was a shift amongst Zimbabwean diasporans, to focus on development. New diaspora groups that emerged with a development focus included the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Interface (ZDDI), the Development Foundation of Zimbabwe (DFZ) and

⁴ The Zimbabwe Vigil works mainly to raise awareness of the plight of Zimbabwe and also helps undocumented migrants gain status in the UK. A detailed discussion is in chapter five.

the Zimbabwe Diaspora Focus Group (ZDFG). The trustees and board members of these organisations comprised prominent “visible” members of the diaspora which in this case were academics or professionals who sought to reengage with the Zimbabwean government for various reasons like wanting to eventually return back to Zimbabwe or just for the sake of development and improving quality of life in the homeland; some themselves returned to serve in various roles during the power-sharing period. During the time of this research, some of the organisations were still functional for example, ZDFG, but it was hard to pin down the coordinators of other groups, which appeared to be defunct, indicative perhaps of how diaspora activists can move between “visible” and “dormant” roles.

Going back to politics in Zimbabwe, the constitutional referendum acted as a litmus test for ZANU-PF as they were slowly and steadily registering members and campaigning for the harmonised elections. Elections were held in July 2013 with ZANU-PF’s victories shocking many different observers according to Raftopoulos (2013) as Robert Mugabe won 61% of the presidential vote compared to 44% in the previous election. Scholars like, Kriger (2012); Raftopoulos (2013); Mushava and Munyati (2013); the Solidarity Peace Trust (2013) all agree that this indeed though shocking was generally because the MDC was outmanoeuvred by ZANU-PF on the playing field. This was also the period in which many Zimbabweans in the diaspora were demoralised, as they had assumed things were going to change in the homeland and viewed this as a return to the old status quo.

Raftopoulos (2014) and Alexander & McGregor (2013) agree that ZANU-PF had successfully rebuilt the party-state, elaborating patronage networks, economic and institutional control in a manner that disadvantaged the MDC parties. It seemed like the opposition was largely debilitated and was in retreat, following the ‘shocking results’ of the election. What is more important for this research is that the opposition seemed to be imploding during this period as there was infighting and some suggested the then party leader, Morgan Tsvangirai step down ‘to allow progress by democratic forces’ (Raftopoulos, 2014; for more on opposition politics in Zimbabwe, see Le Bas 2006, Dorman, 1997 & 2018). These infightings, according to Raftopoulos (2014) show us the desperate search for change and political renewal, which was not only limited to the political parties, but also to civil society. At the same time, this

demoralisation meant an enhanced effort among most Zimbabweans in the diaspora, particularly those in the UK, to concentrate their attention on life in the UK, as they were getting their settlement papers and bringing in family to join them. Kuhlmann (2013) argues that for several people who were active in Zimbabwe diaspora politics, the prolonged struggle for the opposition in Zimbabwe had led to disillusionment as there was no political progress in Zimbabwe. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) also argues that length of stay in the hostland could affect decisions to take part in politics on the part of diasporans.

The failure of the MDC formations in the GNU and the loss in the election in 2013, led to disillusionment amongst Zimbabweans in the UK in party politics. At the same time, civil society in Zimbabwe also faced challenges as they sought to 'deploy human rights discourse to demonstrate the illegitimacy of the ZANU-PF regime' (Ncube 2013). The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum for example, argued that it was important to acknowledge the regime's human rights violations but that could not be done separately from broader political economy issues (Human Rights NGO Forum, 2014). Muzondidya (2014) observes that the disappearance of the labour movements in the early 2000s as a result of de-industrialisation meant that there was a void in relation to civic activism, as trade unions had been such important actors. Moreover, there was also a dwindling of donor funding, and competition amongst civics. One could argue that these are some of the voids that the Zimbabwe Citizens Movement discussed in chapter five sought to fill. The entanglement between civil society and opposition politics in Zimbabwe meant that the same people were disillusioned from both sides. These feelings were shared transnationally as members of the diaspora also did not see any change and most of them retreated to family life, became less visible politically and arguably therefore, the 'dormant' members of the diaspora grew.

However, following the death of Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC-T party received a breath of life when youthful former Organising Secretary Nelson Chamisa became party leader in 2018, and managed to reunite some party factions under the banner of the MDC-Alliance which he was elected leader of. Around this period as well, Zimbabwean social media activism was on the rise led by the outspoken Evan Mawarire, a pastor and critic of the Zimbabwean government. Mawarire popularised #ThisFlag movement via social media (Twitter) to vent about his frustrations

concerning life in Zimbabwe and the state of the economy⁵. Usage of social media amongst Zimbabweans in the country and abroad further brought to life the different struggles that they are facing. This sense of participation through social media coupled with a renewed opposition that has a youthful and well-spoken leader, provoked a huge surge in political and social movement involvement amongst Zimbabweans and in the country. This fresh face, who was young and appealed to millennials and other younger people encouraged diaspora members to reform MDC structures in the UK for example, and particularly to contribute to online political activism as well as via civic rights organisations. Social media platforms are also important for families as I discuss in chapter seven.

A significant juncture in Zimbabwean politics, whilst the opposition was going through its own internal changes, was the removal of long-serving leader of ZANU-PF and President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. After the then Vice President, Emmerson Mnangagwa was fired from office on November 6, 2017, a host of events happened related to factionalism and succession that eventually led to the 'coup.' Rutherford (2018) argues that due to Mnangagwa's close ties with Robert Mugabe, this was a rather surprising move. Others like Powell and Chacha (2019) argue that antagonism had been building up following the alleged poisoning of Mnangagwa earlier and the involvement of Robert Mugabe's wife Grace, in the affairs of ZANU-PF. Nevertheless, after Major General Sibusiso Moyo appeared on national television on the 14th of November issuing a statement that the military had not taken over government, the president is fine but they are targeting criminals around him, it triggered a massive public march in the next few days led by the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA). Their objective was clear, Robert Mugabe had to resign (on the coup, see also Tendi, 2019). As this was happening, members of ZANU-PF's central committee also gathered to remove Mugabe, as well as the parliament and senate. Robert Mugabe resigned on the 21 of November with Mnangagwa hastily inaugurated as the interim president on the 24th.

⁵ (Allison 2016) see <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/26/this-flag-zimbabwe-evan-mawarire-accidental-movement-for-change>

The importance of the events is that they gave hope to many, including those in the diaspora. Though, as we shall see in the next chapters, some were hesitant in accepting the change, some were optimistic initially as Mnangagwa, had come in preaching development and listening to the people (Powell and Chacha, 2019). The post-coup attempts to legitimise the government began with an election in July 2018 which marked a return to the old tricks of vote rigging and tampering (BBC, 2018). The results of the presidential election were delayed, and opposition supporters began protests demanding the release of the results arguing they had won the popular vote (BBC, 2018). The response of the government was ruthless, the army was sent in, shots were fired, and six people were killed with members of the opposition and some civil society being arrested over the following days.

As expected however, post-coup, Mnangagwa won enough of a majority to become president even though the margin was not very big, and the MDC-Alliance disputed the results. This was a big concern for those at home and abroad as it signalled what the Mnangagwa regime or 'new dispensation' as they called it was going to be like. Some political commentators argued there was nothing new about the government with others even suggesting and predicting things were going to get worse (Magaisa, 2018; Maguwu, 2018; Zamchiya, 2018; Machisa, 2018; Chan, 2018 *inter alia*). The challenge however for most diasporans, was that as the situation in Zimbabwe got tougher and tougher again economically, it put a lot of pressure on them to assist, meaning a return to double shifts (Laakso, 2019.). Laakso (2019) observes that the increased inflation and the shortage of fuel among other things impacts those on the ground and their relatives outside the country.

Zimbabwe is a very interesting case when it comes to how the state treats diaspora members. Most countries in Africa and around the world try and engage with their diaspora at more than just a remittance and investment level but offer them certain rights that they claim (Brinkerhoff, 2009). Diasporic acts of citizenship, which are explored in detail above, claim rights. McGregor and Pasura (2010) argue that Zimbabwe diasporic politics have been dominated by anti- ZANU-PF activity. Using Boccagni et al's (2015) categorisation of sending states, Zimbabwe can be regarded as a 'strategic and selective state' as it encourages some form of long-distance economic nationalism but wants to strategically and selectively manage what migrants

can or cannot do (Levitt et al., 2015). Such states offer partial, and often changing packages to migrants and encourage them to take part in the long-distance membership of various bodies and associations in the homeland but stop short of granting them certain rights like voting, usually because they know that most of these migrants would not return home, or fear they are opposition supporting (Levitt et al., 2015). Delano and Gamlen (2014) concur with this by arguing that states seek to tap into such associations and can occasionally even invoke some form of nationalist passions, albeit for the benefit of the state. But the Zimbabwean state does not encourage and finds problematic, diasporic nationalism as it is conceptualised as pro-opposition.

Another category used by Boccagni et al (2015) is that of “disinterested and denouncing state” which once again partially fits the Zimbabwean case, though does not fully capture its relationship with the diaspora, as it has changed over time, particularly in the period of power-sharing. Such a state denounces citizens who left the country as traitors but is still interested in their investments back in the homeland (cf de la Garza et al., 2000; Itzigsohn and Dore-Cabral 2000; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Mahler 2000; Guarnizo, 1998; Louie, 2000; Al-Ali et al., 2001⁶). The Zimbabwean ruling party aligns all emigrants with political opposition therefore does not entertain the idea of the diaspora influencing the people in the home country. Delano and Gamlen (2014) describe how states spill across their borders in search of their own people. In the past, Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe labelled the Zimbabwean diaspora as sell-outs who left their home country to go and work in degrading working conditions in search of an extra dollar; and in the past, state intelligence agencies have extended their reach into diaspora communities. Following the 2017 coup there have been some attempts by the ruling party to reach out to the diaspora, albeit not to the same extent as earlier. Yet, the state still hesitates to offer full rights to diasporans.

The Zimbabwean diaspora is heterogeneous and includes a minority of members who support the current ZANU-PF regime as well as the larger group who support the opposition. The diaspora includes black, white and mixed-race *inter alia* and minority

⁶ These studies have all shown how emigrant states actively try to tap into the resources of their diaspora communities.

ethnic groups as well as the main Shona and Ndebele groups. Much existing research suggests that those who were politically persecuted in Zimbabwe and came to claim asylum in the UK are supporters of the opposition MDC parties (McGregor & Pasura, 2010, Mbiba, 2012). However, there were previous waves of migrants that came to the UK based on persecution in the homeland and not just those who arrived post-2000 hence the term “new diaspora” to refer to those arriving in this period (see McGregor, 2010 on the earlier generations of emigration, see Pasura, 2008 and Chris Zembe’s 2016, 2018 & 2019 articles on the 60/70s emigres).

These diaspora members also have different socio-economic circumstances and this has effects on participation in diaspora mobilisation and transnational engagement. McGregor (2008) defines groups of migrants with insecure immigration statuses as living in ‘object spaces.’ This group can include both the silent and visible members who hardly take part in transnational affairs as they are too busy worrying about their own status, survival, jobs *inter alia*. But this insecurity can also provoke visibility, as demonstrated by the Vigil that provided an opportunity for being heard politically, in the hostland as well as globally. Other notable groupings within the Zimbabwe diaspora include those in the health and social care sectors who settled in the UK by mainly selling their labour and continue to have extremely strong ties with the homeland (Pasura and McGregor 2014). They do not feature prominently in this thesis as a specific category. Scholars have also identified and profiled transnational entrepreneurs who usually hold British passports and would welcome an opportunity to invest back in the homeland as well as the hostland (Pasura, 2014). During the time of research, I encountered some such, though again, they are not my prime focus.

The purpose of this section has been to shed light on Zimbabwean politics in the hostland, and the trajectory of recent politics in Zimbabwe. I have reviewed the literature on Zimbabwean politics and how that was connected to various efforts and mobilisations within the UK-based Zimbabwean diaspora.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature on diaspora, citizenship transnationalism, Zimbabwean diaspora and homeland politics. The purpose was to

elaborate the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of this thesis. My usage of diasporic citizenship in this thesis is grounded in a social understanding of citizenship: it is not just about a sense of belonging but related to practices and their effects within the diaspora and transnationally. It takes forward Isin's (2008) notion of 'acts of citizenship' in a transnational domain and makes the case for including not only irregular migrants in the hostland, but also those diasporans lacking formal rights in the homeland. As such it extends conceptualisations of diasporic citizenship by authors such as Laguerre (1998) and Cohen (2011), who focussed primarily on belonging and rights in the hostland. The sense of transnational belonging, and related acts of diasporic citizenship, have impacts both within the diaspora and in the homeland.

The second part of the chapter made the case for including transnational religious and family networks in debates over diasporic citizenship. This hinged on the strongly religious character of the Zimbabwe diaspora, and the importance of faith-based communities as part of diaspora life, and the extent of charitable giving in the homeland via church organisations. Thus, I argued that practices of diasporic citizenship and the sense of transnational belonging cultivated through the church are mutually imbricated. Similarly, transnational family ties are centrally important to diasporic citizenship, and I argued for a practice-based approach to 'doing family' as a means of exploring these interrelationships.

This thesis seeks to expand our understanding of the Zimbabwean diaspora over the past decade by paying specific attention to both homeland and hostland contexts. The political and economic situation in Zimbabwe as discussed in the final part of this chapter also shapes how diaspora members then interacted with one another as well as engaging the homeland in the fight to be recognised and also for a better country. This chapter began to sketch in the context of homeland and hostland events from the initial 'crisis' of 2000 that produced a new scale of exodus from Zimbabwe, through the political events that occurred during the research for this thesis, creating a starting point for the discussions that follow in the next few chapters. The focus on the post 2013 period and the transnational methodology adopted allow this thesis to add a new dimension to the existing literature on Zimbabwe's new diaspora.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology: Tools and Techniques

3.1. Introduction

Fieldwork is one of the most important ways of gathering data and is particularly useful when trying to understand multi-dimensional phenomena like transnationalism and citizenship. This chapter examines and makes a case for the different research techniques that were employed by this study. I used mixed methods to collect data for this study particularly, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. It is important to point out the transnational nature of this study from the beginning as I collected data from two different countries, the UK and Zimbabwe. This chapter is divided into four sections with the first one explaining the sites and choice of groups of people to study. This section is followed by one that explains the sampling techniques used as well as issues of access. The section also serves as an autobiographic account of how my beliefs and assumptions impacted the research and includes reflexive thinking about the research process. In the third section I analyse the different methodological techniques that were used in the research and further make a case for multi-sited ethnography by probing its benefits and drawbacks. The section also assesses data analyses and how themes, trends and issues coming out of the research were probed further and analysed. In the final section, I explore ethical considerations, my own positionality, informed consent, safety and confidentiality and I make a case for the decisions I made as well as cast an analytic eye to bring out what could have been done differently if any.

3.2. Researching multiple sites

In order to collect data reflecting the transnational nature of the research, I had to make decisions in terms of where and how to gain the necessary information. Shinozaki (2012) asserts that the transnational research process is one that has not received that much attention in the literature. To conduct transnational research, there is need for multi-sited field research which can be mixed. This, according to Marcus (1995) shows us how complex the subject of the research is, how it is present in a specific locality but also embedded in another which could be part of the world system. Here, I was looking at Zimbabweans who are in the UK and how they are embedded

in the homeland. Transnational research aims to understand issues from the perspective of those who are linked directly to them and this was the most reasonable method to use as I sought to understand Zimbabweans in different localities (Pollard 2009). Multi-sited fieldwork specifically refers to understanding how phenomena occur in multiple contexts or sites. The period of fieldwork for this study was between August of 2017 to May of 2018. It was spread between the UK and Zimbabwe with the UK leg of the research being from August until early-January and the Zimbabwean leg from then until May 2018.

Multi-sited transnational research allowed me draw connections and distinguish amongst the sites in order to explore different contexts. The Zimbabweans I sought to study are in different contexts and understand ideas of citizenship shaped by the context they are in. To be able to explore these ideas, it made sense to trace them from locality to locality and understand how perspectives differed or were similar, and the ways in which they moved over space and time, through transnational networks. Examining cross-contextual variations and uniformities would not be possible and understanding the impacts of social remittances for example, would not make sense, or would be very limited, if explored in a single site (Marcus, 1995). In particular, being a participant observant made it easier for me to talk to other participants in situ and I did not have to single them out and go talk to them elsewhere.

3.3. Researching Zimbabweans

As already mentioned, the purpose of this research was in part to understand diasporic influences on homelands particularly looking at diasporic citizenship and how it impacts decisions to participate. It was therefore imperative to pick a group that has those connections with the homeland and one can argue that almost all diaspora groups have these links. However, as I shall discuss further below, the reason for picking Zimbabweans was basically due to the fact that I belong to the same group hence easy access. Research has been done in the past on the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain but it focussed on methods of coping by diasporans, asylum seeking, integration, use of media, political mobilisation and religious fellowships (see Pasura 2012; Bloch 2008; Kuhlmann 2013; Biri 2014; Mbiba 2012; Manase 2013). Little research on Zimbabweans in Britain has explored the transnational component of

networks such as those I traced back to Zimbabwe. My research features mostly those diasporans described by Pasura (2012) as 'visible members' of the diaspora who participate in political mobilisations, though it also includes chapters on religious communities and family networks. In Zimbabwe, I traced those Zimbabweans who were connected directly to these same transnational networks, often focussing on those in organising and activist roles. For feasibility and because of personal interest, it made sense to focus on Zimbabweans as there was also a gap in the literature which this study seeks to fill.

3.4. Sampling and access: Autobiographical reflexivity and considerations

Two different methods of sampling to recruit interviewees for semi-structured interviews were employed; snowball and purposive sampling which I approached in a systematic way. For the former, I used my social networks and personal contacts at first and snowballed from there, asking for further recommendations on who else to interview after interviewing one person. The knowledge of who my subjects were, put me in a better position in finding other useful respondents to participate in the study. Purposive sampling on the other hand involves a researcher finding specific qualities within subjects whom they then choose to further observe or interview in order to gain a more in-depth understanding. I used this method with all the research groups after observing as a participant. I further used it to select non-network members whose data was used to triangulate what I gathered from the networks. These, as I shall discuss below, were professionals and Zimbabweans who have been involved or know about diaspora associations. Interestingly, this study focussed in some sections on personal networks and how they affected how certain initiatives were run and I as a researcher also found myself heavily relying on the family and personal networks that I had created as a Zimbabwean at home and in the diaspora.

It is argued that researchers often spend a lot of time attempting to establish access to people with information or the gatekeepers. Usually this is because there are trust issues when outsiders attempt to get information from a community or a specific grouping (Tonkin, 1984). In a country and diaspora community like Zimbabwe, trust has already been identified as one of the issues that are problematic as Pasura (2012)

argues. Lindley (2009) discusses the importance of existing social and personal networks as a strategy to build trust which is a technique I used.

Before embarking on this academic journey, I had lived in Zimbabwe and worked in the civil society sector. On arrival in the UK, I participated in Zimbabwean diaspora associations like the Vigil itself, took part in activities organised by the British Zimbabwe Society, Budiro Trust and was a member of ZimCatholics where issues relating to those being investigated by this research were discussed. I used these already established personal and social networks amongst the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK to gain access and trust so as to conduct fieldwork. In London, from August until October of 2017, I visited ZimVigil gatherings 11 times but initially as a fellow Zimbabwean, participating, in order to at first identify the gate keepers, observe and eventually interview members. Once I identified the gate keepers, I introduced myself and made sure they were aware of the purpose of my visits.

Getting to meet with the individuals without regular status for semi-structured interviews was always slightly more challenging outside the Vigil times as some did not work and could not afford to come into town to meet. Given this, I scheduled interviews for the Saturdays I knew they were already out to attend the Vigil. Being a participant made it easier to relate to the members, I was aware that being a new member and also a researcher, who is Zimbabwean, could affect whether they talk to me or not. I waited till the end to interview the gatekeepers or coordinators as I wanted to ask further questions about issues raised by some of the respondents. Additionally, interviewing the coordinators last gave me an opportunity to ask them specific questions about the transnational nature and relationships they have with the homeland and also to snowball research participants in the homeland whom they then put me in touch with.

I used the same technique in Manchester to research the Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative (ZCI). Important to note here is the fact that some of the respondents and key informants were close family and friends which presented ethical conundrums that I will discuss in detail further below. The coordinator of ZCI at the time of research was a close relative who put me in touch with the rest of the network in the UK and in Zimbabwe. This had its advantages for example, attending some of their meetings

was easier as I was introduced as both a relative and a researcher. It also meant that I kept up to date with the activity of the network. For the religious network – ZimCatholics - since I had been a member of Zimbabwean Catholic Church fellowships from 2014 when I arrived to study for my masters in London, it was easy to gain access. This connection with the members of the church, made it easier to identify, relate to and access the leaders, as well as congregants as they looked at me as one of them. I used the same strategy as with ZCI and Vigil networks, asking people for their homeland connections so that I could follow the network transnationally. All these factors combined made it easier for me to access the groups and to get the ball rolling with the interviews.

Having finished the first leg of the research in the UK, I headed to Zimbabwe in January of 2018, where I traced the transnational connections from the UK, targeting the coordinators of the specific networks first. I had to be careful how I introduced myself to the members of the transnational networks in Zimbabwe. My positionality as someone who has been referred to them by people who are their source of funding, could affect how they received me and answered my questions. My previous work experience with the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, a coalition of 28 NGOs, made it easier to gain access to the specific individuals and organisations that had closest ties to the Manchester ZCI network. This confirms the entanglements between histories of political activism and civil society in Zimbabwe, something I explore in the chapters that follow. To add on, religious contacts were not difficult to access as the first person I contacted when I arrived in Zimbabwe was the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Bishop's Conference who commands authority within the Catholic circles in the country. From there, it was easy to gain access to priests and other Catholic participants via snowballing and recommendations from the diaspora-based Zimbabweans. I mostly met with my respondents in Harare and arranged meeting with those based outside the city to coincide with days in which they were visiting the city so as to avoid requests for travelling costs and the like.

Given my close personal connections, it was important to be very reflexive when it came to everyday fieldwork. Reflexivity is defined by Billo and Hiemstra (2013) as a commitment to thinking about the ways in which our “personal biographies and positionality influence our research.” I had to make sure that I reflect upon my gender,

class and also biases when asking questions to irregular Zimbabwean members of the diaspora in the UK for example. Everyone had to remember that I am wearing the hat of a member and also researcher when talking to them.

3.5. Methods

3.5.1. Participating Observation

In this section, I will discuss the different types of methods for collecting data I used for this research. Participant observation is one of the techniques I used mainly to gain further understanding of group dynamics and informants before talking to them in full. As mentioned above, I mainly used this method to gain access and trust from the participants themselves before I selected some for in interviewing. Merriam et al. (2001) point out that when one is 'interviewing away from home,' there is a form of mutually perceived homogeneity which can create openness and trust in the research process. This makes it easy for researcher to gain deeper insights into the lives of the research subjects and in this case, how they engage amongst themselves and the homeland (Van Maalen, 2011). For the purposes of my research, I spent my time with the various networks that I was researching. I started off with the ZimVigil soon after getting ethical clearance from the University. I spent Saturdays singing and dancing with them in front of the Zimbabwean Embassy in London eventually mingling with them afterwards. The Vigil was preceded by a Restoration of Human Rights⁷ (ROHR) Central London Branch meeting elsewhere in London, usually at the Southbank Centre from 11:30am till about 1:30PM. I was not made aware of these meetings until later on when I had become a regular attendee of the Vigil. Singing and dancing usually carried on until around 5 or 6PM depending on the time of the year. Participant observation allowed me to learn the legal statuses of the members of ZimVigil which meant that I knew which topics they might avoid for fear of controversy, something considered an avoidance of responsibility by Düvell et al (2010).

Moving on to the religious network, I knew that chiShona and isiNdebele Mass was on the first Saturday of each month and had to make sure that I did not have schedule clashes considering I was also going to the Vigil. Mass would start at 2PM in but I

⁷ Restoration of Human Rights is the sister organisation of the Zimbabwe Vigil and is a registered organisation that collects and remits money to the homeland for their transnational initiatives. I discuss more about it in chapter five

usually passed through the Vigil or informed the coordinator that I was going to church that Saturday. Most congregants arrived around lunchtime for the service and I used this time to greet them and enter into informal conversations with them. Mass would go on until around 4/4:30PM after which everyone would go to the hall in the back the church for food. It was during this time that I got to speak and ask questions, learn about the hierarchies and different initiatives. I had to be reflexive and think about my positionality in this moment, I was coming into church, as a well-educated single Zimbabwean man to a place where most of the single women in the congregation are encouraged to 'find the right person to marry.' This meant that even when attempting to set up interviews, with some of the other young female and also single congregants, I had to make sure it is clear we are only exchanging contacts for the sake of my fieldwork. I worried about the quality of the data and did not want them to feel that they had to talk to me, in the hope that the conversations carry on outside the context of my fieldwork. As I had been a member of the church, I knew that many different older congregants would always encourage the younger unmarried congregants to find a churchgoing man or woman to court. Most members left soon after eating therefore if I wanted to sit down with them for a semi-structured interview, I had to schedule a different time to speak with them.

In Manchester, I made a decision to stay with a relative who is a central figure in ZCI. This meant that I could avoid finding short-term accommodation which could have been difficult considering the time of the year and my budget. As already mentioned, this made access easy since I was close by, when they had a meeting on Skype or WhatsApp, I would get invited to sit in and listen to the discussions. Other participants were informed of my presence in the meeting beforehand. I did the same with meetings in person as they usually were at a member's house though occasionally, they would meet at a venue in central Manchester. Initially, I worried about how this could impact the types of responses they gave me when I eventually interviewed them as I was a relative of their coordinator and they would not want to be critical of the work they are doing. However, whilst sitting in these meetings, I learnt the dynamics of the organisation, the histories of the people as well. They had a WhatsApp group dedicated to mainly the leadership or coordinating team which I tried to access unsuccessfully. The reason being they were concerned that when discussing sensitive topics including names, funding issues and the like, I would see that, and it could

create an issue with consent. Some members were of the opinion that it is possible to forget that I am in the group and they might discuss something they did not wish me as a researcher to be a part of as it was sensitive. Notwithstanding this constraint, I was allowed to read 'some' of the messages that were sent around when they were not deemed sensitive from time to time so that I learn about how they fundraised and mobilised. After I got familiar with them, I started scheduling meetings with different respondents I thought were key to gain further and deeper understanding of their organisation.

For the fieldwork in Zimbabwe, since I had been given contacts, I set up meetings with some of these individuals first. For the Vigil's transnational partnership, I met with ROHR's programme coordinator in Harare who introduced me to the entire team, and immediately got invited to a peace-building soccer match in Harare's satellite town of Chitungwiza. Whilst there, I met some of the local branch members who provided insights into the operation of the organisation outside the headquarters. Being introduced by a member of the network based in the UK to the Zimbabwe based team definitely proved to be useful as once I mentioned my name and who referred me, they would accept to meet. However, I was concerned that they would paint solely a positive picture as they knew there was a chance I could report back to the ROHR UK chapter. I spent a lot of my time in the ROHR office conversing with them about various issues and eventually I met the national coordinator who lived in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second biggest city.

I used the same technique to follow up the ZCI Manchester professionals' network in Zimbabwe: I contacted their Zimbabwe based coordinator who I met with, however because their network has members scattered around Harare and the country more broadly, it was difficult to find a nucleus to follow. On occasion, I would meet with their coordinator who would provide an update on their initiatives. He also lived and worked just outside Harare, so he was not always around. Notwithstanding the geographical spread of the members, I managed to conduct interviews with members of the network who were involved in some of the initiatives. I also interviewed representatives of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum with whom ZCI had a partnership on a project about human rights monitoring. I then snowballed from these interviews to individuals who worked on the human rights monitoring project, the monitors themselves from

within Harare urban, and a few who monitored other provinces namely Masvingo, Manicaland and Mashonaland Central. The Zimbabwe-based coordinator of ZCI also referred me to a few other human rights and democracy activists that they had worked with in the past whom I also interviewed.

Regarding the Catholics, after the Secretary General of the Bishop's Conference connected me with the relevant contacts, I set up meetings where I visited sites in Harare and surrounding areas like Marondera and Chishawasha and was shown some of the results of charitable donations that came in from the UK. I also met and interviewed a Zimbabwean priest who had been studying in the UK when the idea to donate goods to Zimbabwe was first mooted by members of the UK chaplaincy. I travelled to Chishawasha Seminary on the outskirts of Harare for example where I met the Rector of the Seminary and was shown the rooms that had benefitted from the bedding and furniture sent by Zimbabwean Catholics in the UK, and the internet connection they had managed to install using funds sent by the same group. Where there were no physical items to be shown to me, as in the case of the assistance Zimbabwean Catholics in the UK had given to victims of the Tokwe-Mukosi disaster, I was instead furnished with records and letters that had been exchanged between the recipients in Zimbabwe, and the diasporans. It was equally important for me to be careful how I introduced myself as one of the participants assumed that I was doing monitoring and evaluation on behalf of ZimCatholics in London. Additionally, there were volunteer congregants based in Harare, who received the shipments from the UK on behalf of those in Zimbabwe whom I also interviewed, and then snowballed from there. In the next section, I give a snippet of what participant observation was like in the field.

3.5.2. Stories from the field: A day in the life of a Zimbabwean activist

This section discusses participant observation through the lens of an example. It discusses how fieldwork can sometimes go in a direction you did not expect and how that can in some cases work to your advantage. One of my points of call as alluded above were the contacts I had been given by network members in the UK. On one Saturday in January 2018, I had scheduled a meeting with a prominent Zimbabwean political activist and social movement leader in Harare who had agreed to meet in the

morning and then spend time talking before he had to leave for church and work. In the morning of the day, around 9am, we met up, and he took me to his church (Seventh Day Adventist) arguing it was easier to talk there since he had to go in after we finished. Soon after we arrived, he got a call, told me to go wait for him in the church as he had meet someone briefly. I waited in the church until lunchtime with no sign of him. He eventually came back but said we had to leave as he had another political engagement - he had to go make a speech at a political rally hosted by Build Zimbabwe Alliance⁸ (BZA) which was launching its election manifesto. Throughout the morning and till this point, he had been mentioning that he wanted me to experience the life of an activist in Zimbabwe arguing “we have helped a lot of people get their PhDs⁹” which I thought was an interesting reflection on power dynamics between researcher and researched. He was trying to stamp authority and claim power. Along the way as we were talking, he pulled out his speech and asked me to peruse it, as it detailed some of the issues he was advocating for as an activist for example empowering self-employed people or those working in the informal economy. We arrived at the rally where we were ushered to a tent with all the other “VIPs” that had been invited.

Whilst seated, he asked whether it was possible for me to come on stage with him as he wanted someone to record and broadcast his speech live on Facebook. I initially hesitated, but then agreed to and when it was his turn, we both went on stage. This also raised concern for me as I was making myself visible in a politicised network even though I was trying not to raise attention to myself. In this instance, this participant had completely inverted the power dynamics and he was in control of the day. Notwithstanding, I went up with him and got to watch the crowd from stage. What he said resonated with the crowd and they cheered in support as he chanted slogans in support of informal economy workers. After we finished, he invited me for dinner at a local ‘*gochi gochi*’¹⁰ place close to the city centre famously known as ‘*kuhuku*’ (the chicken place). On the way there, we drove through downtown Harare where most vendors are located. He stopped at every road intersection and spoke to them about

⁸ Build Zimbabwe Alliance is a political party in Zimbabwe which fielded candidates for parliament and the presidency in Zimbabwe’s 2018 general election.

⁹ Interview with Chenjerai. Harare. 28/01/2018

¹⁰ Local name for a barbeque, also popularly known as a ‘braai’ in Zimbabwe.

registering to vote as Zimbabwe was facing elections in July. He chanted slogans, '*mavendor hoyeee*' (ahoy vendors) and they chanted back and waved at him. I found this interesting as I got to see first-hand indeed, how days are like for an activist in Zimbabwe.

As we sat down for our meal, he started sharing more stories of his experiences with the government, his history and the like. What is important about this story is how he, as the research subject, tipped the power balancing scale towards himself and decided to do things his way. The whole day was orchestrated to show me how influential he is in the country, city and community as according to him, "I can tell the diasporans that he is a hardworking person whom they should definitely partner with¹¹." Part of this was to boost his own reputation, but it was also shifting the power to himself especially when using statements like "I have helped a lot of people earn their PhDs" arguing that even though he only had a master's degree himself, he could have earned a PhD if he wanted. It also shows how occasionally fieldwork can be messy and have surprises as I had not intended to spend a whole day with him despite the insights I gained something that resonates with what Billo and Hiemstra (2013) when they discuss mediating messiness of the field. In the next section, I go back to analysing methodological approaches and I discuss semi-structured interviews.

3.5.3. Semi structured interviews

In order to gain deeper insights and probe my respondents, I used semi-structured interviews to collect data. Interviews are a very useful technique for generating qualitative data (Kvale, 1996) and I used this technique in addition to participant observation and as the main source of data. In total, I conducted 85 interviews spread across the different sites and networks as follows; in the UK, I conducted 40 semi-structured interviews, 10 with the Zimbabwe Vigil, 10 with ZimCatholics both in London and 10 with ZCI members based in Manchester. The questions that I asked these groups were tailored to the particular themes of investigation of the political, religious and family networks. Questions about family, life in the diaspora, background histories were similar for interviewees in all networks. I conducted a further 10 interviews with

¹¹ Interview with Chenjerai. Harare. 28/01/2018

individuals who were not part of any of the specific networks I was studying in order to triangulate some of the data that I collected, these comprised academics and others who were knowledgeable about diaspora affairs. I asked them questions that sought verification, corroboration or clarity from these respondents. In Zimbabwe, I conducted the rest, meaning 45 semi-structured interviews in different sites around Harare and its surrounding areas; 10 with ROHR/ZimVigil, 10 with local partners of ZimCatholics and 13 with ZCI's local partners. Like in the UK, I also conducted interviews with non-network members to gather varying insights about diaspora member interventions in Zimbabwe but again because some offered quite useful insights, I ended up with 12 from this group. These comprised, like in the UK, academics, individuals working with particular NGOs, civil society activists and general members of the community.

No. of interviews	ZimVigil/R OHR	Manchester Professionals/ Zimbabwe partners	ZimCatholics/Zimbabwe Partners	Non-network members
UK	10	10	10	10
Zimbabwe	10	13	10	12
Total	20	23	20	22
Grand total	85			

Table 1 shows the total number of interviews conducted broken down by location and network

Interviews were conducted in safe environments usually based on the recommendations of the interviewee. For the most part, in the UK, interviews conducted with ZimVigil were outside and during the Vigil where they felt comfortable. Sometimes interviewees would ask that we move away from the group which we did. Shinozaki (2012) argues that occasionally interviewees can decide where and how the interview is to be conducted and this was the case in most of the interviews conducted in Manchester, and Zimbabwe. McDowell (1998) contends that crucial to

the quality of information provided is the location and comfort of the respondent. I made sure that the locations chosen were safe for both the interviewee and me. I also had to be careful about my positionality as someone who had not been in the country for a while and was used to locations in the more affluent suburbs¹² of Harare where some of the respondents would not have felt comfortable with.

I knew how bi-linguistic many Zimbabweans are and I gave participants the option of conducting the interviews in English or in chiShona. In the UK, most people use the English language everyday therefore are proficient. In Zimbabwe however, there were instances where participants chose to speak entirely in the local languages, mostly chiShona, a language I also speak. There was sometimes initial confusion however because even though I speak chiShona fluently and it is my mother tongue, my name is in isiNdebele which is a different language in Zimbabwe. Some participants would initially be apprehensive, thinking they had to answer mainly in English as I couldn't speak chiShona. However, I made it clear that I could speak chiShona despite having an isiNdebele name as I was worried about the quality of responses I would get if a participant could not express themselves fully. Additionally, I had to be careful whilst asking questions to vulnerable respondents like those with irregular status in the UK and as Düvell et al, (2010) put it; being sensitive in studies that are in direct contact with vulnerable people and difficult topics are discussed is useful. However, as the next few chapters will reveal, some of the irregular respondents wanted to share and to be heard especially when talking about political issues and citizenship. Interviews would always begin with general questions about their lives to make the respondent at ease and comfortable which was then followed with more probing questions.

3.5.4. Online and archival research

In addition to the interviews, I used online and archival research to supplement the interviews. It was mainly to gain further knowledge about points raised during the interviews and references used in the interviews. There were moments where interviewees would refer to media or new media in the form of social media so I would

¹² There are some people in Zimbabwe who cannot stand going to the more affluent suburbs which they call "*madale dale*" a play on the names of most of the areas that end with "dale." They are more comfortable in their localities, usually the townships or the general CBD area.

go to the various websites to corroborate their stories. I spent time researching different Facebook groups belonging to diaspora political organisations to see past activities, initiatives and interactions between members. I also read archival newspaper articles for example at the time when the Vigil was formed so as to gather more evidence. The Vigil itself has an online archive of all their diaries from all their Saturday protests so I spent time analysing the details, numbers of attendees, the nature of the issues discussed *inter alia*. The same strategy was used for ZimCatholics who also have published a collection of newsletters online and I spent time combing through them for details. This was a very useful technique and was one of the first things I did before starting interviews, to gain more background knowledge about the context and continued to do this as I conducted interviews to corroborate stories, get references and more insights.

3.6. Analysing the data

Data collected was analysed on the go which was made possible by the fact that I transcribed the interviews I conducted soon after to allow easy storage. Whilst transcribing the data, patterns and themes started emerging which allowed me to probe further when asking questions. For instance, to understand how Zimbabwean diaspora members engage politically, I had initially assumed that everyone takes part because they were an activist before arriving in the UK. What became apparent was this was not always the case as some other members became active only after arriving in the UK. What this meant was rephrasing such questions to make sure they asked about previous participation as well. Together with the trends emerging from the interviews, my notes from the observations I made, and the corroboration from the archival and online research, I was then able to draw conclusions and analyses on the various issues that respondents discussed which inform this study.

3.7. Whose voice was heard?

As highlighted above, this research focused on the ‘visible’ members of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK and also those who are actively participating in different diaspora funded initiatives in Zimbabwe. Schwarzer et al (2006) argue that ensuring that participant’s voices are heard is one of the ways to empower those that

might be vulnerable and disempowered. Because I was mainly focussing on those that are actively involved, it is possible that the voices of participants who are not very active though also consider themselves members were not included. Participant observation additionally allowed me to interact with those who are vulnerable because of their irregular status in the country. Focussing on the coordinators and only the regular members of the Vigil would have meant these voices of the most precarious were not heard, but to avoid biases, I also wanted to hear from these members who were sometimes regarded as quiet and timid.

Additionally, to make sure a variety of voices were heard, and to ensure the coordinators did not dominate unduly, I did not necessarily interview the coordinators either in Zimbabwe or the UK first. I was concerned that the research should represent diverse views and include insights from the members who were not in leading positions, as the latter might withhold some of the sensitive or critical information for fear it would reflect badly on them. Some research shows that women migrant's voices are less heard due to their invisibility from the public eye (Polzer, 2012). In the case of my fieldwork in the UK, the majority of members of the different networks I researched were female. Even though I tried to get a more balanced gender sample of participants, membership in general, whether at the Vigil or the Catholic Church was mostly women which I also found interesting. Many of those with irregular status, whose identities I was very concerned to protect, did want to share their stories in the public eye as some of them thought it could help their quest to not be returned to Zimbabwe should that eventually arise. However, despite my attempts at diversifying the voices heard in the research, the nature of snowballing sampling as a technique means that the research cannot be fully comprehensive. In the next section I discuss issues of ethics and other considerations.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

3.8.1. Positionality - Insider/Outsider

Starting with positionality, this section discusses the ethical challenges, dilemmas and issues that arose during fieldwork for this study. It analyses how they were mitigated and what could be done in the future to avoid or prevent some of them. Merriam et al (2012: 773) refer to positionality as an “assumption that a culture is more than a

monolithic entity to which one belongs or not” which basically is where one stands in relation to the ‘other.’ As already discussed above, gaining access was to a certain extent easy given that I was part of the same group that I was researching. But this did not always mean that I could ask the questions I wanted right away. There were many considerations, particularly regarding how I approached people. My identity, as a Black Zimbabwean played a key role in how I was viewed by all my participants, it made me acceptable because I was looked at as a fellow friend making me an insider. However, even though we shared the same identity, for participants in the UK, I was coming from an academic background where I am receiving ‘Western education’ and my legal status is more stable than those for example whom I was talking to from the Zimbabwe Vigil. This meant that even though I would regard myself as in ‘insider,’ to them I was an ‘outsider.’ What this meant additionally was that some participants were selective in what they shared with me, as I discuss in the next few chapters, especially with the Vigil, there were issues that I would hear whispers of but never full details. Many people were unsure how I was going to use the information and how it may affect their affiliation with the organisation.

The same applied in Zimbabwe where even though I shared the same culture with respondents and spoke the same languages, I was coming in from the UK and some assumed I had parted ways with Zimbabwean culture and traditions. Naveed et al. (2017) observe the same and argue that the idea of coming from the ‘West’ can impact how you are viewed by research subjects. My status as a doctoral researcher from a UK-based university, in Zimbabwe was in some instances perceived as higher than the respondents which automatically made me an outsider even if I was talking to fellow Zimbabweans, something Merriam et al. (2001) also share. This meant that even though I was home and amongst my fellow Zimbabweans, they would in the case of political activists, overplay their role and exaggerate their influence knowing that I was in contact with the diasporans from whom they receive funds.

Additionally, whilst in Zimbabwe, to some participants, I was representing the diaspora. For them, because I had been referred to them by a member of their network based in the UK, I was coming in as a member of the specific network. My positionality regarding this had an impact on how some participants viewed and interacted with me. As already discussed, and alluded to above, some participants felt the need to

overstate the work they did in case I was reporting back to their partners who provide funding in the UK. Members of the religious network for example kept reiterating how grateful they were of the charitable donations that had come from their counterparts in the UK. To me, it was as if they were worried if I tell the diasporans that they were not grateful, they would not donate anymore. The sorts of responses and information that I got from some participants were influenced by my connection to their network coordinators based in the UK. For some, it was an opportunity to vent and share their unhappiness with how initiatives were being run as in the case of ROHR in Zimbabwe. For other, like individual activist partners in Zimbabwe, it was an opportunity to show how useful they are so that they keep the partnerships with the diasporans going. In all cases, I had to remind participants that I was an independent, academic researcher who though being a member of the diaspora, had not been sent by their counterparts in the UK to investigate how they were doing.

In some cases, I was given information on how to navigate the group dynamics of the networks I was researching. For example, whilst observing the protests with ZimVigil, the coordinator shared with me about how many different masters and PhD students had come by asking them questions and then went on to write negatively about the organisation which can make the members hostile. He warned me that they might be a bit guarded at first and would definitely view me as an outsider. In Zimbabwe, some respondents were keen to know how long I had been living outside Zimbabwe and they used this to determine whether I was in touch with the current context in the country. Additionally, they were eager to learn my positions on Zimbabwean politics for example if I was pro Nelson Chamisa, the new leader of the MDC Alliance. I tried to convey agreement by virtue of nodding and a neutral position so that they could go on. This to an extent, made me feel like an outsider and in some cases had an implication on the power dynamics between the researcher and the researched in the sense that, they could choose to address something in full knowing that I knew less about it or share more information that was not relevant to the research.

3.8.2. Researching vulnerable participants – Informed consent

Since I spoke to some respondents who were irregular in the UK, I classified them as vulnerable people. They are usually looked at as having low social status and

sometimes stigmatised (Düvell et al., 2010). Despite this, irregular migrants hold positions of key influence in the fieldwork context as they do have the power to decide whether to tell their stories and participate or not (Düvell et al., 2010). I decided signed consent was unethical and switched to verbal methods for informed consent. I also made it abundantly clear to participants that they had the right to terminate the interview at any time or if they thought a question was too risky, they could choose to decline answering. Merriam et al. (2001) in their account discuss how in some cases, it is upon the researcher to make sure that they are not putting their subjects at risk by publishing details that could end up negatively impacting these groups.

Observing and having interviews in situ helped me learn more about these vulnerable members. I tried to not press them for answers on questions about whether they visit home frequently or not, knowing that they do not go home otherwise they would not be allowed to come back into the UK. I had to be careful about how I phrased questions about work, earning money and financial remittances to the homeland. This was so that I did not alienate myself from them or put them off during the interview such that they may encourage others to not talk to me. I did not want them thinking that whatever they share with me could come back and affect their status in the UK. In other cases, I let them lead the interview and I would just add more questions to further probe so as to make them feel in control, something Shinozaki (2012) also encourages.

3.8.3. Interruptions in the field: The ‘coup that was not a coup’

As asserted by Naveed et al. (2017), fieldwork can be messy and almost all fieldwork requires changes in pre-planned schedules, research designs and methods. Fortunately, in my case, I did not have to go as far as changing the research design but in November 2017, there was a ‘military coup’ in Zimbabwe which saw the removal from power of its long serving president, Robert Mugabe. This occurrence momentarily had an impact on my fieldwork as it brought with it briefly, a lot of optimism about the future of Zimbabwe. Despite the fact that Robert Mugabe was forced to step down by the military, most were hopeful that the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe would change. It meant that some of my respondents who had been feeling indifferent about the situation in Zimbabwe for a while started sharing their belief that things could change. Indeed, some respondents in the UK were talking about how the change in

government in Zimbabwe could prompt them to visit more, to participate more transnationally and invest in the country.

Initially, I thought I would need to rework my questions but that would have affected uniformity so instead I added questions which I asked those individuals who displayed optimism in the country. Of importance to note is that during this process, the positions of the organisations who are the basis of my research did not change. As soon as the news about the 'coup' and subsequent change in government broke, I reached out to the ZimVigil, ZCI and ROHR to find out their positions and both in different words said they were 'monitoring the situation' but not necessarily celebrating. They were cautious and argued that this 'coup' meant civilians ceding power to the military. Indeed, when the new cabinet was eventually formed, a number of military personnel were given influential ministerial positions to which the two diaspora-based organisations argued, 'we told you so.' There had been speculation that the interim and now substantive President was going to form a government that included the opposition but when that did not transpire, some who had been hopeful and optimistic again started doubting and questioning themselves.

Regarding the religious networks, I decided to focus mainly on interviewing Zimbabwean Catholics about their charity work for that period immediately after the 'coup' and when the military was trying to get Robert Mugabe to resign. This also gave the political networks some time to monitor the situation and see where it was going. I conducted some of the interviews that I had pre-arranged with the political networks before the news broke, however. As alluded above, general responses did not change that significantly and diaspora-members' situations in terms of irregular status had not changed. For the professionals in Manchester, the situation in Zimbabwe momentarily opened a door for them to collaborate alongside local partners with ease as everyone assumed that Zimbabwe was moving towards a different and positive era. For those without legal status in the UK though, news started coming out after the visit by the Zimbabwean Minister of Foreign Affairs that he was to strike a deal with the UK government whereby Zimbabwe received aid from the UK in exchange for accepting deportees. There was some panic and some respondents shared that there was an urgency to get their situation resolved so that they did not end up being sent back.

When I arrived in Zimbabwe, January of 2018, the situation seemed calm and different political players were at work launching their campaigns as a general election had been called for July 2018. As discussed above, I attended the launch of one of the many political parties that joined the race to get their presidential candidate elected with one of my respondents in the same month. Despite this, respondents were playing a 'wait and see game' as it was hard to tell who exactly was going to win the elections, thus their responses did not differ much from how they would have answered before the 'coup.' The campaigns happened with no major incidences even though ZCI for example had anticipated violence and intimidation. Violence did however occur in the aftermath the elections as discussed in the previous chapter. The purpose of this vignette was to show how messy the field can get, how sometimes decisions and calculations have to be made to ensure that the research carries on.

3.8.4. Safety in the field – Researching sensitive topics in Zimbabwe

Related to the 'coup' and political speech in Zimbabwe and in its diaspora is the issue of safety. One of the most important aspects of doing fieldwork is making sure the researcher and the respondents are safe and since I was researching sensitive topics in the sense of legal residency in the UK and politics in Zimbabwe, it was of utmost importance that I do it in a safe manner. I made sure initially that all respondents were aware of the nature of the research. When choosing where to meet with respondents in London, outside of the Vigil for example, I wanted it to be comfortable, so I gave them the opportunity to select a location themselves. Whilst conducting the interviews, in all instances, I made sure that I or the respondents were not too loud as to attract attention. In some instances, when respondents, particularly political activists are talking, they may get quite animated and loud and I wanted to avoid drawing attention. The UK field sites were generally safe as there are no problems in the country with talking publicly about political issues, it was the sites in Zimbabwe that I was mostly worried about.

As already alluded to, when I arrived in Zimbabwe, I did everything to not draw attention to myself and to the respondents. What I was aware of, is that some of the political activists and social movement leaders I wanted to interview were constantly being monitored by the state. So, as already mentioned above, I made sure that before

meeting with them, we discussed what the safest location or site would be. Additionally, I made sure to have my voice recorder handy, and place it somewhere on the table that is not too obvious but close enough to capture the interview.

3.8.5. Confidentiality and anonymity

In addition to the above, respondents were always informed that their information will be kept confidentially, and their names, details and contacts would not be shared with anybody else. In some instances, I had to reiterate that based on the ethical recommendations for this research, their information would not be shared with any other person to ensure that they do not worry and cooperate. There was a risk in the field, for example with the vulnerable irregular Zimbabweans in the UK that if their information is shared, this might have negative effects on their residence in the country. I had to find ways of mitigating this and confidentiality and anonymity were essential. However, there were some respondents who insisted that their stories be shared exactly how they were told; which they are in this thesis but for confidentiality and anonymity reasons, their identities are concealed. Apart from cases in which respondents were speaking in their official capacity on behalf of organisations, this research anonymises all the research participants and though it may take away from those who wanted their stories told directly from them, it also protects those who could be vulnerable and end up facing consequences from their employers, families and state agencies. Even in the case of those who spoke in their official capacity as organisational leaders, pseudonyms are used in this thesis to protect the identities of those who may be negatively impacted by its publication.

3.8.6. Managing participant expectations

Whilst in the field, both in the UK but particularly in Zimbabwe, it was always important to manage participant expectations in the sense of what I was able to do for them and what the research could do for them. There were respondents who during an interview, would mention that 'you should definitely include this in your thesis' and usually, it was because they were trying to expose other individuals for fraud, embezzlement, and related issues. I had to make it clear to them that this is an academic piece of writing and some of the points they raised may or may not be used and if so, they may be

used in a manner they did not expect. In Zimbabwe mostly, there was a general assumption again, as I mentioned above, that I would foot the bill for the beverages/meals that the respondents had whilst being interviewed. “*Handiti ndimi madiaspora...?*” (Aren’t you the ‘diasporans...?’) was a phrase that was used a few times to indirectly say that because I was coming in from a university in the West, I should pick up the bill as I had money. Naveed et al (2017) discuss this when they mention that coming from a ‘Western University’ can have its impacts on power dynamics and expectations in the field.

Though it was fine to pick up the bill as a form of reciprocity in the field, sometimes it felt like a form of ‘you scratch my back, I scratch yours’ something Mandiyanike (2009) shares particularly when doing research in your home country. I felt obligated to do so, and perhaps this was my way of expressing my own diasporic citizenship as someone who had not been home in a while and knew how tough the situation was. Some respondents would pick quite pricey items on the menu and I would still feel obligated to pay because I had taken them away from their business for about an hour or more and therefore should show gratitude. Similar to Mandiyanike (2009), I also got questions about how to get scholarships, asked for advice on how to go about applying *inter alia*. There were also other requests like help in setting up a hometown association so that those in Zimbabwe could tap into diaspora resources. In most cases I had to remind the respondents that I was a student and though I might be currently enjoying residency in the UK based on my student visa, I do not work full time and also struggle to make ends meet sometimes. Shinozaki (2012) also discusses this and goes on to mention that in her case, some of respondents felt sorry for her as a student since they were earning more as domestic workers. However, this was not the case in Zimbabwe.

Because of the high usage of WhatsApp in Zimbabwe and globally, I used this as one of the ways I could communicate with potential respondents. It meant sharing my phone number with them so as to coordinate meeting places. However, it also meant that they could easily contact me about other issues not related to the research. Over the last few months, after leaving the field, I still receive messages from respondents sharing information, asking questions and occasionally for favours. The latest one was in August 2019, more than a year after I left the field, I received a message from a

respondent saying due to the state of politics in Zimbabwe (arrests of civil society leaders) they had fled to South Africa and was living with a friend. They said that due to the fact that they left without packing much, they were not working and living off donations and any assistance I could offer financially or by spreading the word so they could help would be appreciated. This obviously presented ethical dilemmas for me as the researcher since this respondent helped me in my research and for the sake of 'duty of care,' I felt I should assist but I limited myself to assisting by reaching out to some contacts I have in South Africa to see if they could do something.

3.9. Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has shown the methodological and ethical decisions that were made during fieldwork for this study. I went with a mixed method approach so as it allowed me to explore the more vulnerable members of the sample through participant observation and also allowed an in-depth understanding of the networks I was studying through semi-structured interviews. What is clear here is access is usually easier when you are a part of the group that you seek to research, but it also creates ethical challenges in terms of when do you stop being a researcher. Being a member of the same group also does not necessarily mean being an insider as I had some issues. Additionally, despite having a plan on how fieldwork is going to be conducted, there are other variables that come into play that could slow you down and indeed change the outcome of your research. Mitigating these can be problematic depending on the extent. The minor variables that I came across were handled carefully as I did all I could not to deviate from the plan. The relationships that a researcher and their participants or the research also has an impact on whether the plan will be carried out as set out or improvising would need to be done.

Chapter 4: Transnational Political Mobilisations Amongst Zimbabwean ‘Professional’ Migrants

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse transnational political activity by migrant professionals from Zimbabwe based in Britain. I look at a diaspora initiative to secure the diaspora vote, democracy and respect of human rights in the homeland. Prior studies on the Zimbabwean diaspora have already profiled how highly politicised the group is, and this chapter shows the differences and changes that have happened over time within Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK. The chapter explores how the Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative (ZCI) based in Manchester and comprising mostly professionals have engaged in activism and claimed their rights in the homeland and challenged the Zimbabwe government from a distance, by engaging in partnerships with large and well-established civil society organisations. I chose this group as an object of study because of its social base in educated middle-class professionals with rights in the UK and because of their transnational civic and political engagements. This makes an interesting case of how middle-class diaspora members have sought to influence events in Zimbabwe at a particular juncture in time. The chapter takes forward debates over diaspora political mobilisation in Zimbabwe and new African diasporic contexts more broadly which have largely ignored the professional middle classes with status or have explored their activities in the countries of settlement without a transnational lens (see McGregor 2010; McGregor and Pasura 2010; Pasura 2010; Pasura 2013). It examines how diaspora life and democracy in the hostland affects the decision to be active and, extends research that has been done on the Zimbabwean diaspora in earlier periods.

My definition of diasporic citizenship requires an analysis of political engagements in both hostland and homeland. It demands an analysis of legal status, but also a broader social approach to citizenship and activism. Based in the UK, ZCI members create a sense of belonging in the hostland and claim rights in situ, but at the same time, also claim rights in the homeland, a country where they are not looked favourably upon and where their status is contested. Beyond the Zimbabwe case, this chapter contributes to broader debates over diaspora transnational political mobilisation. Brinkerhoff

(2011, 2014, 2012) for example restricts her collection to diasporas' humanitarian engagement with homelands while Smith and Stares (2007) are among those authors who focus on diaspora politics to the exclusion of humanitarianism. The chapter shows us how diaspora civic, political and humanitarian engagements are interlinked, and to a certain extent are also informed by activists' own history of past activism and personal networks. The chapter also extends understanding of Zimbabwe's civic sphere and its interconnection, not only with political activism, but it also profiles the links with the diaspora, spelling out the influences that diaspora organisations have on their homelands.

Chapter three has set out this thesis' overall multisited methodology. This particular chapter draws specifically from ten interviews with key informants in the UK and another ten based in Zimbabwe. Additionally, I also use the data I collected as a participant observer with ZCI in Manchester in the UK and civics in Harare, Zimbabwe. This multi-sited methodology allowed for an assessment of individuals' motivations as well as providing some grounds for debating impacts in both countries (cf Kuhlmann 2013).

This chapter is organised into two main sections, the first section discusses and analyses diaspora political mobilisation and introduces the case of the Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative (ZCI). I argue that unlike prior studies that show political engagement and humanitarian or philanthropic activities as different fields of socio-political action, ZCI shows their actual entanglement because of the intertwining of histories of political opposition with civic and rights-based mobilizations in Zimbabwe. Additionally, I argue that partly due to this entanglement, as well as the members' socio-economic status, and their method of recruiting members based on invites, this organisation has inadvertently promoted exclusivity in its membership as they work with people in specific circles only; middle-class and civil society. I explore how diaspora life affects decisions to engage in transnational activism, arguing that experiences of political life in the UK have influenced people to a certain extent, Zimbabwe diaspora members wish to see some of the good aspects of democracy they experience in the UK also happening in the homeland. In the second section, I take a look at the influences that ZCI has had on the civic sphere in Zimbabwe by discussing how they partner with Zimbabwean human rights, civic and political organisations. I introduce, and link the

exclusivity discussed in the first section to key individuals' personal networks and examine how they impact this transnational relationship. The section also discusses the nature and scope of work ZCI is doing with partners on the ground, focussing on how they enabled the uptake of new technologies within Zimbabwe as well as bringing about closer links with donors for fund raising. This transnational engagement enhances activists' sense of diasporic citizenship as it adds to their sense of belonging to the homeland as they claim rights there and seek to raise the profile of human rights abuses and bring about wide improvements in substantive citizenship.

4.2. Diaspora Political Mobilisations: The Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative (ZCI)

In this section, I will introduce the organisation which forms the empirical basis of the arguments in this chapter, the Zimbabwe Citizens Initiative (ZCI). The organisation was a brainchild of Zimbabwean professional migrants dispersed around the world, so they could come together and tackle issues at home at a larger and more coordinated scale. As mentioned above, I chose this group as an object of study because of its social base which includes educated professionals with rights in the UK, who either studied in the UK or had their qualifications before emigrating from Zimbabwe. This makes an interesting case as this type of group is less emphasised in the literature on transnational civic and political engagements. Such middle class, professional groups are sometimes not fully analysed because they are seen as comfortable in the hostland as they enjoy legal rights and are free to move between the homeland and the hostland. Because of their professions, most of them are also able to contribute economically to the homeland and are usually the target for government campaigns on investing back home thus they appear primarily in the literature on economic remittances. Key activists within ZCI are based in Europe, USA and South Africa, and despite diasporic origins, the organisation also has members within Zimbabwe. ZCI is regarded by its founders as:

“A globally-diverse platform for Zimbabweans with a deep passion for the conditions in our country whose mission is to promote participatory democracy by providing technical and financial support to social movements in Zimbabwe and providing a platform for all citizens to hold the government officially accountable¹³.”

¹³ Words spoken by Kingstone Jambawo at the launch of the organisation in England

The organisation is meant to be a movement that is driven by the collective interests of all its members at home and abroad, and indeed claims to represent all dispersed Zimbabweans' common national interest. The idea is for every member regardless of where they are, to push for a participatory democracy in Zimbabwe by working together with people and civic associations on the ground in the homeland by giving technical and financial support. ZCI was formed in United States of America in 2016 by a group of Zimbabweans based there under the leadership of Albert who is both an MDC activist¹⁴ and civic activist and strong critic of the Zimbabwean government. The organisation quickly grew and gained momentum such that, in late 2016, there were discussions about connecting with other Zimbabweans around the world and the leadership reached out to their networks living in the UK. The reason it made sense to open up a branch in the United Kingdom was because of the large population of Zimbabweans based in the country and also the level of political mobilisation by Zimbabweans in the UK. The Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK has developed many different associations including various political party branches for both the MDC and ZANU-PF, which were particularly prominent in the decade 2000-2010 (see Pasura 2010; McGregor and Pasura 2010; McGregor 2010).

After reaching out to personal networks in the UK, the England arm of the organisation was launched in December 2016 but only got the ball running in March of 2017 when it hosted an event that commemorated¹⁵ the disappearance in March 2015 of Itayi Dzamara¹⁶, a prominent MDC-T activist. Itayi is a pro-democracy activist who staged a one-man demonstration in Zimbabwe's capital city Harare under the banner Occupy Africa Unity Square which is one of the big and well-known squares in the city. The significance here is that soon after launching, we can already see the organisation at work remembering a high-profile disappearance as they claim this was to "bring back Zimbabwe's poor human rights record into global attention and to force the regime to account for his disappearance¹⁷." After their launch, the England-based coordinators,

¹⁴ Since moving to the USA, Albert is more active through civics and ZCI, demanding respect for human rights and democracy rather than being a full MDC activist.

¹⁵ We can see the network already at work dealing with actual issues on the ground in Zimbabwe.

¹⁶ Itayi Dzamara is a journalist turned political activist who famously started the Occupy Africa Unity Square campaign against the government of Robert Mugabe. He was abducted by unidentified men in March 2015 whilst at a barbershop in one of the suburbs of Harare. Itayi has been missing since.

¹⁷ Interview with Garai. Manchester. 05/09/2017

in a similar fashion as the US-based coordinators had done, reached out through their personal networks to people in Scotland, Ireland and Wales which eventually led to new chapters of the ZCI initiative in those locations. The organisation then spread to other parts of the world with representations in South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Canada and Zimbabwe itself. In the UK/England, ZCI was mainly based in Manchester with the majority of the membership residing in the city and its surroundings. The organisation said it brings like-minded people together regardless of their affiliation to other diaspora associations, organisations or political parties they might be a part of, though in practice and as we shall see, it is quite selective of who was admitted.

The organisation had members that were drawn from other active diaspora organisations like the Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation (ZHRO), Restoration of Human Rights (ROHR) and other political networks and parties, particularly the MDC in the UK and other members who were not a part of any political or other diaspora association before joining ZCI. However, most respondents I spoke to from ZCI, said they had been part of the MDC either in Zimbabwe or when they arrived in the UK.

“ZCI is a combination of people from all walks of life regardless of what organisations they belong to, coming together as Zimbabweans, who are fighting for the same cause. It is like finding each other and then joining hands and becoming one. It doesn't matter where you are coming from, political party, civic group, everyone is allowed to join the Citizens Initiative¹⁸.”

A number of reasons can explain this predominance of MDC supporters. There is the fact that most ZCI members – and indeed most Zimbabweans in Britain - left Zimbabwe at a time when life was very hard politically and economically after 2000 and wanted to see a different government in power (see Makumbe, 2009, Crush and Tevera, 2010; Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2010; Mazuru, 2014; Madebwe and Madebwe, 2017 for more on the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe during this period leading to emigration). The diaspora since this moment has been strongly associated with opposition support (Pasura 2010; McGregor 2009), and remains critical of the ruling party notwithstanding the spread of disillusionment with the

¹⁸ Interview with Garai. Manchester. 05/09/2017

opposition and some demobilisation in comparison to the early years after 2000. In some cases, people like Tashinga¹⁹ who told me that they had their eyes opened to what was actually happening in Zimbabwe only after they left, meaning they become more politically active after leaving. The significance of this will also be portrayed further down when I discuss the importance of personal networks and histories in such forms of associations. ZCI also had membership in Zimbabwe itself and they had managed to associate themselves or rather recruit prominent human rights lawyers and activists like Fabian Gold²⁰ and Prisca Mawara²¹ to name a few.

This nominal inclusivity beyond party politics, the selective professional base, the mode of operation through close personal networks and the transnational civic activism are distinguishing features of the organisation. Other diaspora organisations detailed in the literature are either political parties, humanitarian or religious bodies, or associations primarily devoted to the social wellbeing in countries of settlement (cf Mbiba 2012; Pasura 2010; Pasura 2008; McGregor and Pasura 2014): transnational dimensions to civic organisations have not been carefully examined.

These political and personal networks of ZCI founding members were further used to coordinate activities on the ground in Zimbabwe²². When asked why this was the case, the coordinator of the UK arm said that they were looking for people they knew already hold an interest in matters that they wanted to deal with, particularly human rights, civic education and elections monitoring²³. They were also hoping to “*hit the ground running*”²⁴ as soon as the organisation was set up in the run up to the 2018 elections. The organisation was formed close to an election year in Zimbabwe and most of the activities they were attempting to implement were about promoting democracy, protection of human rights and plurality. From this, it is clear that there was urgency in terms of how fast they could get everything up and running considering that there was an election coming in Zimbabwe in the next year. This urgency however also led to

¹⁹ Interview with Tashinga. Salford. 29/10/2017

²⁰ Fabian Gold is a Zimbabwean political activist and human rights lawyer who has been active since the #Tajamuka and #ThisFlag movements gained traction

²¹ Prisca Mawara is a Zimbabwean lawyer and also political activist who ran as an independent candidate for parliament in the 2018 Harmonised Elections

²² A detailed discussion on personal networks follows in the next sections.

²³ Interview with Kundai. Manchester. 12/12/2017

²⁴ *ibid*

some more negative features, as it meant the recruitment process was very exclusive as the organisation did not let just anyone join.

Many of the members of the network can be described as activists and have either been involved with MDC politics directly in Zimbabwe or have been contributing to non-partisan politics like demonstrations and human rights campaigns over the years either by donating time, ideas or money. They are 'visible' members of the diaspora as regarded by Pasura (2010). ZCI officeholders could not give me membership figures for their organisation, as they argued that numbers fluctuated considerably, and they occasionally get people coming in to join them when they run specific campaigns. In some cases, the organisation has a specific program they want to implement in Zimbabwe for example, they funded some of the activists who were leading the social movement #Tajamuka/Sesijikile (meaning "We have rebelled"). Some individuals chose to give to that specific initiative through either a fundraising call or after hearing about it through personal networks. Additionally, they had members who were recruited personally by the coordinator. I discuss this further down in this chapter when I introduce the idea of 'elitism.'

Notwithstanding ZCI's claims to inclusivity and non-partisanship, it is important to also note that due to the nature of politics in Zimbabwe, it is unlikely that you will find an organisation like this being affiliated with the ruling party ZANU-PF. ZANU-PF has been the agent of human rights abuses, political and economic struggles that drove the majority of ZCI members (and others) out of the country. Pasura (2008) argues that Zimbabweans in the diaspora maintain distinctive political identities based on homeland prior political connections and activities, which is also the case for ZCI.

The organisation ZCI prides itself as being accommodative to everyone and encourages ideas from its members. They crowdsourced their ideas from each other and it was not just up to the coordinators or the founder to decide on what to do. They claimed to work hand in hand with all members to ensure that there was unity of purpose firstly, before they executed any of their plans. Tafara explained the wide range of activities that they aspired to undertake and their ambitious goals in relation not only to the diaspora vote, but rights and democracy in Zimbabwe more broadly;

“...started the organisation to mainly introduce a platform where citizens in the diaspora could play a vital role in the political formation of Zimbabwe so we wanted to provide them that opportunity where they could all come to one place to share ideas. We could do so many things, launch initiatives from there as well such as getting the diaspora vote, the Ziso platform as well as influencing the opposition politicians towards a coalition²⁵.”

One of the initiatives mentioned in this quote is the Ziso platform, which I discuss further below. *Ziso* is an online platform the organisation launched together with their partners on the ground. Additionally, crowdsourcing their ideas impacted how they dealt with their partners on the ground as they normally did not force any ideas onto them but rather worked with them on what it is that was needed on the ground. In the case of the work they do with social movements for example, ZCI got in touch with the key civic and human rights activists in Zimbabwe to find out what or how they could help in the pre-election situation.

Regarding ZCI's means of working in Zimbabwe, they relied mainly on partnerships (similarly to the Zimbabwe Vigil explored in the next chapter). What we see however in ZCI is a slight difference in how they partnered with homeland organisations. Unlike the Zimbabwe Vigil which started up and then registered a new organisation to be the one working on the ground on their behalf, ZCI partnered with already established large, donor-funded mainstream civic and human rights organisations and individuals who are well-known prominent activists in Zimbabwe. The organisation worked with the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum which has been operating in Zimbabwe since the food riots of 1998. ZCI itself had members spread all over the world, as noted above. This is a rather different transnational *modus operandi* from that of a hometown model of association, which predominates in the literature on African diaspora engagement where most members are either in the same community or based in the same hostland country (Mercer, Page, and Evans 2013).

ZCI operated using donations from its members all over the world. This perhaps was why it mainly invited professional²⁶ people to join in the hope that they will contribute more compared to other immigrants without regularised status who cannot work fully

²⁵ Interview with Tafara. Manchester. 05/11/2017

²⁶ See the discussion on “elitism” for more.

therefore are assumed to not earn enough to contribute such significant funds. The communications officer of the organisation argued they mainly relied on member donations for most of their activities, and gave the example of how they fundraised for mobile phones for rights activists' in Zimbabwe to perform verifying roles during the elections:

“We source funding from donations, people are made aware of the situation for example the launch of the app in Zimbabwe, we needed money for mobile phones which were going to the verifiers, people who are members already were coming together and giving what they had. It is mainly member donations²⁷.”

The organisation fundraised through various means that also hinged on social occasions in the UK as well as using online sites to gather funds from members across different countries. When they launched in December 2016, they organised barbeques²⁸ for people to attend and they sold different items at the barbeques amongst them, flags, t-shirts, caps in a bid to raise funds. They hosted dinners at local hotels in Manchester where one could buy a seat on a table and therefore ‘donate’ to the organisation. They also had a *GoFundMe* page which was open to anyone willing and able to donate. Members were encouraged to give as much as they could and when there was an initiative being launched, there was a drive to collect as much as possible. Such methods of fundraising also testify to the group’s exclusiveness, because it is not every Zimbabwean in the UK who can afford to spare money for a ‘fundraising dinner’ at a hotel. In the next section, I will discuss more about the socio-economic composition of the organisation and its exclusivity by exploring recruitment of members.

4.3. “Invite Only” – Elitism and Exclusivity in Zimbabwe Diaspora Political Associations

The close personal networks and professional base that characterize ZCI require some further exploration. Most of the members I spoke to were professionals working in the diaspora and in Zimbabwe. This exclusiveness I attribute to the fact that most

²⁷ Interview with Tashinga. Salford. 29/10/2017

²⁸ Popularly known as ‘braai’ in the Zimbabwean circles

of the members were invited to join the organisation by those who were either coordinators or members already. A large number of the respondents said they were personally invited to join and they themselves were already members of other organisations which then enabled ZCI to also expand its network. Personal networks are brought to the fore by this organisation and we will see them come into play on the homeland side as this is how the organisation managed to recruit partner organisations and individual activists in Zimbabwe. Boyd (1989) advocates for closer attention to personal networks in the study of migration as they have an effect on how people organise, congregate *inter alia*.

The coordinators used their own experience and networks to find ‘the right people’ who as they said, “share similar ideas and plans” to ensure that the organisation runs smoothly²⁹. This reliance on personal networks could be attributed to suspicion within the Zimbabwean UK diaspora community (see Pasura 2008; McGregor 2009; McGregor 2010), which was particularly pronounced in the early 2000s when the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) would try and infiltrate these diaspora-based associations to learn about what they were doing and try to destabilise them. Trust is therefore another integral part of the recruitment and operations process (see Pasura 2008).

Tashinga, who left Zimbabwe to study in the UK and has since been employed and interestingly, never went back to Zimbabwe was not alone in narrating how joining was brought about via personal recommendations. He said:

“I joined through a recommendation from one of the coordinators. She spoke to me and told me I had to kind of apply type of thing and then I had a conversation with her and the other US based coordinator³⁰.”

ZCI seemed to be cautious about the type of people who were members and thus they spoke to them first to learn about potential member experiences before allowing them to join. Other respondents like Anesu also echoed the same sentiments with Tashinga stating that they “...were made aware of the organisation through a request to join.”³¹

²⁹ Interview with Tashinga. Salford. 29/10/2017

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Interview with Anesu. Manchester. 05/12/17

To a certain extent, this means that the members are somewhat 'vetted' before they are included in the association which can assist in its smooth functioning, and can guard against the infiltration and disruption from ZANU-PF that characterised diaspora associational life in the early 2000s (McGregor and Pasura 2014; Pasura 2008). However, this vetting means that ZCI is also open to allegations of 'elitism' since it is shut to the rest of other members of the diaspora community who might want to join. It presents a limitation in terms of reach and inclusivity.

In political and sociological conceptualisation, an elite is a "small group of powerful people who hold a disproportionate amount of wealth, privilege, political power or skill in a society." (Mills, 1956: 65). Here, I will adopt a different definition by arguing that elitism is conferred rather through education, professional work, connections as well as political stance. Wealth though, clearly matters as mentioned earlier, it is not every diaspora member who could afford to donate money or spend money on a dinner to fundraise for an activity for the organisation. Those without legal status in the UK, for example, who do not work, would not be able to attend such events. But for this organisation, it was also the combination of professional work and higher education, plus the necessity of MDC support that came together to create the boundaries of membership.

Additionally, ZCI was not involved in matters of gaining legal status in the UK. Unlike other diaspora-based organisations in Britain, it mainly focussed on the homeland and on contributing as much as they could there. This was partly because the majority of its members were middle class with professional jobs. None of the respondents I spoke to had a pending case of asylum or was worried about their legal status in Britain, in fact, some argued that they now called Britain home based on the amount of time they have spent here. The fact that they were in the country legally means that they could participate in British democratic processes like voting which as discussed in the next section, had an impact on their experience in Britain.

4.4. Do diaspora life and democratic experiences affect decisions to be active?

One of the key activities ZCI engaged in was lobbying over dual citizenship and the diaspora vote. It has been an important aspect of efforts to formalise the sense of on-going Zimbabwe citizenship within the diaspora. This motivation to expand democratic participation, I argue in this section is also because of the experience that diaspora members have had with politics and democracy in the UK. I argue that it is thus important not to just typologise different forms of diaspora engagement – and in this instance to focus on what Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) would refer to as ‘homeland politics.’ Rather, it is important to situate these engagements in relation to status in countries of settlement, and to discuss diaspora citizenship in relation to both domains. If they technically can vote in UK elections, many ZCI members asked themselves why can they not vote in their own country? This section takes forward debates by Pasura (2008) and others who have documented lobbying on the issue of the diaspora vote in Zimbabwe. It does so by exploring how political ideas circulate, focussing on ZCI’s attitudes and initiatives not only on the rights to the diaspora vote, but also on voting practices in national elections in both countries. I further argue that through their claims of entitlement to political participation in the homeland, the Zimbabwe diaspora in the UK is also remitting political ideas back home, ideas that are influenced by experiences in the hostland. Additionally, I show, however that the flow of political ideas goes in both directions. First this section discusses the diaspora vote, before turning to views on, and experiences of voting in elections in both countries, examining ZCI members’ political ideas and practices.

Diasporas can be seen as political actors undertaking ‘acts of citizenship’ in claiming rights and responsibilities in hostlands (Isin 2008; Isin and Nielsen 2008). But they also try to claim such rights in the homeland. ZCI members through their initiatives are claiming a number of rights in Zimbabwe, particularly voting. They argued that since they have been contributing to the development of Zimbabwe and kept the country afloat, they needed to be allowed to vote. Glick Schiller refers to these ideas as social citizenship i.e. citizens claiming rights through social practice rather than through the law and this notion can be extended to understanding diasporas (Schiller 2015). Boccagni et al say this makes them become political actors and Isin further expands this by saying ‘...subjects become activist citizens through scenes created...’ (Boccagni et al 2016; Isin 2008; Isin and Nielsen 2008). The lobbying for the diaspora vote which has been sustained for nearly two decades allowed ZCI and other diaspora

activist organisations to network and partner with activists on the ground and other professionals in this case, legal representatives who take their cases to court.

The Zimbabwe diaspora claims citizenship in the homeland based on economic and legal rights which are spelled out in the Constitution of the country and I argue that they are activist citizens who are remitting political ideas back to Zimbabwe through their claimsmaking (Boccagni et al 2016; Barbero 2012; Davies 2007). Before the 2013 Constitution, the old constitution of Zimbabwe did not have such provisions and had been the subject of criticism for many different reasons including the fact that it was agreed in the transition to independence under the guidance of Britain. When emigration due to political and economic reasons reached its peak in the early to late 2000s, the Government of Zimbabwe used the then constitution to disenfranchise its citizens that had left the country fearing that they would vote for the opposition and at the same time labelling them traitors. Although the 2013 Constitution recognises diaspora rights in theory, this recognition is not formalised in practice because the law has not been brought into alignment with it. A somewhat similar parallel can be drawn from the South African government that despite allowing South Africans abroad to vote in 1994, the pressures of multiracial democracy forced them to abolish external voting in 1999, disenfranchising an estimated 1-2 million South Africans living abroad (Wellman 2015). South Africa however was forced to reinstate the external vote by the Constitutional Court. In the same vein, the 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution included provisions like human rights and is becomes important for ZCI members as it allows all Zimbabweans to vote despite their geographical location, as Timothy clearly pointed out when asked about this,

“Yes, I think we should be involved because they have a constitutional right in terms of elections. Every Zimbabwean regardless of wherever they are, be in Zimbabwe or anywhere in the world, they have a right to participate in elections, to choose leaders of their choice³².”

What is interesting here is whilst making these claims, they were also strengthening beliefs about constitutionalism in the homeland through conversations and connections with networks in the diaspora as well as on the ground in Zimbabwe.

³² Interview with Timothy. Manchester. 27/10/2017

Equally noteworthy is the fact that they were highly unlikely to have picked up the ideas of constitutionalism from Britain as Britain does not have a written constitution. The strength of ideas and campaigning over constitutional rights is something that likely originated from Zimbabwe's own history of constitutional and legal activism (which was an important aspect of the liberation war – see Karekwaivanane (2016) and others on this history of legal activism in Zimbabwe). This shows that the circulation of ideas is not at all one way but can also go from Zimbabwe to Britain.

Over the past decade, Zimbabweans based abroad have been trying to encourage the government to allow emigres to vote in national elections. They have challenged the government for not providing them with such a basic and fundamental right which is now in the country's constitution. The issue of the diaspora vote was one that was very ambiguous during the time I was conducting my fieldwork however, because of the lack of alignment between the law and the 2013 Constitution: some respondents were not sure what the law said but were arguing that they need to have their rights recognised. Their sense of being rights-bearing citizens was further motivated by their experiences with the rule of law and democracy in their hostland which I discuss in detail below. Members of ZCI argued that they are and still remain Zimbabwean citizens regardless of how long they have stayed in the UK and despite the lack of full legal recognition of their citizenship at home. A number of Zimbabweans living in the UK have, despite it being against the law for a while, kept two passports, both the Zimbabwean and the UK one which they use selectively based on where they are travelling to. Isin and Nielsen argue that acts of citizenship involve calling into question and sometimes breaking the law (Isin and Nielsen 2008). This research shows how diaspora claimants have called into question or broken the law transnationally by retaining both documents.

Additionally, I asked ZCI members about their attitudes with regards to the elections in Zimbabwe based on their experience of UK elections and previous elections in Zimbabwe. Some of the respondents argued that the election would be stolen from them anyway regardless of whether they voted or not as this was what ZANU-PF as a party always does (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2018; Tendi 2010). The few respondents that aired these views were also the same individuals who were starting to be disillusioned and apathetic with regards to the voting and election system in Zimbabwe

because they claimed there was no change in the homeland (Raftopoulos 2013). Tafara argues that:

“If you look at the amount of time that we have been working on ‘change’ in Zimbabwe, with other organisations, with this organisation and up until now, nothing has changed in the country, it sort of discourages and lowers the morale for some members who maybe could have done more had they been seeing some change or direct impact at home.”³³

From this, one can see that there was growing concern amongst ZCI members as to whether their efforts were impacting anything in Zimbabwe or not. Most talked about how they have been calling their relatives back home and sharing with those in their networks, telling them to vote wisely in elections arguing that this can affect whether they visit home more. We see here the circulation of ideas as argued by Boccagni et al (2016): these diaspora members, who mostly left the country to seek greener pastures, the experienced political life in the UK are now trying to influence how people understand politics and rights in the homeland. They were trying to influence peoples’ perspectives on political issues, particularly voting (Boccagni et al 2016). In the next few paragraphs as alluded to before, I discuss the UK elections through the words of my informants and debate their impacts of diaspora life and on members of ZCI.

Boccagni et al (2016) argue that migrants are sometimes exposed to new methods of political acting which can affect how they interact within the hostland and the homeland including the ideas they remit back. Elections in the UK can provide an example of such exposure to new ways of acting. These elections were a good example for Zimbabwean diaspora members to compare with those in their homeland Zimbabwe. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) argues that migrant political practices can include diverse activities like rallies against injustices in the country of origin³⁴, demonstrations and the like. Certainly, such activities have become a very common and important feature of the Zimbabwe diaspora political mobilisations. But participating in national elections in the UK were also important practices that shaped ideas and mobilizations, as well

³³ Interview with Tafara. Manchester. 05/11/2017

³⁴ Over the years, Zimbabweans in Britain have organised and participated in different rallies which usually are a culmination of efforts by the very different political groupings in the UK. They are normally targeted at something specific like for example, the rally in support of Zimbabweans who marched to the State House in November 2017 after the military takeover. Zimbabweans in Britain also marched to the Embassy in London ‘to show their support.’

as influencing the potential for lobbying about the homeland. It all depended on how the new or incoming government would feel about what is happening in Zimbabwe.

A lot of the work that diaspora political and civic associations like ZCI do is to engage with the UK government to try and lobby them to do something about the Zimbabwe situation (on the history of this lobbying in the UK, see Pasura 2010; McGregor and Pasura 2010; Pasura 2010; McGregor 2009; McGregor 2008). Interestingly, this is not something that is learnt in the diaspora as some of the ZCI members worked in civic society and political activism meaning they were always lobbying the government when they were still in Zimbabwe. This is an example of how ideas also circulate from Zimbabwe. The UK coordinator of ZCI asserted that in December 2017, they went to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to brief the government after ‘the coup’ before the arrival of the then new Minister of Foreign Affairs from Zimbabwe, Sibusiso Moyo³⁵. The organisation reached out to the FCO when they heard that they were going to be hosting Zimbabwe’s Foreign Affairs Minister. They asked if they could meet with the FCO so that they could share their concerns with them. Such a request can only be granted if the UK government at that time is receptive and wants to work hand in hand with the Zimbabwean diaspora to solve issues in Zimbabwe. However, as with many other organisations, for such a meeting, only a select few could go as the FCO cannot host the entire membership. Some of the respondents I spoke to were somewhat sceptical of this meeting and hoped that they were properly represented³⁶.

Members of ZCI in general also lobby their local MPs in the various localities they live. Sam told me that they had a “Meet your MP” campaign in 2017 where they were encouraging each other to meet and engage with their local MPs to make them aware of the situation in Zimbabwe. “You would be surprised at how little they know about what is going on in Zimbabwe...” Sam told me after I had asked about the campaign. “We do this so that they can then go represent our interests as well in parliament, as Zimbabweans here in the UK, and also for Zimbabwe back home³⁷” he further explained. This shows us how much work they did to claim their rights in the UK as citizens as well as lobbying on behalf of other Zimbabweans on matters relating to the

³⁵ Interview with Kundai. Manchester. 12/12/2017

³⁶ Interview with Timothy. Manchester. 27/10/2017

³⁷ Interview with Sam. Manchester. 16/11/2017

homeland. Notwithstanding this, there was a general disgruntlement with British politics in general with some of the respondents saying, “MPs are more worried about Brexit now than to entertain a group of Zimbabweans³⁸.”

The practice of voting regularly in elections that are not wholly and blatantly rigged or marred by violence and corruption, and exercising your right was also one of the ideas that are remitted back to Zimbabwe through political remittances (Boccagni et al 2016). Whilst in the UK, members of ZCI (and other Zimbabwean diaspora members who are in the country legally) got to vote in elections in a context of order and peace. This practice can be novel for Zimbabweans, given the problems with the voting roll in Zimbabwe, manipulated ballots and especially, Zimbabweans have not experienced a significant change of government, as ZANU-PF continues in power. In my interviews, ZCI members spoke about how they discussed political ideas and experiences with their friends, family and colleagues on the ground in Zimbabwe thereby potentially influencing people at home by their desire to see similar political practices in Zimbabwe. Diaspora members spoke with and encouraged those at home to participate and demand their rights based on what they experience in the hostland. As Tafara argued, “we observe here in the UK how things are done, how elections are conducted sometimes with unpredictable outcomes and we wish we had such systems in place in our own country.³⁹” However, it is the case that Zimbabweans have recently come to see the realities of a limited democracy in Britain also. Some friends have been commenting to me, how their idealised view of British political democracy has been altered by the current political turmoil, politicians’ self-interested behaviour and divisions in Britain over Brexit, as well as examples of corruption⁴⁰.

But it is not only simply participation as voters and observations on politics in the UK that has an impact on attitudes and ideas remitted back home. The experience in the UK of healthcare access, housing, human rights as these are promoted in schools and elsewhere are also important features of everyday life in the diaspora and contribute to understandings of democracy. These differences in relation to Zimbabwe are quite

³⁸ Interview with Garai. Manchester. 05/09/2017

³⁹ Interview with Tafara. Manchester. 05/11/2017

⁴⁰ Information shared during discussions with friends and colleagues (non-UK citizens) at social gatherings

important as they also inform discussion with relatives and friends at home, either over the phone or when they visit. They too can be part of the political remittances that circulate between UK and Zimbabwe as a result of transnational diasporic networks and contribute to practices of diasporic citizenship.

The word ‘transparency’ was a term I heard frequently in interviews and other discussions with ZCI members over their experiences of diaspora life. Notwithstanding the doubts mentioned above, many argued that they had been observing and experiencing commendable political standards, ‘clean politics⁴¹’ as Anesu put it and they wished this would happen in Zimbabwe. One of the examples I was given was how senior civil servants’ salaries are made public. They drew comparisons with how in Zimbabwe you do not know how much a cabinet minister is paid. You might know how much their basic salary is, but their allowances and other ‘perks’ are never public information, and this is one reason why corruption can escalate. Garai echoed that whenever he went to Zimbabwe, he was always sharing with people how things are handled in the UK, he told relatives and friends of the openness and transparency, how politicians have to declare their wealth etc⁴². His hope was that by doing this, he could encourage or influence these ideas to stay on the ground and therefore change circumstances at home in Zimbabwe⁴³. Corruption has been a problem for a long time in Zimbabwe with scandals appearing in different arms of government and one can see why these respondents would argue this way, presenting a view of British politics that can also be romanticised. One quick look at the news headlines will tell you conversely that in Britain, politics can also be untransparent, with questions over where the funds that were used to support the “Leave campaign” came from being asked for example.

Other important aspects of political and social life that Zimbabwean diaspora activists commented on was inclusivity and openness in the sense of being colour blind to race. In Zimbabwe, there is a very small population of non-Black people and in some instances, it is possible to go through life without crossing paths with such people. This can lead to stereotypes and prejudices about white people for example, based on

⁴¹ Interview with Anesu. Manchester. 05/12/17

⁴² Interview with Garai. Manchester. 05/09/2017

⁴³ *ibid*

Zimbabwe's history of land alienation by white settlers, economic privilege and racial segregation (Good 1974; Raftopoulos 1994; Tendi 2010). The respondents argued that being in the UK had exposed them to many different types of people from all over the world, such that they felt they could now appreciate people the way they are. This is yet another positive remittance which can be useful in the case of Zimbabwe where race has been politicised since 2000. These ideas were shared with members of the families in the homeland through phone and text conversations which meant they could possibly also influence how they view such issues. Again, the positive accounts of UK life I frequently received from ZCI members need to be qualified given the fact that politics in the UK has become very divisive lately and ideas of race have become more polarised, with racial mobilisations and the government denationalising sections of the Black-British population. The romanticized sentiments shared by these respondents showed how the trials of democracy and racism in Britain were, by comparison, judged to be better than the extremes of patronage politics, political manipulation and corruption in Zimbabwe which they faced on a daily basis before leaving the country. I contend that in essence, what these respondents were saying is they believed they had become more tolerant notwithstanding the prevalence of racism in Britain even amongst different diaspora groups (see Pasura 2009 for more on this). This section has outlined ZCI's activities in the UK and has discussed the effects of members' political exposure in the UK on their ideas, and how these can circulate transnationally. It has shown how people emphasise the positive political lessons of diasporic life and how these are relayed home. In the next section of the chapter, I will discuss how the activities of this network have impacted the Zimbabwean civic sphere.

4.5. ZCI in the Homeland: Contributions to the Civic Sphere?

As mentioned earlier, ZCI has partners on the ground whom they work with try to ensure that their work reaches all the corners of Zimbabwe. The organisation's initiatives that I discuss here occurred at a particular juncture in Zimbabwe when opposition politics was a weakened and fragmented force and 'civics' were engaged in increasingly fractious competition due to the withdrawal of donor funds. This contentious civil society landscape (Moyo 2014), combined with the influence of personal networks discussed above, shaped ZCI's decisions on partnering. The period

of research was also a time of varied short-lived protests/social movements that had significant transnational connections. The transnational network created by ZCI takes a different form than associational life that predominates the literature, which has focussed on hometown associations (Mercer, et al, 2013) and political parties. For the most part, ZCI had partnered directly with a fully-fledged NGO in Zimbabwe that works on the issues they wanted to touch on, namely the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum,⁴⁴ which could be referred to as their core partner. But their partnerships were not only limited to that, as they had also worked directly with individuals who are social movement activists like Chenjerai, Lungiwe Poshi⁴⁵, Panashe⁴⁶, Prisca Mawara⁴⁷, Tafara⁴⁸ and other organisations and movements, among them Tajamuka/Sesjikile, Citizen's Manifesto and vendor associations *inter alia*. The organisations' core partner on the long-term human rights project they were working on, however, was the Forum. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum is a coalition of twenty-two human rights NGOs in Zimbabwe. Although each of the Forum's member organisations have their own specific objectives, all are 'concerned with the nature of organised violence and torture in Zimbabwe...'⁴⁹ The organisation's mission is to 'provide leadership and coordination on the Human Rights Agenda in Zimbabwe⁵⁰' with a vision of a society which promotes and protects all human rights of all people. Below, I discuss the partnership between ZCI and the Forum and others, examining the significance of these personal networks in national and transnational domains.

Various factors may have contributed to the importance of personal networks within associational networks. These include the lack of trust within the diaspora (Pasura 2008) as well as the history of political and civic activism in Zimbabwe, shaped by a tightly connected web of individuals who are the backbone of civic society. Many individuals have moved from active politics to civic society activism particularly for opportunity reasons but also due to disillusionment with the MDC. Social scientists argue that 'social capital' is the 'material advantages a person derives from

⁴⁴ Known in the civil society sector as the 'Forum.'

⁴⁵ Lungiwe Poshi is an activist and ran for parliament as an independent candidate in the 2018 elections.

⁴⁶ Panashe also leads another informal economy worker's association

⁴⁷ Prisca Mawara is a political activist and lawyer who also ran as an independent (parliament) candidate in the 2018 elections

⁴⁸ Tafara is a human rights activist

⁴⁹ Lifted from the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum website which can be accessed here: www.hrforumzim.org/contact-us/members/about

⁵⁰ *ibid*

connections with acquaintances, family and friends and is based on the personal networks of the person themselves (Thomas, 2011: 54; Ijla 2012). These networks help add to this capital which can lead to reduction of time taken to search for partners on the ground in this case.

The ZCI co-founder, Albert, and other core members of ZCI used to be MDC activists in Zimbabwe themselves before they left the country for various destinations. Many of the people Albert got in touch with to help coordinate the organisation's initiatives on the ground were his former colleagues: 'we had been in the trenches together'⁵¹ as the Zimbabwe based coordinator, Taurai⁵² argued, meaning they had been together throughout the struggle for a better Zimbabwe. Taurai and Albert had been good friends since their schooldays when they were classmates and they had then both become active in MDC politics thereafter. When picking someone to coordinate ZCI initiatives in Zimbabwe, Albert approached his friend. On the other hand, Taurai, used to work for the MDC and worked in local government before taking on an administrative role at the MDC party's headquarters in Harare. After he left the MDC, he used his own networks on the ground to recruit people who could then help with some of the ZCI's activities⁵³. I will discuss these partnerships in more detail further below.

Taurai eventually left the MDC in 2013 because he was disillusioned by the direction the party was taking and the lack of positive results. The change that he had hoped for was not coming and he felt like he could realise this elsewhere. He coincidentally was seconded to go work for a civic organisation promoting electoral rights, so he left the MDC and moved there. Such is the case for a number of other respondents I spoke to, who shifted their careers into civics. The timing is not accidental: the year of 2013 was marked by the MDC's failure to get into government (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2013). The party had been compromised over previous years by working as a junior party in a unity government, and the former opposition had begun to increasingly resemble the ruling party, offering a less clear cut alternative (LeBas 2006; 2011;

⁵¹ Being in the trenches together literally means being in a war and hiding in the trenches together but has not come to mean "to have been through a lot together with someone"

⁵² Interview with Taurai, Harare, 25/01/2018

⁵³ See below for more history about Taurai

Raftopoulos 2013). Brian Raftopoulos (2013) writes of these elections as the 'end of an era', conveying the demoralism among former activists over the ZANU-PF history in the elections. Taurai, and others like Panashe, told me that they got tired of politics and their own party, and thought they could contribute more to society by joining civil society⁵⁴. Other reasons also mentioned included the fact that the MDC could not afford to keep all these young technocrats on its payroll due to funding issues and as Panashe said, "we all want a life and if you are not earning, it becomes a bit difficult you know..⁵⁵" Some left because they were tired of the 'system'⁵⁶ whilst others felt they needed to be earning money. One can also argue that there was a disillusionment in relation to the party's failure to make it into government as it is sometimes viewed as a way of gaining employment and wealth (Betts and Jones, 2016).

These personal networks built through past MDC networks facilitated the process through which ZCI maintained direct contact with those on the ground and kept up to date. As already argued, Thomas (2011), notes one way in which personal networks are useful is to make processes easier and shorter. It is important to note that on the Zimbabwean side, the recruitment of partners and members was not subject to such thorough vetting as in the UK. Taurai conferred how he mainly reached out to individuals he already knew, and thought would be useful in ensuring that activities like monitoring of human rights abuses are done properly. NGOs, particularly human rights and democracy focussed organisations, such as the elections monitoring organisation where Taurai worked, grew exponentially in Zimbabwe between the period of 2000 – 2010, supported by donor funds (Helliker, 2015), and most of the individuals who were active in politics decided to join them as they mostly offered attractive salaries.

The other reasons why many people involved in ZCI and the Zimbabwean civics left politics is also important. These comprised trust and funding issues, as well as a clash of ideas which led to fractures in the Zimbabwean political, civic and human rights landscape itself. Embezzlement scandals have always been present in Zimbabwean

⁵⁴ Interview with Taurai. Harare. 25/01/2018, Interview with Panashe. Harare. 16/02/2018

⁵⁵ Interview with Panashe. Harare. 16/02/2018

⁵⁶ I use 'system' here to refer to the way in which the MDC was run, the ideal, the expectations versus the reality. This also is a word that the respondents chose to use in various occasions.

politics where members are accused of either funnelling party funds for their own use or diverting it towards something that benefits them (Moyo 2014; Mwaradzika 2015). Some of these characteristics were brought to the 'diaspora.' (Pasura 2010; Boccagni, et al 2016). Interestingly, embezzlements were present in civic society as well and there had been a number of cases reported. One very relevant to this study was that of the leader of #*Tajamuka/Sesjikile* who temporarily stepped down over allegations of mismanagement of funds in 2017⁵⁷. To a certain extent, this makes one question the decision by ZCI to work with this particular social movement.

In other cases, ZCI worked with certain partners for specific campaigns like the *Munhu Wese MuRoad*⁵⁸ (All Citizens to the Streets) demonstration, initially planned for 2016, but which fostered a series of others demonstrations (see Mutanana 2016) and ZCI here provided financial support. The intended march was meant to show the Zimbabwean government that the people were tired of their corruption, empty promises and wanted them to change their ways or leave office. It eventually failed to take off as activists faced intimidation by the state: some had their cars burnt and some received numerous threatening phone calls⁵⁹. Coincidentally, this ended up being the same day in 2017 that citizens marched together with the army to demand the resignation of Robert Mugabe. Chenjerai argues that for activists like him, the march in 2017 felt like they were "fulfilling a dream⁶⁰." ZCI also worked together with the various activists on the ground in 2017 to help motivate and get people out on the streets⁶¹.

The harassment activists faced underlines the need for trusted personal networks in transnational activism in the Zimbabwe context (see Pasura 2008; Pasura 2010). The Zimbabwe based coordinator of ZCI argues that;

⁵⁷ See <https://allafrica.com/stories/201710040611.html> for more on this

⁵⁸ This name has been adapted for a number of other citizen-led demonstrations but in this case, I am referring to the demonstration that was meant to take place in November of 2016. <https://news.pindula.co.zw/2016/11/04/activists-call-zimbabweans-part-munhuwesemuroad-demo-november-18/>

⁵⁹ Interview with Chenjerai. Harare. 28/01/2018; Interview with Tafara. Harare. 10/03/2018

⁶⁰ *ibid*

⁶¹ Interview with Kundai. Manchester. 12/12/2017

“I used my personal networks as this was easier than trying to work with an unfamiliar person, besides, I knew these people have the same interests already therefore it would be easier to bring them in.”⁶²

The distrust that is characteristic of diaspora associational life is also a feature of the Zimbabwean civic society sector (Pasura, 2008). This spread of mistrust across borders shows that it is not always the positive ideas that circulate when people migrate from different countries. In the next section, I turn to the impact of ZCI’s partnerships.

4.6. Partnerships on the Ground and Impact

This section shows contributions ZCI has made to human rights reporting and to social movements in Zimbabwe. I argue specifically that the diasporic connections have enabled the use of new technologies within Zimbabwe as well as bringing about closer links with donors for fund raising. The partnership that ZCI has is different from the type of humanitarian network/assistance that predominates in the literature as the latter is focussed on flows of financial remittances and has not profiled this sort of partnership with, and support for established donor-funded NGOs (Brinkerhoff 2011; Riddle and Brinkerhoff 2011; Brinkerhoff 2012). The Forum at the time of research had three primary foci, according to one Forum respondent – transitional justice, peace-building and documented rights violations:

“We are basically 3 units, the Transitional Justice Unit which deals with issues around transitional justice in Zimbabwe, previous issues, the 2008 violence, reconciliation, peace building and we have the Research Unit which documents human rights violence and the Public Interest Unit which is aimed at litigation of cases of victims of organised violence and torture”⁶³.

Clearly, it was beneficial for ZCI to want to partner with an organisation that has this much reach and legitimacy both within Zimbabwe and internationally. ZCI and the Forum collaborated after ZCI realised that they were about to launch very similar initiatives in the case of the Ziso platform. Interestingly, from the ZCI side, they say that they had reached a memorandum of understanding with Ushahidi, the platform

⁶² Interview with Taurai. Harare. 25/01/2018

⁶³ Interview with Nakai. Harare. 08/02/2018

that hosts Ziso. The Forum only joined because on approaching Ushahidi to ask about the platform, they were told that Ushahidi were already working with another Zimbabwean organisation. The partnership was a coincidence but turned out to be one of the biggest partnerships ZCI had with a homeland-based organisation. I will discuss further down how this ‘marriage of convenience’ can be problematic for ZCI, much as it also brought advantages.

Ziso is a an Ushahidi⁶⁴ based platform that allows citizens to report human rights violations without facing the wrath of the government and intelligence agents. The platform allows real time reporting of human rights abuses through text and as the website of the platform says, “every Zimbabwean has a legal and constitutional right to live freely and interact freely without any threat, harm or coercion⁶⁵.” It allows a form of crowdsourcing of information that is useful in the case of human rights abuses and the idea is that once the abuses are reported, they are known and can be shared with people nationally and internationally.

“The way the platform works is if there any reports of violence, we then send our verifiers to check it out because what we found is you get a report that something has happened but sometimes it is not even political, it is maybe domestic violence but the person who has done is an important person in a certain party so people just say that it was violence. So we then send our people in to check and if the info is verified, NGO forum is also linked with the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights who will then get involved.⁶⁶”

Once citizens reported some form of violation, the Forum dispatched a ‘monitor/verifier’ who would be based in the area to go and verify the report and once verified, it was put on the platform, or on the map for all to see. However, there were limitations to how the platform worked in that, it was hard for a verifier/monitor to be in more than one place at once, in the event that there were incidences happening in different parts of their province. A verifier for Masvingo I spoke to argued that her province was too big to such an extent that if something happened in the southern part

⁶⁴ Ushahidi, which translates to ‘testimony’ in Swahili, was developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election violence in 2008. Since then, their crowdsourcing tools have been used around the world to help people raise people’s voices and to map ‘hotspots’ in times of crisis. See here for more: <https://www.usahidi.com/about>

⁶⁵ The platform is available via this URL link: <https://zimbabwecitizensmovement.usahidi.io/views/map>

⁶⁶ Interview with Kundai. Manchester. 12/12/2017

of the province, she wouldn't be able to get there on time as it was too far⁶⁷. Maita was very quick to mention this when I asked about her experiences using the platform.

Both organisations, ZCI and the Forum contributed towards the recruitment of these verifiers through their established networks. Half of the twenty monitors came via ZCI and the rest from the Forum who according to their coordinator, were people already working on human rights issues⁶⁸. During the time of research, they had verifiers in almost all major towns and at least one per province⁶⁹. The Forum's expertise in human rights matters meant that it took the lead in terms of training the verifiers on what to do when an incident is reported, how to document it and what happens afterwards. The organisations also shared resources with costs being split in the middle so that each organisation contributed financially.

The verifiers were also given cell phones which according to Taurai, they were meant to keep after their service as a form of incentive. They also initially received small stipends⁷⁰ from both ZCI and the Forum for transportation and food whilst 'on duty' but those funds had since dried up. Again, here we can see how using these close organisational and personal networks can be useful in the sense that, the Forum recruited its verifiers from its membership who were mainly professionals meaning even when they were not getting transport money to go and verify cases, they would occasionally dig from their own pockets Desmond⁷¹ a verifier argued. There were limits to this however and an elitist argument can be included here. In this case, the Forum and ZCI recruited from their membership and networks meaning the majority of the people they worked with were employed already hence they could afford to cover these extra expenses. However, although it was useful to utilise people versed with issues of human rights, this meant everyday citizens were not recruited, yet one of the ways to ensure ownership of projects in development, is to include community members/beneficiaries. It also ensures that they learn from this participation. Some of the verifiers argued that because of the economic hardships in the country, they felt

⁶⁷ Interview with Maita. Harare. 10/04/2018

⁶⁸ Interview with Nakai. Harare. 08/02/2018

⁶⁹ There are limitations to this as some provinces are bigger geographically and more remote making travel difficult which hinders verification.

⁷⁰ Each verifier would receive US\$50/month as a stipend

⁷¹ Interview with Desmond. Harare. 29/01/2018

that the organisations had not provided sufficient funds, contending they “could help contribute more to transport and data because data costs are very expensive in the country⁷².”

From the above, certainly, the organisations seemed to have had a well-managed partnership on paper, but in my assessment, there were also shortfalls. The Forum is a very big organisation with a lot of reach and to begin with, they could have included more verifiers than the 10 they ended up relying on. Since the Forum recruited from its own ranks as already mentioned, it would have been easier for them to include people they worked with who were already on their payroll so that they did not have to pay them any extra. They could have demonstrated more commitment to human rights reporting by contributing more since they were a bigger organisation with a substantial amount of funding. Of course, they might not have had a large amount of funding earmarked for this particular project or on realising ZCI had already signed an MOU with Ushahidi, decided to earmark the funds they would have used for this initiative, to another project, opting only to match what ZCI provided. This is why I argue the arrangement is a ‘marriage of convenience’ necessitated by the fact that Ushahidi, the company running the platform, contended that they could not have two organisations from the same country running a similar platform, at the same time, something Kundai mentioned during her interview⁷³.

Despite this, the Forum representative illustrated the impact the project had for them as an organisation and for human rights in the country as

“It is powered on citizenry, and they are able to send in the violations, it is able to locate, to give us the geographical violation of the incident and where the violation would have occurred....it allows the reporter to give us a narration of what exactly happened, it uploads evidential pictures and it also gives us an opportunity to share videos with the public so for example when these stories are then supposed to be publicised, mainly for the reason to deter perpetrators, so just to promote the human rights situation in Zimbabwe.⁷⁴”

⁷² Interview with Mr Navhaya. Harare. 03/03/2018

⁷³ Interview with Kundai. Manchester. 12/12/2017

⁷⁴ Interview with Nakai. Harare. 08/02/2018

The Forum administered the system and they called victims in some cases to find out if they needed legal assistance which they then referred to their public interest unit that provided free legal representation. The initiative opened up a space where citizens who did not usually have a voice, could speak out against human rights abuses. This was indeed a positive outcome but as we have seen in the literature and history of Zimbabwe, the courts are not kind to such victims and the state can challenge these cases to frustrate the claimants (de Bourbon 2003; Raftopoulos 2003). Additionally, calling the victims assumed that they had a phone and network coverage which was not the case in every part of the country. Some of the regions where these abuses were reported were so remote that it became difficult to trace the origin which created another problem of how the verifier would get there.

Notwithstanding these arguments, it appeared that because of the work the Forum was doing through Ziso with ZCI, the technology used was adding a new dimension to the capacity to achieve reach and validate reports that have international legitimacy and also remain up to date with the latest global technologies in human rights reporting. The Forum argued that through Ziso, they could accumulate substantial evidence in the form of pictures, videos and personal accounts from people who reported the abuses, and, in some cases, these were reported real time. The technology also allowed them to be able to quickly reach people who needed assistance in some instances.

In addition to working with the Forum, ZCI had other linkages with social movements and the informal economy mentioned above. It can be difficult to assess the impact of ZCI's support for these movements, though both ZCI members themselves and the partner activists in Zimbabwe stressed very positive effects. In relation to the "*Munhu Wese MuRoad*" demonstration for example, activists based in Zimbabwe like Chenjerai argued that:

".... we work with organisations outside the country. If you look at us, in 2016, we mobilised thousands of the diaspora in Canada, Australia, Germany, UK, USA to come together to support protest that was happening in Zimbabwe. I personally did that, mobilised the people across the globe. This initiative was supported by people like Kundai, Albert, Abraham, Todd,

these are individuals across the world who saw the importance of creating these relationships.⁷⁵”

Even though he slightly exaggerated his impact, from the quote above, we can see the involvement of the diaspora including ZCI members mattered profoundly for activists on the ground.

Some of the respondents who were not part of ZCI’s networks, like Denford, a lawyer who occasionally worked for the organisation Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), argued that demonstrations were having an effect in giving Zimbabweans the courage to go out and demand what they want⁷⁶. Despite this, there were also widespread concern that the demonstrations were not working to bring about change. In some instances, a citizens’ demonstration would usually be met with a ZANU-PF counterdemonstration, marching in support of the government. Events after the July 2018⁷⁷ harmonised elections in Zimbabwe when soldiers shot live rounds into a crowd of protesters also showed that repression was still very present and had undermined anti-government demonstrations. Citizens were still being met by force.

Some of the demonstrations that ZCI supported had been based on informal economy workers who are scattered all over the cities in Zimbabwe. Sachikonye and Raftopoulos (2018) argue that informalisation of labour in Zimbabwe has escalated and has undermined past forms of opposition mobilization, through trades unions for example. Based on general observations in the city, residential areas and discussions with respondents, one could tell that the informal sector was also keeping the country afloat. Diaspora members were perhaps motivated to mobilise alongside the informal sector vendors as both lack rights, and both wanted change: vendors and other informal economy workers were constantly being harassed and the diasporans did not have voting rights. Once again, however, notwithstanding the voice these

⁷⁵ Interview with Chenjerai. Harare. 28/01/2018

⁷⁶ Interview with Denford. Harare. 14/04/2018

⁷⁷ On August 1st, 2018, protesters (who eventually turned violent) went on the streets of Harare to demand the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission release the results of the Presidential ballot. The army showed up to ‘help the police manage the crowd’ but during the process, shot fatal live rounds into the fleeing protesters. The shots killed 3 unarmed protesters and another 11 were wounded. Opposition leaders were arrested and accused of inciting violence

demonstrations gave to citizens, they have failed to significantly further rights or bring meaningful change.

There were also other benefits that come in indirectly from these ZCI initiatives with their partners. For example, I spoke to Desmond who worked for a Catholic community radio station⁷⁸. Part of his job was to engage the communities and conscientise them about issues of human rights *inter alia*. Because he was a monitor for the Ziso platform, he received training in human rights from the Forum thus when he engaged with the communities through work, he was now doing it from a knowledgeable point of view. This was an unintended benefit as ZCI did not set out to impact grass roots Catholic communities in this way. Nonetheless, they eventually managed to reach a large number of people through this work with a radio station that reaches into grassroots communities meaning they could spread understandings of ideas of human rights through this channel.

From the analysis above, it might seem as if all ZCI's impacts were overwhelmingly positive. But there were some challenges that the organisation had to navigate, beyond simply the broader challenges of the persistence of an authoritarian ruling party. Respondents outside the ZCI's network argued that there was a terrible culture of competition within the Zimbabwean civic society as well as amongst social movements. So much that there were 'suspicions and false allegations amongst the activists themselves'⁷⁹. There was always a question of why this person was getting money and, in some cases, Chenjerai argued that 'he has even seen activists confront each other in public over funding received from abroad.'⁸⁰ There was a lot of gossip about misuse of funds and other allegations amongst the activists themselves which could be problematic as it meant it became hard for them to unite under one common banner (Moyo 2014). I asked the ZCI members whilst conducting fieldwork in the UK how they dealt with that and they acknowledged this treacherous terrain and the difficulties it posed, which had occasionally, disrupted their work and reputation which

⁷⁸ Radio Chiedza is a Catholic Community radio station based in Harare with a very active social media presence

⁷⁹ Interview with Linda. Harare. 29/01/2018

⁸⁰ Interview with Chenjerai. Harare. 28/01/2018

in turn can put off diaspora members from donating to the organisation and ultimately having a negative effect on the organisation.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter's exploration of the transnational civic activism on the part of the ZCI has profiled the actions of a diaspora organisation formed of middle-class professionals. By its focus on a middle-class group, this chapter brings to light the experiences of a group of migrants whose roles and impacts at home are often discussed primarily in relation to the economic domain. The ZCI's members expressed their sense of diasporic citizenship by claiming rights for themselves within the homeland and contributing to causes that sought to influence the broader terrain of human rights and democracy in Zimbabwe. The case of the ZCI shows the importance of widening the concept of diasporic citizenship beyond the usual frame of reference of rights in the hostland to also consider activism in relation to the homeland and its effects. It showed the importance of the legal domain for 'acts of citizenship, as for example focussed on campaigns for the diaspora vote and dual citizenship, but also argued for a wider social lens to incorporate other forms of civic and political activism. By exploring diaspora citizenship and the civic sphere in both host and homelands, I also tried to unpick how political ideas were circulating transnationally, and profiled two-way movements. On the one hand, key figures in the ZCI had brought histories of rights and constitutional activism with them from Zimbabwe, but they were also influenced by experiences of voting and democracy in the UK, which were transmitted home through conversations with family as well as through the formal partnerships with rights organisations, resonating with Boccagni et al's (2016) notion of political remittances.

It is important to situate this activism at a particular juncture of Zimbabwean politics where opposition politics was weakened and fragmented, and when NGOs and other civics were also engaged in ever greater competition for funding. The chapter showed that these Manchester based Zimbabwean middle-class migrants had used their personal networks derived from past political activism, redirecting political energies into civic and rights activism. They connected with the Zimbabwean opposition but differed from earlier means of diasporic political engagement that hinged on working through party political structures directly. The chapter thus added to debates about

diaspora political, civic and humanitarian engagements, showing their mutual entanglement in this instance. I also stressed the potential exclusivity of middle-class diaspora mobilizations, based on personal networks and close vetting of new members, which in the case of ZCI could also reinforce class boundaries within the diaspora.

The chapter began to show how diaspora-based initiatives of Zimbabweans in the UK are affecting Zimbabwe's civic sphere which has been neglected by scholars previously. It showed positive contributions through the initiation of new technologies for reporting and monitoring rights violations via a 'marriage of convenience' with the Forum, one of Zimbabwe's most well-established civic organisations, as well as support for social movement activism. Challenges notwithstanding, the work done by ZCI and the partners on the ground has helped improve human rights monitoring in the country and thereby giving citizens on the ground a voice *inter alia*. In the following chapter, the thesis continues to explore transnational civic engagements through another very different diaspora organisation, which has a radically different social base than that of ZCI.

Chapter 5: Abjection and shifting circumstances: Legal status and diasporic citizenship

5.1. Introduction

“When people seek asylum, they are told, once you have sought asylum you are not allowed to go back to Zimbabwe. They will not give you travel documents. You’ve got a lot of people who are now stateless. Some people ended up having mental health problems, I know a Zimbabwean who was homeless, used to come to the Vigil, people would bring him food, but I think in the end he got mental issues – how could you not considering all that you are facing? He started taking drugs, you know, whatever drug that people take on the street [...]”⁸¹

The dynamics of Zimbabwean emigration and immigration to Britain from the late 1990s were such that significant numbers entered the British asylum system or were deemed ‘irregular’ migrants. This was particularly the case after the British government imposed a visa on Zimbabwean travellers in 2002 (Pasura, 2014). This period coincided with the downfall of the economy in Zimbabwe and upscaling of the persecution of political opponents and activists. Some Zimbabweans fled to the UK to either join family members or to claim asylum. Sassen in explaining why people take risks to travel, argues that “migrations do not just happen but are produced, they are not autonomous and are tied to problems in the homeland” (Sassen, 2016: 205), which is very relevant in the Zimbabwe case where political repression and economic plunge escalated from the late 1990s. Some Zimbabweans claimed asylum on arrival in Britain whilst some came on various types of visas from study to visit, but when the visas eventually ran out, this placed them in illegality as ‘overstayers.’ The broader Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK thus came to include many whose claims to asylum failed, “whose status in the UK is precarious and always shifting.” (Kuhlmann, 2013: 322) These insecure migrants were also part of the transnational politics that is the topic of this thesis: they act out their diasporic citizenship to claim their rights in the hostland but also go further by attempting claim rights and influence politics at home even though they are looked upon as traitors by their homeland government.

Ideas of citizenship are understood in different ways, as the discussion in the literature review made clear, and our particular concern in this chapter is with those potentially

⁸¹ Interview with Maita. London. 23/09/2017

excluded from legal formulations in the hostland. Legal understandings of citizenship are said to have a limited view as they do not extend citizenship to residents who do not have status within a specific territory (Isin 2008). Arendt (2004) argues that the idea of having a right is connected with being a citizen of a particular state, so what happens to individuals who do not necessarily belong to any state, whose status is precarious as asylum seekers or as 'illegals?' Such individuals have to rely on handouts and 'dirty jobs' to survive, in other words, they end up in an 'abject space' (McGregor 2008). In this chapter, I use abjection to refer to the space that the group of migrants with insecure status discussed here occupies because their legal status is exclusionary, forcing them into precarity. An understanding of citizenship that reaches beyond the letter of the law to socio-political claims with a focus on action brings these people back into debates over citizenship and gives them a voice (Schiller 2015; Sassen 2008; Isin 2008; Isin and Nielsen 2008b; Isin and Turner 2007; Yuval-Davis 2006). This understanding therefore allows us to argue that citizenship claims on the hostland, even when not underpinned by legal rights, can be considered a form of active citizenship, yet these claims can also be interlinked with claims to rights and citizenship in the homeland, and hence to transnational diasporic citizenship. The literature on precarious migrants has largely focussed on claim-making made in situ in the hostland when discussing irregular migrants; yet acting through a proxy human rights organisation in Zimbabwe allows the group of irregular migrants I discuss here to make their claims transnationally in reference to the homeland. Their willingness to be 'visible' in this way, partly reflects their hostland residence, despite its insecurities, as they feel they are out of reach of the homeland government. Moreover, by rendering themselves visible they can also help further claims to asylum.

This specific chapter draws from a total of 20 interviews with key informants spread between the UK and Zimbabwe with 10 being done in the UK – a mixture of individuals with and without status - and the other 10 in Zimbabwe linked to the activist organisations supported by diaspora-based Zimbabweans. I additionally use data collected via field notes during the time I spent with both the Zimbabwe Vigil that meets outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in central London and their partner organisation Restoration of Human Rights (ROHR) as a participant observer. The chapter asks the following questions; how does 'abject' legal status shape associational life and institutional modes of engagement with both hostland and homeland? How does it

compare and contrast with the associational life of those who have secure status discussed in the previous chapter? How can new insights into the Zimbabwe Vigil and Restoration of Human Rights' (ROHR) – The Vigil's transnational partner acting as a proxy in the homeland – history and current politics add to our understanding of 'abject' individuals' politics and 'acts of citizenship', both in the UK and in Zimbabwe? I argue that precarious legal status has shaped forms of transnational civic engagement that are distinctive from the partnerships discussed in the previous chapter, as irregularity provoked greater militancy and emphasis on protest tactics, while at the same time undermining the capacity to form formal partnerships, achieve accountability and mobilise funds. Yet there are also similarities in the sense of diasporic citizenship fostered through the organisations discussed in both chapters.

The chapter proceeds in five sections. The first section introduces and discusses the Zimbabwe Vigil Coalition [hereafter the Vigil] which is the main basis of the chapter. I argue that despite members' precarity, there is a strong sense of rights to citizenship manifest in the practice of civic engagement happening both in hostland and homeland. I additionally argue that deteriorating Vigil membership has contributed to declining momentum. Moreover, I argue that a trajectory towards inclusion within the UK has also contributed to the Vigil/ROHR's declining membership and social base. In the second section, I turn to ROHR, which operates on the ground in Zimbabwe, and its relationship to the Vigil arguing that corruption, funding and trust issues within the organisation have also contributed to a decline in momentum. In this and the third section, I make a case for extending usual framings of insecure migrants' 'acts of citizenship' by adopting a transnational lens, bringing them back into a discussion of homeland politics. The Vigil uses ROHR for transnational claim-making in the homeland and in this way influences the broader civic sphere in Zimbabwe. In the fourth section, I argue that part of the reason the Vigil and ROHR have struggled with membership relates to the nature of Zimbabwean diaspora politics and to Zimbabwean politics more broadly which has left citizens disillusioned. In the fifth section, I argue these homeland-based initiatives through the work of the partner organisation ROHR are not as effective as those by ZCI's partners due to lack of funding beyond the Vigil's membership in the UK. The lack of funding and the contentious politics in the homeland has affected the impact of interventions by ROHR in Zimbabwe. The legal

precarity of the members as funders of these organisations, I argue, contributes directly to the problems and lack of accountability they manifest.

5.2. The Zimbabwe Vigil

This section introduces the organisation which is the main basis of this chapter, the Vigil. It is important to explore the foundations of this organisation and to set its actions at the time of research within a trajectory over time, enabling a comparison between earlier work (discussed by Pasura, 2008; 2014 and others), and their activities in 2018. The work that this organisation was doing at the time of research showed both continuities and changes, but the shifts in momentum, profile and declining influence are notable, which are interconnected with changes to legal status as well as to activist practices of citizenship in both host and homeland. The fact that the Vigil has persisted over the years despite the contentious nature of its everyday politics is one that needs explaining. It is also important to note that although the Vigil works predominantly with those who are insecure, some of the members of the Vigil have since been granted asylum and citizenship in the UK but they carry on supporting the association. I argue that just like ZCI members, Vigil members likewise seek to engage with the homeland through this organisation due to the sense of diasporic citizenship which enhances belonging to both hostland and homeland.

According to one of the Vigil's founders, the organisation was created in 2002 "to draw attention to human rights abuses in Zimbabwe⁸²", it was seen as a conglomeration of groups, did not belong to any political party and claimed to have always welcomed people from other organisations who agree with what it stands for. Although the co-founders of the Zimbabwe Vigil claimed that it did not belong to any political party, it was in fact founded using existing structures and membership of the Central London Branch of the MDC opposition party (before it split in 2005) together with white farmers lobbying over the land issue (Benton and Benton, 2017). Benton and Benton (2017: 10) contend, "the decision to start the Vigil was made by the Central London Branch of the [recently formed] Movement for Democratic Change who used to hold regular forums on Mondays." In the early 2000s, they were addressed by then MDC MP Roy

⁸² Interview with Joy. London. 19/08/2017

Bennet and a Zimbabwean human rights activist, Tony Wheeler, who were visiting the UK urging the gathering to draw public attention to the violence and abuses in Zimbabwe. The first Vigil was held on the 12th of October 2002.

According to Courage, the Vigil's coordinator at the time of my research, when the Vigil started, there were a lot of white Zimbabwean exile members who were looking for a place to lobby over the land issue. This was because the start of this organisation coincided with the arrival of white farmers who had been evicted from their farms by "Mugabe and his hooligans, Chenjerai Hunzvi⁸³ and others.⁸⁴" Pasura (2008) argues that this existence of white Zimbabweans at the Vigil has to be problematised considering their absence from grassroots and national political activism in the country prior to the emergence of the MDC, and their self-interest in taking part in the Vigil. However, it is also important to keep in mind that these white Zimbabweans were not only protesting their dispossession of land by the Zimbabwean government, but also the broader erosion of democracy and rights.

Courage also mentioned that the white presence at the Vigil had declined over time, and the balance had shifted gradually as more and more Black Zimbabweans also joined the diaspora⁸⁵. In the first days according to Courage, most of the efforts came from white Zimbabweans but by the time of my research, the protest had about 95% or more black Zimbabweans and they were in leadership roles⁸⁶. This is an interesting statistic, which Benton and Benton (2017) attribute to the easier assimilation process for white Zimbabweans compared to black Zimbabweans as most whites had a straightforward path to citizenship in the UK and did not have to enter the asylum system or endure protracted illegality. As Morris (2003) argues, racism underpins discriminatory practices of extending rights to migrants by host nations. When compared to the ZCI politics discussed in the previous chapter, the Vigil's dynamics were very different. The Vigil has been more militant and used mostly protest and

⁸³ Chenjerai Hunzvi was the chairman of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association who played a pivotal role in successfully pressuring the government to compensate war veterans threatening violence – this is an important turning point of the Zimbabwean economy. Hunzvi also spearheaded the invasion of white owned farms leading to the so called 'Third Chimurenga' which eventually was the reason why most of the former white farm owners left the country.

⁸⁴ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Ibid

street demonstrations to get its message heard whilst ZCI held quiet meetings in hotels and private residences.

This then begs the question of membership. Where did the Vigil draw its members and why were they all so militant? Both the Vigil and ZCI included members who had been political and human rights activists before leaving Zimbabwe and who continued with their political engagement in the UK. But as noted above, the Vigil had its bedrock of support from those who were insecure and lacked full rights. For most black Zimbabweans who moved to the UK after 2000 because of the situation in Zimbabwe, the Vigil offered a visible place for them to protest and have a public profile in raising knowledge of the ills of the Zimbabwean government. It was motivated by ideas of human rights, lobbied and pressured the British government and other international institutions to take action over the situation in Zimbabwe. They were successful in raising the profile of their demonstrations in the early years (2000-8), thanks to the interest on the part of British press and UK politicians in Zimbabwe's trajectory, which McGregor (2009) argues reflects the legacies of settler colonialism (in contrast to Kurdish groups in Germany, for example Østergaard-Nielsen (2003)). This political support can provide one explanation for the militancy, but the desperation of the members who comprise the majority of those present at demonstrations is another, as they see their protests as a means of legalising their stay. Morris (2003) states that those who are in a country unlawfully are not always entirely lacking in rights but claiming this right could jeopardise their presence, something members of the Vigil seemed not to worry about, quite the opposite, as members hoped that their participation and public profile could support a trajectory into legalising their presence.

Although the past levels of political support had waned somewhat by the time of the research, the Vigil still had political access and support at the time of research via figures like Kate Hoey who led the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Africa in the UK Parliament and who had a history of raising concerns over human rights, supporting white farmers and the Zimbabwean political opposition. A further reason for the organisation's militancy and ability to sustain a regular presence was the support they got for their programmes via local authority funds in the 2000s, though

this funding had ceased now, according to my interviewees⁸⁷, which is largely a reflection of austerity cuts by the UK Government.

From the conversations I had with respondents, some Vigil members were politically active before leaving Zimbabwe whilst others said they became politically active only after joining the Vigil. The majority sought asylum on arrival in the UK or after visas expired. Members of the Vigil come from all sorts of backgrounds, but they had come to be irregular, occupying what McGregor (2008) refers to as 'abject spaces.' As McGregor (2008) discusses, they are legally outcast, and abjection implies being imputed with negative characteristics like impurity, criminality, animality, speechlessness and victimhood, are forced into stereotypically dirty jobs avoided by the citizens (Nyers 2003). Many such migrants spent years in hiding after they had arrived in the UK for fear of deportation, and many were failed asylum seekers whose applications and subsequent appeals were turned down by the Home Office. Their motivations for leaving Zimbabwe combined political and economic factors. Their illegality did not, however, translate into passivity. These claimants of rights, who came together as Zimbabweans at the Vigil, were mostly united through a common situation of exclusion in the UK and demands for inclusion.

Vigil members had however, arrived and applied for asylum at different junctures since 2000, with variable outcomes, and it is important to contextualise changes in British policies and practices towards asylum seekers and irregular migrants over time. The differentiated status of Vigil members reflected these changes, and created a form of civic stratification (Morris, 2003). Whilst waiting for a decision on asylum applications, you are not allowed to work in the UK, so Vigil members had spent long periods in limbo. According to Morris (2003), a person used to be able to work in the UK 6 months after applying for asylum, but this changed in 2002. In some periods, there were significant numbers of Zimbabweans in detention centres, such as in 2005, when the Home office had halted deportations back to Zimbabwe. Like other migrants in irregular circumstances, Zimbabweans finding themselves excluded have used a variety of means to try legalising their stay (on such manoeuvres in other contexts, see De Genova, (2002). Over the period from 2010 in particular, Zimbabweans in

⁸⁷ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

irregular circumstances have also been subject to regularization, as Morris (2003: 89) argues, “Britain [...] has targeted some groups in rather limited regularisation exercises including old case rulings on asylum seekers.”

McIlwaine (2015) argues that ‘illegals’ in the UK manage to regularise themselves over time notwithstanding legal obstacles. This was also the case in relation to Zimbabweans. However, there were still some Zimbabwean migrants who had insecure status and sought to get it regularised who were not included in the unofficial regularisation, or who had fallen out of legality subsequently as student and other visas expired and they had stayed on. These were some of the people who were active with the Vigil at the time of my research. As rumours of deportations resurfaced in the UK Zimbabwean diaspora after the change of government in Zimbabwe in 2018 and following press reports of Zimbabweans in detention being deported, most were keen not to be removed and sent back, and saw working closely with the Vigil as a means of helping them to make a convincing case to remain. Insecurity has also been an ongoing issue even amongst those individuals who were granted status, either because people were only given temporary rights, or because it takes time for people to really feel they are secure given the hostility to migrants in a public sphere shaped by debates over Brexit in which anti-immigrant sentiment has been key. This sense of insecurity in Britain has motivated some to continue attending the Vigil even after their status is regularised, alongside their interest in seeing change in Zimbabwe, discussed further below.

As I eventually discovered, some of the newest members of the Vigil were failed asylum seekers who were attempting to create or portray themselves as politically active by denouncing the Zimbabwean government so that they avoid a chance of getting deported back to homeland (cf McGregor and Pasura 2010 on an earlier period). Over the years, the Vigil had helped members of the Zimbabwean diaspora with asylum applications. These actions in the quest for political inclusion fit Isin and Nielsen’s understanding of acts of citizenship. John discussed how the Vigil’s leadership “used to write letters of support for people who were claiming asylum to facilitate this process⁸⁸.” Though the Vigil might claim to have been helping out, a

⁸⁸ Interview with John. London. 09/09/2017

couple of members I spoke to were not fully happy with the way this was being handled by the Vigil's President whom they accused of making money out of them by charging fees in order to write such letters⁸⁹.

One of the Saturdays⁹⁰ I was at the Vigil, I witnessed Mr Goronga,⁹¹ the President of the Vigil and founder of ROHR address a group of about 16 people who had attended the Vigil. There had been reports in the Zimbabwean diaspora media⁹² in the past, that he had been asking for money to write letters of support for asylum seeker applications (Nehanda Radio; 2010⁹³) but according to him, he had done no such thing. He rather emphasised how "he actually had used quite a lot of money out of his pocket to visit people and put them in touch with legal representation."⁹⁴ Though the body language of those listening showed ambivalence towards him, it looked like they all were just nodding their heads to get him to stop speaking, they did not call him out or say anything against what he was telling them. Because of such reports of personal financial profit out of assisting asylum seekers, there seemed to be a problem of distrust amongst Vigil members, and indeed diaspora members more broadly. Amongst the Vigil members, it seemed to emanate from rumours that some individuals would report those with insecure status out of spite⁹⁵.

Over the years, the numbers of Zimbabweans making asylum claims have dwindled. This reduction of numbers of Zimbabweans within the asylum system meant that the Vigil has increasingly struggled with fundraising. Some of the funds they raised at the time of research, came from the sale of items during the Vigil on Saturdays as well as through social events that are unaffordable to some members. As John elaborated:

"The Vigil fundraises through donations, at times you just put a tin and people who come or pass by to support put some coins or whatever it is they have in there. We sell t-shirts, caps, pins, wristbands here on Saturdays and we also do other events to fundraise like this year we have

⁸⁹ Interview with Shamiso. London. 14/10/2017

⁹⁰ Participant Observation field notes. 07/10/2017

⁹¹ Mr Goronga has been President of the Vigil since it started and in 2006 was elected the MDC UK Chair but removed by Tsvangirai in 2009 (MDC UK and Ireland suspended) over financial irregularities.

⁹² Zimbabwe diaspora-based newspapers include *The Zimbabwean*, *Nehanda Radio*, *Zimdaily*, *Zimbabwe Situation* *inter alia*. Mr Goronga was addressing this same concern which I believe had resurfaced or is always present within the diaspora community.

⁹³ For more, see here: <https://nehandaradio.com/2009/06/22/uk-asylum-for-120-talk-to-rohr-zimbabwe/>

⁹⁴ Field Notes. 07/10/2017

⁹⁵ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

an All White Boat Party (everyone has to dress in white clothes) on the River Thames which is £50 entrance and we will be launching our book too. We also collect membership fees for ROHR International.⁹⁶

Though this boat party mentioned by John was a fundraising campaign meant to be attended by both Vigil/ROHR members and the general public, the ticket price meant that it put a strain on those who were not gainfully employed. Eventually, photos that were posted on the Vigil's website showed that there was only a handful of people in attendance⁹⁷. Additionally, whilst doing fieldwork with this organisation, I tried my hand at selling some of their wares. In my opinion, it was hard selling a wristband for £1 to someone walking past for many different reasons one being, most people nowadays do not carry cash on them. I managed to make only £4 during the 3-hour period I was there though I spoke to around 13 people regarding the Zimbabwe situation. In terms of the Vigil's purpose of making the ills of the Zimbabwean government known, it was arguably a successful day, though from the point of view of fundraising, it could be hardly be described in this way. This made me wonder how many of the wristbands would need to be sold for the organisation to raise a significant amount of money. On top of this, three of the respondents I spoke to also argued that it was difficult for them to attend the boat party for example as they did not have a steady income and would rather keep the money they have for upkeep. As Tadiswa explained:

"I do not have a job and have not been working officially and legally for a while meaning I do not have a lot of money lying around. It is a difficult decision for me as I also want to contribute to the cause but do not have much."⁹⁸

What this meant for members such as Tadiswa is that she had to think very hard before taking part in some of the activities and events hosted by the Vigil. She did not have the necessary financial capital though she wanted to be a part of the event so as to be visible. The coordinator had informed me that they were inviting the media to the boat party since they were launching their book titled *Zimbabwe Emergency: Journal of the Zimbabwe Vigil in London* which is a collection of all their online diaries over the

⁹⁶ Interview with John. London. 09/09/2017

⁹⁷ Available here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/albums/72157689517853725/with/36575617344/>

⁹⁸ Interview with Tadiswa. London. 18/11/2017

years⁹⁹. Interestingly enough, the same coordinator was criticising the organisers of a festival called *Zimfest*¹⁰⁰ for overcharging clients and turning everything into ‘money-making scheme¹⁰¹.’ This showed that there was some animosity between the two organisations as according to the President, the Vigil used to host a similar event in the past¹⁰². Going back to Tadiswa, she also wanted to be seen at the boat party so as to further add to her activist profile. McIlwaine (2015: 507) contends that migrants “exercise some form of agency in the sense of being conscious actors in both creating practices to navigate their exclusion as well as negotiate often hostile migration regimes rather than being victims of their circumstances.” The challenge with most of the members in Tadiswa’s situation was that as much as they did not have legal status in the UK, they did work on the side, did not earn much but had families in Zimbabwe to take care of. This then affected the level of investment in the organisation by its members which in turn affected its general effectiveness. The funding issue was one that was important as it affected the way in which activities were run both in the UK and in Zimbabwe.

The precarity of the members of the Vigil is something that invites more problematisation. Indeed, their irregular status underpinned many of their other actions (which is not untypical of activism on the part of other migrant groups without status). In this case, Vigil members took part in homeland or emigrant politics partly to resolve their own legal situation in the hostland (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Datta et al. 2007). Their protracted precarity affected a number of people psychologically as Courage argued, leading to mental health issues amongst irregular Zimbabweans in the UK¹⁰³. Fears of the dreaded CIO and the UK government’s threats of deportation contributed. As Jacob described:

“I was always hiding since arriving here and I have never actually exposed myself in terms of being out there and doing things that would reveal my identity and the like. Because for example if the UK government knew that

⁹⁹ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

¹⁰⁰ Zimfest is described on its website as an annual Zimbabwean music, food and family festival. In the past, it has hosted prominent Zimbabwean artists such as Oliver Mtukudzi and Jah Prayzah to name a few. See <https://www.zimfestlive.com/> for more.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

¹⁰² Interview with Blessing. London. 05/08/2017

¹⁰³ Voice of America interviewed Dr Ian Ndlovu in 2015 and he discussed depression and diaspora suicides amongst Zimbabweans. See here for more: <https://www.voazimbabwe.com/a/stressed-zimbabweans-take-own-lives-in-the-diaspora/2966243.html>

you had been in the military, they would send you back. They would claim that you were coming here to spy. You had to go underground so I had a fear, they would always assume that I was from Zanu.¹⁰⁴”

Many people failed to stay on the same career path that they were in Zimbabwe and this too led to depression. But it also meant people were ready to do what they could in order to get money for maintenance and to send home, with more and more pressure coming from the homeland about upkeep since they were ‘in the diaspora.’ Jacob expressed how he was willing to be visible because he felt the chances of being sent back home or treated as a deserter had diminished in comparison to the past. Nonetheless, collectively this group of individuals attending the Vigil had experiences in the UK that were different from the middle-class members of the Zimbabwean diaspora discussed in the previous chapter. Despite belonging to the same diaspora group and often coming from middle class backgrounds in Zimbabwe, their socio-economic status and earning capacity in Britain as well as their legal standing made them precarious, which also influenced the nature of the transnational association that they supported, which I will discuss later.

Notwithstanding the complaints some people articulated about the Vigil, it had nonetheless undertaken activities that have helped its members, as well as working to lobby the British government about the situation in Zimbabwe and also raising awareness to Zimbabweans in the UK. Conversations with the coordinator revealed that the organisation had worked to prevent deportations including in one case where they physically went to Heathrow airport to reason with the airline with success¹⁰⁵. These acts of citizenship are useful and are examples of challenges to injustices. When the Vigil group went to the airport, they were calling into question a decision by the Home Office. The Vigil had also through its partnership with other organisations in the UK, worked to send petitions to the British government – these included petitions demanding the UK government to lobby the Zimbabwe government over arrests and detention of opposition politicians, sanctions and others asking them to take action over the human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. During the period when I was conducting fieldwork, they were collecting signatures to lobby the UK government over arrests of

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Jacob. London. 02/09/2017

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

the opposition, attempting to influence and level the political playing field in advance of upcoming elections.

Pasura's (2008) study of the Zimbabwean diaspora argues that the Vigil seems to be pushing some normative agendas consistent with broader Zimbabwean transnational human rights activism in a number of countries and global politics. The time I spent with the Vigil also seemed to reflect this, as the Vigil adapts every year to deal directly with new events in relation to the homeland. They had various transnational campaigns in line with what was happening in Zimbabwe, from raising awareness of Grace Mugabe¹⁰⁶ assaulting one of her son's friends in South Africa whilst visiting - they argued the world needed to know what a terrible person she was in the hope this would dampen her political ambitions – to criticisms of the 'coup' that took place in November 2017, and actions to draw attention to the violence that followed the 2018 elections. They pushed consistently with a human rights agenda that had in many ways, not changed significantly since they were formed.

This section profiled the Vigil's support base amongst the most insecure members of the Zimbabwe diaspora in the UK and explained members' support for transnational protest. It showed how legal exclusion motivated militancy and visibility within the hostland, and how activism over rights in situ can be connected to transnational activism regarding rights in the homeland. An important part of the Vigil's activities and claims to be contributing in positive ways to advancing human rights agendas within Zimbabwe has also been achieved through the funding of and other support for a human rights organisation operating within Zimbabwe, to which the chapter now turns.

5.3. Transnational Claim-making: The Case of Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)

¹⁰⁶ Grace Mugabe is the former first lady of Zimbabwe, married to Robert Mugabe and in 2017 was accused of assaulting a 20-year-old woman with an electric cable in Johannesburg. Mrs Mugabe who was not travelling on a diplomatic passport, claimed diplomatic immunity and managed to skip South Africa. In December 2018, an arrest warrant for her was issued in South Africa after the woman she assaulted successfully challenged the immunity in the High Court. See here: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/11/grace-mugabe-denies-assault-claiming-victim-intoxicated-unhinged/> for more.

This section introduces an interesting dimension of the Zimbabwe Vigil as it claims to have always sought to fight for human rights in the homeland. ROHR¹⁰⁷ coordinates the Vigil's efforts on the ground in Zimbabwe. The attention to ROHR's activities in this section extends our understanding of acts of diasporic citizenship as it extends to a transnational domain and shifts the focus to diaspora members' on-going participation in homeland politics. ROHR claimed to be adding to the human rights community, which I agree with, but also argue that their work is contradictory and controversial. ROHR was a minor player among rights organisations in Zimbabwe at the time of research and it had not been able to quell accusations of exploiting its members and corruption. The literature has largely focussed on claim-making made in situ in the hostland when discussing irregular migrants, yet diasporic citizenship and acting through a proxy human rights organisation in Zimbabwe allows this network of migrants brought together by the Vigil in London to make their claims transnationally in reference to the homeland. They could protest freely as they felt they were out of reach of the homeland government, indeed as I argued above, such protests were also seen as a route to gaining asylum. Yet ROHR's difficulties as an organisation partly reflected the irregular status of its members in the diaspora, which I argue, has contributed to the accusations of corruption and unaccountability. In some ways, one could argue that this organisation could be seen as a form of "unruly politics," a notion developed by Khanna et al. (2013) specifically in relation to political action by the excluded:

"political action by people who have been denied voice by the rules of the political game, and by the social rules that underpin this game. It draws its power from transgressing these rules – while at the same time upholding others, which may not be legally sanctioned but which have legitimacy, deeply rooted in people's own understandings of what is right and just."
(Khanna et al. 2013: 14)

The irregular migrants in Britain who founded ROHR have been called traitors by the Zimbabwean government and have been rendered powerless through denial of access to rights in the political systems of the homeland and hostland. They however are taking other steps in transgressing some of the exclusions by challenging the homeland as well as hostland government from afar using organisations whose own

¹⁰⁷ Full name at founding being Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe

modus operandi is complex and not transparent. Interestingly this can be contrasted to the forms of partnership adopted by Zimbabwean professionals discussed in chapter four, who chose to partner with well-established, donor-funded organisations in Zimbabwe. ROHR was formed in the UK by members of the Zimbabwe Vigil with funds from the Vigil and was then registered as an organisation in Zimbabwe in 2007, by individuals who had returned to the homeland from the diaspora. ROHR claimed it was a “non-political organisation, whose members were passionate and committed to bringing about change in Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁸” The organisation sought to “educate and encourage Zimbabweans to stand together, encourage active participation in Zimbabwe on governance issues including their constitutional rights.¹⁰⁹” Below, I scrutinize these claims, showing that the organisation’s work on the ground was contradictory and more ambivalent than its creators claimed. In some ways, I argue, it can be seen as particularly ‘unruly’, though the organisation’s difficulties also reflected the challenges of a repressive environment, politicisation and corruption issues that have marred the broader political and civic sphere within Zimbabwe.

The two organisations - the Vigil and ROHR - relate to each other very closely, not only because the Vigil funds ROHR, but also in terms of personnel. When I asked the treasurer of the Vigil how their relationship with ROHR worked, he answered;

“The Vigil works hand in hand with ROHR, the Vigil is for protest and ROHR is an actual organisation. They work hand in hand and at times ROHR organises for fundraising events and when we are done, they can chip in to help out the Vigil and similarly, when ROHR is struggling with finances, the Vigil helps out, it’s like they help each other out. We also sometimes get money from outsiders but not at the moment, it seems like there is no money out there.¹¹⁰”

John was the treasurer of both the Vigil and ROHR UK during the time of my research. ROHR had a UK chapter and a Zimbabwe chapter, and they worked hand in hand. The Zimbabwe chapter was, I argue, basically the proxy of the Vigil and worked on behalf of the various members of the UK chapter who could and could not return home based on status in the UK. ROHR had been in existence for a long time and had its

¹⁰⁸ From the ROHR website

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*

¹¹⁰ Interview with John. London. 09/09/2017

own interesting history which added to the fractures and mistrust within the Zimbabwean diaspora.

ROHR was officially formed in 2007 in the UK (not all the founders were based in the UK) by a group of Zimbabweans, among them, Mr Goronga, Chenjerai¹¹¹, Tamirira¹¹², Jeremiah, Gloria to name a few. According to the founding president, Mr Goronga, ROHR existed even earlier, but was not formally and officially registered. The idea had certainly been present since 2003 and the organisation was meant to be a victim-oriented organisation for those who had suffered human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. After it was officially formed in the UK, Chenjerai, who had been in the UK, “opted to go home and join the others¹¹³” meaning he went back to Zimbabwe to form the Zimbabwe chapter of ROHR. The organisation carried on and would coordinate funds in the UK, remitting them back to Zimbabwe where they would be used for various activities on the ground.

In the UK, the organisation collected membership fees of £10 (and still did during the time of research) per month from the Zimbabwe Vigil members who were almost all members of ROHR and also from other well-wishers who either joined or gave money. It is important to note here that the Vigil and ROHR were also now collecting donations from other people who were not members of the Zimbabwean diaspora. ROHR however had not run smoothly over the years, and its problems have been covered extensively in the Zimbabwe and diaspora media. Headlines broke in 2009-10,¹¹⁴ with Nehanda Radio carrying a story on the 30th of June 2009 that ROHR and ZimVigil were exploiting asylum seekers. It reported that the organisation was charging £120 to write asylum seekers “letters of activity,” evidence of exploiting their members. The organisation’s policy was that you could get such a letter if you had been a member for more than 12 months, however, reports in the media¹¹⁵ claimed that ROHR’s President was asking for the 12 months subscription upfront to write these letters. Mr

¹¹¹ Chenjerai now leads one of Zimbabwe’s biggest informal economy worker’s union

¹¹² Tamirira used to be the Director of Elections for the MDC Harare Province before joining the civil society

¹¹³ Interview with Blessing. London. 05/08/2017

¹¹⁴ More here <https://nehandaradio.com/2009/06/30/rohr-zimvigil-exploiting-asylum-seekers/>

¹¹⁵ The majority of the Vigil leadership seemed to have some form of resentment towards diaspora-based media outlets to such an extent there were claims that some of the paper and radio owners had used the Vigil to get their paperwork sorted out but then fell out with the leadership over silly differences.

Goronga, who then was the President had been removed from his position as MDC UK chair a year before this for ‘financial irregularities’¹¹⁶.

In 2011, there were further problems and Zimbabwe-based members of ROHR ejected Mr Goronga from his director role citing “actions of gross misconduct, misappropriation of funds and criminal discharge undermining of the ROHR constitution provisions”¹¹⁷ (Nehanda Radio, 2011). Two other founding members were removed and replaced with Chenjerai and Gloria as vice president and president respectively. Members of ROHR also sent a request for Mr Goronga to remit the £26 000 which had been sent to his personal account on various days with the intention to be sent to Zimbabwe. Further to that, this new board asked Mr Goronga to return the £8 000 he received from ROHR for ‘educational expenses’¹¹⁸ apparently without the constitutional approval of the board of trustees. The divisions expressed at this meeting, which amongst the ROHR members was referred to as the Chelmsford Manor Conference¹¹⁹ (where it took place in Harare) caused the organisation split into two factions. Mr Goronga rejected the claims and argued that he was the true visionary of the organisation, and was never alerted to the meeting, yet Gloria argued notice was given and Mr Goronga and his faction chose not to attend.

The faction led by Gloria went on to adopt the name ROHR Zimbabwe whilst the Goronga faction took ROHR [Zimbabwe] International. The similarities and differences can be seen in the two organisations’ current websites which almost carry such similar domain names however, (<https://rohr-zimbabwe.org/> and <http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/>)¹²⁰ respectively. The two organisations were both still functional at the time of research, both doing somewhat similar initiatives in the UK, except the protest outside the Embassy (which was dominated by Goronga’s ROHR).

¹¹⁶ See here a press statement by ROHR refuting this <https://nehandaradio.com/2009/06/24/press-statement-from-rohr-zimbabwe/>

¹¹⁷ See here for more: <https://nehandaradio.com/2011/07/12/human-rights-boss-accused-of-26-000-fraud/>

¹¹⁸ *ibid*

¹¹⁹ There is more information about this meeting here: <https://rohr-zimbabwe.org/index.php/2017/05/12/rohr-zimbabwe-renews-leadership/>

¹²⁰ The ZimVigil website carries a disclaimer that reads “Please note that the official website of ROHR Zimbabwe is <http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/>. Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents us.”

These splits affected the organisations' effectiveness as there was duplication of activities and the turbulence meant that ROHR showed some aspects of the 'unruly' politics defined above. My focus in this thesis is on the longer-standing ROHR, headed by Goronga, and the specifics of what ROHR Zimbabwe's activities, are currently outside the scope of this research project.

To further clarify the membership practices of ROHR, it is important to note that the UK chapter was also divided into other smaller chapters based on city groups. On Saturday the 14th of October 2017 whilst I was at the Vigil conducting fieldwork, the ROHR Birmingham chapter showed up at the Vigil¹²¹. What was very striking about this group was 7 of the 9 people who came spoke isiNdebele. Though the organisation is not officially divided based on ethnic origin, it was immediately clear to me that the Birmingham chapter drew from the isiNdebele speaking community in the city. They set up their banners, joined the singing, spoke to a few people and then eventually left arguing they had to catch the train back to the Midlands whilst it was still daytime. It was clear in this instance that membership of these diaspora associations was sometimes driven by, or at least in practice, came to reflect ethnic origin. The Vigil and ROHR in London might have been able to draw people from across ethnic origins because it was the "headquarters" but in other smaller cities, membership maybe based on which particular Zimbabwean ethnic group was the main population in that city/town or particular ethnic networks within towns where both Zimbabwe's major ethnic groups reside (such as Birmingham).

ROHR [Zimbabwe] International drove transnational initiatives for the Vigil at the time of research. It was for most of the members, one of the ways they were in touch with the homeland, given that many could not travel. Tsitsi explained that because you have claimed political asylum, "even if you are granted travel documents as a refugee, you are not meant to travel back to your homeland as that defeats the whole purpose of the asylum. If it safe for you to return home, then you should go back home¹²²." This meant that the contact these migrants had with their homeland was indirect and ROHR presented them with an opportunity to contribute to the civic sphere in the country so

¹²¹ Field Notes, 14/10/2017

¹²² Interview with Tsitsi. London. 07/10/2017

as to change the situation and to make claims on their continued citizenship at home. While I have characterised some aspects of ROHR as demonstrating ‘unruly politics’, it nonetheless participates in shaping the political sphere in Zimbabwe through its human rights work, and (as we shall see) its on-going personal connections to Zimbabwe opposition politics. Khanna et al (2013, 13) argue that an act cannot stay unruly for long and once it is engaged as political, it “enters the lexicon of political action and instead becomes a recognised mode of political action.” It becomes a form of negotiation for power. Respondents at the Vigil thus did not only criticise ROHR, but felt there was some value to it: they seemed to understand that the work they did with ROHR was to try and make some changes, however big or small, within the country to foster democracy and uphold human rights arguing;

“To raise awareness of the situation, of our situation in Zimbabwe. The singing that we do, those are protest songs. Songs and prayer are important because you would be asking for divine intervention. I know that people walking past might not understand but in Zimbabwe will definitely understand, that is why we sometimes “toi toi”¹²³ because that is the other way of attracting people and getting the message across. Some people they do not understand all these things which is why we also speak to people. In Zimbabwe we have our partners who work tirelessly on the ground to encourage democracy and good governance.”¹²⁴

Thus, ROHR was an important conduit for these diaspora citizens to be able to interact with the homeland in a more direct and political way. It also showed an example of how these precarious irregular migrants nonetheless make claims related to democracy and representation in the homeland as well as the hostland (cf Shankland et al 2012). In the next section, I will look more closely at how members have interacted with ROHR and the Vigil over the years bringing out the context of disillusionment in relation to Zimbabwe politics, and demobilisation to explain the organisation’s trajectory overtime.

¹²³ Toi-toi or toyi toyi is a form of Southern African dance that was first used in Zimbabwe during the Liberation Movement by the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and involves stomping of feet and chanting that include songs or slogans. The dance was also used in South Africa to intimidate the South African Police during the struggle against apartheid and is still employed by South Africans to express their grievances against government decisions and policies.

¹²⁴ Interview with Tichaona. London. 21/10/2017

5.4. Disillusionment and Demobilisation

In this section, I argue that part of the reason the Vigil and ROHR have struggled with membership relates to the nature of Zimbabwean diaspora politics and to the trajectory of Zimbabwean politics more broadly. I intend to shed light on how and why notwithstanding the activism I document, the Zimbabwean diaspora and Zimbabweans in general demobilised in comparison to the previous decade of 2000-2010. The founder of ROHR and also President of the Vigil and former MDC chair managed to stay in his position notwithstanding being implicated in many different scandals involving embezzlement of funds as described above. This stubbornness by individuals can be upheld by some members as epitomising negative aspects of Zimbabwean politics, where people who make terrible decisions are kept in power. This directly contrasts with values like accountability and transparency that some Zimbabwean migrants feel are evidenced in Western politics and the UK. One respondent explained ROHR's declining membership in relation to the lack of transparency related to finance:

“Yes, we work with ROHR but the financial side to be honest I do not know about it. It is just the coordinators who know about it. There is no transparency when it comes to finances in the organisation unfortunately and that does have an effect on why the numbers are going down as well.”¹²⁵

The point raised above in terms of numbers going down is an interesting one that needs further discussion as demobilisation of the Zimbabwean diaspora more broadly has been something happening over the years, particularly since 2009. A previously very politically engaged diaspora community has increasingly disengaged particularly from direct party-political roles, but much of the scholarship on the Zimbabwe diaspora relates to the earlier more engaged years (Pasura 2011; McGregor and Primorac 2010).

Over the years, the numbers of people attending the Vigil weekly has gone down. An analysis of the Vigil diaries¹²⁶ showed that there was a steady decline in the number

¹²⁵ Interview with Danai. London. 13/09/2017

¹²⁶ Available here: <http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/vigil-news/the-vigil-diary>

of people signing the weekly register from hundreds in the early to late 2000s to less than 50 at the time of research. Kuhlmann (2013) argues that for several people who were active in Zimbabwe diaspora politics, the prolonged struggle had led to disillusionment as there was no political progress in the UK and in Zimbabwe. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) also argues that length of stay in the hostland could affect decisions to take part in politics. This of course could be countered by the formation of ZCI as evidence of renewed interest in diaspora political mobilisation but the diasporans in that group are very few in number and belong to a different socio-economic class than those that concern us here and for the most part, Zimbabweans with legal status have increasingly become dormant members of the Zimbabwean diaspora.

The entrance of Zimbabwe's main opposition, the MDC parties into the Government of National Unity (GNU) with ZANU-PF in 2008 was attributed by some of the respondents as the reason why some felt betrayed by the party that they had previously supported and political developments at home influenced their decisions to withdraw. They argued that people had so much hope and confidence in the MDC parties bringing about change in the country, that would have allowed them to return, but they felt that MDC parties both did nothing for them and in fact, became a part of the problem as they were viewed as complicit.

“People got disappointed and tired. When the unity government came and it did nothing much in terms of changing things after, people decided that they had had enough of this and there was no need to carry on with that. It made people not want to continue knowing that things will never change and that only one party would carry on being the one.¹²⁷”

As the years went by, people also realised that there was nothing changing at home, the political and economic situation remained precarious, and ZANU-PF continued to dominate. Additionally, this period coincided with the quasi-regularisation in the UK discussed above through which many diasporans who had been irregular were allowed rights to remain; and those who had been granted asylum gained formal citizenship and could now bring their families to the UK. The drive for change in the homeland for most people had been based on the hope of going back to Zimbabwe

¹²⁷ Interview with Jacob. London. 02/09/2017

but once the opportunity to bring their families to the UK presented itself, many decided instead, to focus on that, especially as the economy in Zimbabwe continued to falter, and political trajectories seemed stagnant or were unclear. Some members went back to university to either regain their qualifications (some had fled Zimbabwe without their certificates) or trained in a different field (mostly nursing and social work). The arrival of families and the return of some diasporans to university meant that they were focussing on these aspects of their lives now. Families needed to be taken care of and for some, this brought with it, long hours and multiple work shifts, and some were doing this whilst going to school. This meant there was no more time for them to be going to the Vigil every weekend. Some stopped going altogether whilst others at first would come in maybe once a month and then eventually stopping¹²⁸. The ways in which diasporic citizenship practices interacted with transnational family dynamics are explored in further detail in chapter seven.

The trajectory of Zimbabwean diaspora politics can also be discussed in terms of disillusionment. Fragmentation within diaspora organisations, embezzlement scandals, removal of people from executive positions within the MDC UK branch and meddling by the main MDC party in Zimbabwe all led to more disgruntlement (Kuhlmann 2013). These shifting circumstances amongst the migrants' lives, in Zimbabwean diaspora and homeland politics affected ideas of return and participation in general. No specific response was given as to why demobilisation was happening but there were rather, a myriad of factors that contributed. Election rigging, unequal political playing fields *inter alia* were some of the phrases I was hearing from respondents. It almost sounded like some had lost hope in there ever being a positive political change in Zimbabwe.

The failure of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zimbabwe however, which ended with ZANU-PF winning the 2013 elections, seemed to be the main reason why most people decided to focus on other issues especially irregular migrants who had other problems in their lives and feared detention and deportation (for more on arrival of Zimbabwean in the UK and asylum research see Bloch 2005, 2008; Pasura 2006; Home Office, 2008, 2009, Madziva 2010). These fears were renewed when the coup

¹²⁸ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

in 2017 happened. After the interim government took over, Zimbabwe started attempts at reengaging with the UK. There were many reports in the media¹²⁹ that Zimbabwe was trying to broker a deal where they would accept deportees¹³⁰ back in return of an aid package from the UK. Such news made those in hiding to further retreat as there were no guarantees that they would be safe if they were returned to Zimbabwe leading them to become dormant members of the diaspora (Pasura, 2008). However, some members were still visible and continued to go to Vigil protests and were members of ROHR.

This section has profiled the broader disillusion, depoliticization and disengagement throughout the Zimbabwe diaspora in relation to how this affected attitudes towards, and the membership of, and contributions toward, the Vigil and ROHR. Below, I explore in further detail the work of ROHR on the ground in Zimbabwe. This too, has contributed to the sense of disillusion and disengagement on the part of many.

5.5. 'Restoring' human rights in Zimbabwe: ROHR's work in the homeland

This section analyses the various activities that ROHR has implemented in Zimbabwe, for the light they shed on diasporic engagement at home, and the contention over the organisation's activities that I have characterised as 'unruly politics.' By comparing the Vigil/ROHR with the transnational work being done by ZCI, I offer some suggestions as to how the legal status of ROHR's funders affects the organisation's turbulent internal politics. Diasporas can be leveraged for economic development in their homelands according to Chand (2016) and scholars like Khan (2005) contend democracy and good governance are important prerequisites of economic development. The work that ROHR is doing in Zimbabwe contributes towards development in the country by advocating for peacebuilding and respect of human rights. On the other hand, as I have also indicated, the organisation has been marred by allegations of corruption, exploitation, lack of internal accountability, and partisanship. To start off, I will explore ROHR International's Zimbabwe Chapter and the relationship it had with the UK Chapter then go on to look at the work they did in

¹²⁹ A report from February 2018: <https://www.news24.com/Africa/Zimbabwe/uk-to-deport-at-least-2-500-illegal-zimbabweans-report-20180216>

¹³⁰ Deportations to Zimbabwe had been halted as there were no safety guarantees for those returning when Robert Mugabe was still in power.

2018, the imbrication with politics, and the opinions of those who are based in the Zimbabwe office.

ROHR's Zimbabwe chapter as discussed previously, was the driver of initiatives and activities on the ground in Zimbabwe. It had been operational since 2007 when it was formed, initially being one organisation until 2011 when the Chelmsford Manor Conference took place and some members were removed from the organisation. When asked about the history, focus and split of the organisation, the Zimbabwe coordinator Gwinyai said:

“ROHR [...] to a large extent focus on educating people and informing the masses on what the other human rights are and not just the political rights and as time went by, I think as the organisation grew and received funding, at one point, I think they had a substantial cultural fund from the EU, issues on leadership, management, transparency were raised and. [...] I don't think the organisation was fully prepared to handle all those things and a lot of the splits that you now have, I think purely goes down to that. Some issues, minor, were blown out of proportion, some issues that were major were left unaddressed, so it then created room for that split, and I do not have tangible evidence for it, but I strongly believe as well, there were political forces to it given a whole variety of reasons. Human nature, non-leadership traits and things like that also came in as a result of these resources that were being poured into the organisation so if you are culminate all of this and put it in one pot, that is what split this wonderful organisation, a noble idea which was actually to be non-partisan ending up itself being partisan and you now get these factions. This also emanating from close political support of the opposition.¹³¹”

This quote introduces us to some key issues and internal problems that the organisation faced. Although Gwinyai was vague in talking about leadership traits and handling of funds, transparency and accountability, he did provide some evidence of embezzlement and poor leadership. The Zimbabwe Chapter of ROHR was not operational for a few years as there were logistical issues with finding new people and registering formally in Zimbabwe. It was only in 2013 that the organisation resumed operations on the ground.

¹³¹ Interview with Gwinyai. Harare. 15/04/2018

The Zimbabwe coordinator¹³² joined the organisation during this time having returned from the diaspora which was interesting because he was not active before he left Zimbabwe but interactions with other Zimbabweans in the ‘diaspora’ encouraged his activism on return. Åkesson and Baaz (2015) discuss how return migrants can contribute to development of their homelands by bringing in skills learnt abroad. As I mentioned earlier, the Zimbabwe chapter was registered in the homeland by members who had returned from the UK. This is evidence of a cycle of ideas, going around from the homeland, to the diaspora and back to the homeland (Boccagni et al 2016).

Having reopened, ROHR in Zimbabwe started recruiting and gaining members. It used the original structures from before the split in 2011 to recruit. Though present in all the other provinces, ROHR only had offices in Harare, which was the headquarters, but there were plans to open a second office in Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe. Their offices were manned by a Programmes Coordinator, a couple of Programmes Officers, Project Officers and administration personnel. ROHR Zimbabwe chapter also formed local chapters which had representatives from various communities with one at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ)¹³³. Mr Munhondo who had joined as a student, said he did so in 2015 and eventually became chairperson of the UZ Branch¹³⁴. It is not unusual for political and human rights initiatives to be launched at universities because of student political activism and particularly engagement with opposition politics in Zimbabwe as discussed by Mlambo (2008) and Zeilig (2008). One of their programs officers explained his reason for joining, arguing that the “members who joined was because there wasn’t an expressive environment that allowed them to talk so you find that by nature and by bias, a lot of those would be opposition supporters...”¹³⁵ This together with what Gwinyai mentioned above regarding support for opposition politics offered insights into the general membership of the organisation. Big cities being strongholds of the opposition in Zimbabwe, it thus follows that most members in cities were opposition supporters (Maroleng, 2004; Moore, 2014). Interestingly, and similar to the Vigil, ROHR, both in the UK and in Zimbabwe portrayed itself as a non-partisan group but Mr Munhondo’s views on the

¹³² Interview with Gwinyai. Harare. 15/04/2018

¹³³ Student activism is quite important in Zimbabwe as most of the people who end up as activists in the political and civic societies start off as student activists.

¹³⁴ Interview with Mr Munhondo. Harare. 02/03/2018

¹³⁵ Ibid

constraints of the “expressive environment” can help explain why opposition supporters would also support a human rights organisation. When asked for an exact number of members, Mr Munhondo mentioned that they “had a lot of structures around the country” but could not verify everyone because not every member could afford the membership fees¹³⁶. This vagueness sounded as if he was hiding the fact that the organisation was not as active as it claimed.

In terms of recruitment of office workers, ROHR also heavily relied on personal networks. After the split, they likely wanted loyal individuals. All the staff employed at the Harare office expressed that they joined because they had been referred by someone who was already working with ROHR or met and spoke to one of the founders from the UK. Mr Musasa who was the programmes coordinator in Harare said:

“[...] tried working with several organisations then I once met Mr Goronga the President and he talked to me and gave me an insight of what ROHR does and he was also impressed by my work outside ROHR and he thought maybe I could be important if I come to join then we negotiated my coming into ROHR.”¹³⁷

He was personally recruited by the founding president (based in the UK) of the organisation when they met in Zimbabwe whilst he was visiting. Again, the importance of personal networks and the issues of trust and accountability that come with it were brought to the fore.

Going back to the roots of ROHR, the organisation has been working with a broad vision “to create an active citizenship that is aware of what its political and economic rights are” according to their coordinator. Gwinyai also made an interesting and important link between the ROHR movement and activism in Zimbabwe in general arguing;

“[...] we come in the middle where you try and conscientise the society because a large part of it was inspired by the movement that was there for constitutional change so there was a lot of that drive and a lot of people just

¹³⁶ Interview with Mr Munhondo. Harare. 02/03/2018

¹³⁷ Interview with Mr Musasa. Harare. 05/02/2018

being aware of what their rights are over and above what their political rights are. So, when there was that movement abroad, that is where the idea of ROHR was birthed.¹³⁸”

Gwinyai argued that part of the reason why the organisation came into existence was inspired by the movement for constitutional change within the country and how that awareness drove people to want more from the government and to expect specific standards too (see Magaisa, 2011; Dzinesa, 2013, Ncube & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015 for more on the constitutional process).

This broad vision for working towards a more democratic and accountable political order has been carried out in different ways over time: initially ROHR had significant external funding, in comparison to their more recent heavy reliance on donations from the UK chapter. According to Gwinyai, they used to receive funding from the European Union among other donors, but the situation changed post-2008 when levels of interest from donors deteriorated after the unity government. Bratton (2016) concurs with this argument by citing that most of the donors focussed on governance initiatives during the GNU period. This also shows the gap that ROHR was filling on the ground in terms of adding to the civic sphere through the support of UK-based individuals (for more on African diaspora developmental contributions to the homeland see Ankomah et al. 2012; Amoamo 2015; Anopue 2015).

As Gwinyai mentioned above, ROHR used to host workshops to educate and conscientise the communities about human rights issues and in general, seeking to raise awareness of politics and other matters of concern, arguing that an educated society is better than a non-educated one. The organisation also sought to defend the human rights of citizens through use of strategies such as public demonstrations and connecting those who would have been arrested by the government with human rights lawyers. One of the key issues the organisation has worked on in the past was to push the government to release the voter's roll in 2013. In doing so, they joined forces with larger, and more prominent Zimbabwean civic organisations. Mr Magamba contended, “I believe that if it had not been the pressure from groups like ourselves, the

¹³⁸ Interview with Gwinyai. Harare. 15/04/2018

government wouldn't have even bothered.¹³⁹ Interestingly, Mr Magamba did not attribute the outcome to ROHR in particular but to the broader array of civic groups whom they cooperate with, though ROHR's advocates often claim and successes for themselves. Masunungure (2008) argues that the civil society is useful in keeping the government of Zimbabwe in check though they have frequently suffered persecution for doing so.

Other activities mentioned as successes of the organisation included pressure on the government to remove cash restrictions during the Zimbabwean dollar era (Chitiyo, Vines, and Vandome, 2016 shed more light on this). The national coordinator mentioned (again exaggerating ROHR's influence) that "we were the main sponsors on the bill that ended cash restrictions during the Zim dollar era. We sponsored, through ZLHR, to take up the case to the Supreme Court and once we did that, it sent the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) into panic mode and immediately after we had launched that case, the RBZ after like 4-7 days withdrew those limits.¹⁴⁰" Though other organisations played more important roles in pushing this bill, ROHR added its voice. The outcome was that the decision by RBZ was reversed. Additionally, ROHR worked closely with influential and prominent members of civil society in Zimbabwe, including the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) amongst others.

These, albeit exaggerated claims were nonetheless evidence of the contributions ROHR had made to the civic sphere within Zimbabwe. Much has been made possible through the support of those Zimbabweans living illegally and legally in the UK and who hope for a better homeland in case they return. This is also an extension of acts of citizenship transnationally as through this proxy, Zimbabweans in the UK are trying to claim rights on behalf of others as well as to secure their own families' futures. Nonetheless, for these initiatives to go forward, there has to be agreement between the UK and Zimbabwe chapters on what should be done and the relationship that the organisation has with the Vigil and its sister organisation is crucial for funds and thus also needs further interrogation.

¹³⁹ Interview with Mr Magamba. Harare. 11/05/2018

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Gwinyai. Harare. 15/04/2018

5.6. ROHR's UK and Zimbabwe Chapters, Congruity or Disparity?

It could be argued that the relationship between the Zimbabwe and UK chapters of ROHR are strong, mutually beneficial and very deeply connected through funding from UK based members, unlike like ZCI and the Forum which was more a partnership of convenience. This section aims to explore the extent to which UK- and Zimbabwe-based arms of ROHR have convergent or divergent aims, and how collaborations and tensions affected the organisation's *modus operandi*. I argue that this relationship shows evidence of a disconnect that has opened up over time between the diaspora and homeland, which is reflected in some of the internal tensions within ROHR, as well as between ROHR and the Vigil.

The argument I heard being used a lot was; because most of the members of ROHR UK and the Vigil had been in Zimbabwe before moving to Britain, and because of the circumstances that led to them leaving the country, they sympathised with ROHR's efforts despite the difficulties and constraints. Though this may seem to contradict some of the stories of individuals in the UK who became activists out of self-interest, the funding of ROHR could be upheld as a counterargument. Indeed, the Zimbabwe office heavily relied on donations from the UK particularly from Vigil members. The issue of funds meant that, according to ROHR's Harare office, the UK chapter could pull the strings on what programmes they wanted to focus on as they provided the funding. The programmes coordinator in Harare argued;

“ROHR UK have some things that they want to see here on the ground and since they are the funders, they call the shots on what they want the money to be used for but we have our own programs that we actually set and would want to follow as the Zimbabwe office. We have to notify them and say this is what we have and this is what we want and after we notify them they will just let us do whatever we want to do.”¹⁴¹

This shows how difficult it can be for the Harare office to run programs they would find useful in communities they have direct contact with, unless these coincide with those favoured by the diaspora.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Mr Musasa. Harare. 05/02/2018

To a certain extent, there was a disjuncture between what the UK chapter claimed it was doing, and what the Zimbabwean chapter was doing in practice. One of the local members, Tanaka argued that occasionally the UK chapter would ask them to go and demonstrate against something without taking into account what the process entailed, from getting clearance from the police and then mobilising people to show up “using their own money¹⁴².” This also raised another important issue of paid demonstrators to give an impression of large support and numbers. There were a lot of strong opinions amongst the membership on the idea of diasporans asking people to go for a demonstration and then not at least giving them money for transport and food, and also failing to appreciate the risk. Tanaka argued;

“Someone who is not on the ground has a different understanding of what is happening. They think things are easy for example if planning a demo, for them is as straightforward, you just go and do it. For someone who has been staying in the UK for maybe 10 years, the playing field there is very different and the situation here is very difficult so to explain to someone that we can’t just do a demo, he can just open the constitution of the country and quote some things in there and say you should therefore follow these.¹⁴³”

We can see here the issue of loss of touch with the homeland coming into the fore. There were members of the Zimbabwe chapter who argued sometimes it was hard for those who had not been in the country for a long period to make sense of issues in the homeland; particularly they can fail to appreciate risk. Laws like Public Order Security Act (POSA)¹⁴⁴ and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA)¹⁴⁵ were still present in Zimbabwe and restricted human rights activism notwithstanding a progressive constitution, which as noted previously, was undermined because it had not been streamlined with legislation.

¹⁴² Interview with Tanaka. Harare. 18/05/2018

¹⁴³ *ibid*

¹⁴⁴ The Public Order and Security Act was first introduced by Parliament (ZANU-PF dominated) in 2002 and thereafter amended in 2007. It gives untold power and authority to the police and has been used in many different occasions to crush demonstrations. The act is also regarded as one of the ways in which former President Robert Mugabe consolidated his power.

¹⁴⁵ Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act was also introduced during the same parliamentary cycle as POSA (2002). The act introduced a media and information commission in which all mass media should register with. It also says mass media ownership and shareholding should only be local among other things but in general, allows the state to access personal data of citizens.

Additionally, donor dependency can be argued to contribute to the tensions. Some Zimbabweans regard NGOs as existing to give handouts and not ask for anything in return (de Renzio and Hanlon (2009) use the Mozambique case to show how donor dependence is perpetuated by both recipient state and donor country/organisation). The fact that ROHR was an NGO meant that Zimbabwean publics could also expect a material benefit for participating in the programs. It can be problematic for an NGO to ask for people to do anything without giving them money or goods in return, as some Zimbabweans will not want to be a part of such initiatives. This problem has become generalised within Zimbabwean society more broadly and is not just a feature of the diaspora-funded organisations. Indeed, it has been fostered by donors. It has also become a feature of political parties' practice as it has become an element of election campaigns that political parties come into a community bringing with them t-shirts, food in the form of a variety of goods¹⁴⁶ (see Kuhne, 2010; Chigora and Chilunjika, 2016; Anti-Corruption Trust, 2018 for more on vote-buying and election fraud). Also, this has contributed to a more general societal culture of expecting material goods from NGOs and had become part of the environment in which ROHR operated at the time of research.

Moreover, the funding ROHR received from the UK was not enough¹⁴⁷ and had to be split between paying the rent, upkeep of the office¹⁴⁸ and the programs. The low socio-economic earning capacity of members who funded, and their legal status presented a problem for the organisation regarding administering activities, for example keeping registers of members and donations. The Zimbabwe chapter also found it difficult to mobilise its membership for funds arguing that the repressive rule in the country was far from propitious. When I spoke to Courage¹⁴⁹ from the Vigil, he mentioned that they had tried in the past to push the Zimbabwe office to ask its Zimbabwe-based members to contribute just a dollar a month so that they could add those funds to the pool, but it had proven difficult for them to do that. This was also confirmed in Zimbabwe by the local staff as they argued most of their members within the homeland lived below a

¹⁴⁶ ZANU-PF alone is known to do this during the campaign period where they bring maize, cooking oil, beans and the like for supporters who attend the rally to take home.

¹⁴⁷ Actual figures were not shared with me.

¹⁴⁸ The UK chapter supports the Zimbabwean one in every way including payment of rent and amenities for the office.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

dollar a day and asking them for money would not be fair. This negatively impacted ROHR's programs, particularly the flagship project at the time of research, which was the Zimbabwe Peace Actors Platform (ZimPAP).

ZimPAP was an ambitious project that sought to create a civilian army (women and youth led) of peace actors and protectors within communities who would work hand in hand with the police. The project was created in anticipation of the 2018 general elections. The idea was mooted by members in the UK chapter initially but took a while to get mobilised and be implemented in Zimbabwe. The ambitious target of the project was to recruit around 100 000 civilian peacekeepers at ward level and at least 100 community-based organisations (CBOs) by the end of 2018¹⁵⁰. This immediately begins to highlight overambitious the project was:

“[...] launched since last year February and [...] idea was there needs to be a civilian army of peace actors, peace protectors and they need to create a platform in which their opinions can be heard, what they are saying, can be recorded. Once this army was created, they would then in turn, form a platform where they would work with the police. At the time when we created it, it was very far-fetched because it is fair enough to say our relationship with the police as a civil society in general is not great. Things have changed however and there is now legal frameworks to create such platforms where this sort of thinking can actually take place. [...] Civilian army to teach peace, we were mainly looking at rural communities. To report incidences of violence and we were assuming that there were going to be high levels of violence given our past and the idea was as long as these peace actors are there [...] It would then act as platform where more can be trained but still build on the wider goal of having a more enlightened citizenship. The great restraint to all of that has been financial restraint. It is something that we hope to build on for the next election because right now it might be a little too late to do all of that.”¹⁵¹

From the quote above, it is difficult to not be sceptical. The idea of a civilian army working together with the police is far-fetched as the police in Zimbabwe have been known to be a part of the repressive machinery of the government. Coordinating such a project could prove problematic due to the sheer size, moreover it would put people at risk. The very idea shows the extent to which the militarism of ruling party politics has also infused the imagination of civic and human rights organisations.

¹⁵⁰ See here for more: <https://263chat.com/civic-groups-takes-community-peace-initiative-domboshava/>

¹⁵¹ Interview with Gwinyai. Harare. 15/04/2018

Notwithstanding these concerns, the project was launched, with the help of the UK chapter and other supporting organisations¹⁵².

However, during the time of my fieldwork in Harare, ZimPAP only managed to host one event in Harare's satellite town of Chitungwiza, citing financial difficulties as the reason for why other activities had been postponed. Moreover, ROHR did not actually conduct its more ambitious and risky goals of creating a civilian army. The organisation's partners were small CBOs with very small budgets and could not offer any significant financial assistance to ROHR. Comparing this to the Forum which was ZCI's partner on the Ziso platform, there are definitely significant differences as ZCI and the Forum managed to share costs of the project and planned activities were actually realised. With ZimPAP, most funding came from the UK chapter of ROHR, and activities never developed beyond 'launch' events. While the coordinator complained that donors were a problem because they did not respond to local communities' need, in this instance, the project's overambitious, risky and politicised nature may also have contributed, alongside ROHR's known problems of accountability.

The lack of funding created a problem in terms of effectiveness and sustainability. The project was conceived with the idea that there was going to be a lot of political violence in the run up to the 2018 election. Yet, according to Bratton (2016), one of the political gains of the power-sharing deal by ZANU-PF and the MDC in 2008 was a reduction in political violence in the country (incidents of rights violations fell from 1320 nationwide in December 2008 to 319 in December 2011 (ZPP, 2012). ZimPAP also duplicated other bigger and better-established organisation's activities. Its human rights monitoring aims overlapped with ZCI/Ziso/Forum for example. The lack of coordination or unity amongst Zimbabweans in the diaspora (Pasura, 2008, 2014) means that there were two different diaspora-based initiatives focussing on one issue, human rights. Had they been united and coordinated their efforts, impact and contributions might have expanded. However, it is also important to not lose sight of

¹⁵² Photos from the Mashonaland East Province ZimPAP Launch on the 17 of April 2017 are available on the Zimbabwe Vigil Flickr albums here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwewigil/albums/72157679462919964>

the fact that ROHR had been rocked by an embezzlement scandal, so it is possible that no one really wanted to partner with them out of fear of losing their funds. ROHR's distinctive funding base among irregular migrants provided particular opportunities for the leadership to act unaccountably as many members were reluctant to speak out or withdraw given their interests in assisting their cases. This history and public knowledge of accusations of corruption have limited its capacity.

The attempt to orchestrate a civilian army did not take into account the risks and lack of political space. Onslow, (2011), Masunungure (2014) and Moyo (2014) *inter alia*, argue that the civil society continued to be persecuted by state agents alongside opposition parties in Zimbabwe, including in the period of this research (Avenue et al 2017, 2018; de Bourbon 2003). ROHR's leadership in Zimbabwe has faced arrests on many different occasions. Respondents such as Sekai shared stories of arrests and detention especially the programmes coordinator based in Harare who, in most cases would be on the forefront of a demonstration or whatever activity they were doing.

“[...] on many occasions, Mr Musasa our Program Coordinator is the one who has been arrested several times and we had to go to the police on several occasions so we could pay the bail to get him out and he once went a night in the cells and when we want to do our demonstrations, there is a provision in the constitutions that we can do that but notify the police first but whenever we try and do those procedures they always want to make it very difficult for you to obtain that go ahead to do the demo. When you decide to go ahead with the demonstration without their approval, they will plant people amongst you and those people will destroy or stone buildings so that they can say this organisation is propagating violence.¹⁵³”

This shows how difficult it was for the organisation to go ahead with political and rights initiatives when their leader is constantly getting arrested. Additionally, what Sekai mentioned here shows the nature of politics and activism within Zimbabwe where people are planted within your community to be violent and cause trouble so that you can be blamed, and either be arrested or banned from such activities as demonstrations. This has long been a problem within social movements and other activist programs where supposed government plants come in and incite violence to give the state the right to either violently crush a demonstration or to not allow you to

¹⁵³ Interview with Sekai. Harare. 05/03/2018

get clearance. A report by Peace Direct (2017) who met with a group of 21 different peacebuilding organisations in Zimbabwe and Act Alliance (2011) both highlight the shrinking political space for CSOs in Zimbabwe, showing how these allegations were well founded, and stressing their negative impact on peacebuilding initiatives in Zimbabwe.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the activities of irregular migrants in the UK that take the form not only of ‘acts of citizenship’ relating to the legalisation of their status in the UK but drew attention to transnational mobilisations that can illustrate a notion of diasporic citizenship. Members of the Vigil discussed here joined the organisation for various reasons including creating an activist profile for themselves to challenge their notions of deportability and to increase their chances of staying in the UK. Much as some of the Vigil members joined the organisation for the sole purpose of making the abuses of the Zimbabwean government known, there are some members who mainly joined to further their own cases. This activism for rights in the hostland is a classic case of what Isin (2008) refers to as acts of citizenship. The insecure status of the Vigil members shaped the types of funding-raising activity, while also undermining the organisation’s capacity to use the sorts of expensive social occasions that are typical of other diaspora organisations. The irregular status of members also provided the leadership with opportunities to continue to leverage funds from those who are insecure despite recurrent accusations of exploitation and corruption, factionalism and splits. The ways in which the insecurity of the Vigil membership affected the organisation offered an interesting comparison to the professional group discussed in the previous chapter. The lack of transparency and accountability was one of the reasons for the Vigil’s declining numbers, combined with a trajectory towards regularisation in the UK and the broader decline in political activism across the Zimbabwean diaspora, when compared to the previous decade, reflecting disillusion with Zimbabwe politics and the fragmentation of the MDC political opposition parties.

But this chapter has also examined the Vigil’s activism within the Zimbabwe homeland, where the Vigil played out members’ sense of diasporic citizenship through partnership with a proxy organisation – ROHR [Zimbabwe] International. By virtue of

being in diaspora, the irregular funders of ROHR are out of the reach of the homeland state security agents meaning that they can easily criticize their homeland government without worrying much about their own personal safety, while at the same gaining a sense of on-going civic activist engagement at home. Irregular migrants were thus involved in political activism that faced two ways: they lobbied the UK government for rights in situ and attention to human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, whilst at the same time attempting to influence the civic sphere in the homeland directly through ROHR. I used the notion of unruly politics to capture the organisation's internal tensions and contentious politics, the self-interest of the leadership that has produced accusations of unaccountability and a turbulent political trajectory. However, the outcome of this 'unruliness', has nonetheless been political action that contributes to efforts to further civic rights in both host and homeland.

The chapter tried to bring out differences between the two diaspora-based associations considered in this and the previous chapter in terms of how they operate both in the UK and in Zimbabwe. I made comparisons throughout the chapter that showed how the professionals were able to do some initiatives that the Vigil could not due to members' insecure status, *inter alia* – fund-raising through expensive events, support for technical innovations in human rights monitoring, or forming partnerships with reputable, donor funded and well established civics in Zimbabwe. This chapter thus showed how migrants' insecurity shaped the way in which Vigil members interacted with their own organisation's leadership as well as how they interacted with the homeland via the sister organisation ROHR. Members themselves felt that they could be taken advantage of by leaders who knew they needed to maintain an activist profile and could not mount challenges due to their own precarity. The insecure status of the membership contributed to the organisation's lack of internal accountability and history of corruption, accusations and splits, though the spread of corruption within NGOs working inside Zimbabwe has also been a notable feature of the civic sphere more broadly over the last decade.

Chapter 6: “Charity begins at home:” Impacts of religious transnationalism on diaspora citizenship, charity and the homeland

6.1. Introduction

Prior studies of the Zimbabwean diaspora have already profiled a highly politicised and religious diaspora. This chapter turns to religion amongst Zimbabwean migrants in the UK to examine how it shapes transnational engagements with the homeland, and the interconnections with civic action in the homeland through charitable giving. I follow Mensah’s (2008: 312) definition of religious transnationalism as “a process by which immigrants forge and sustain their religious practices and identities across borders.” I contend that religious transnationalism not only helps migrants integrate within Britain, which other studies have argued, but I also argue that it encourages them to engage with and impact the homeland socially in important ways, particularly via charity. Faith and religious networks give migrants an opportunity to feel and act out their sense of on-going connections to the homeland, through charitable giving, which I argue enhances their diasporic citizenship.

The literature tends to discuss religious transnationalism as a way to integrate in the hostland but the impacts it has on charitable giving in the homeland as discussed here have rarely been fore-fronted, because the lens of many studies has primarily focussed on countries of settlement (cf Pasura 2008, 2012, 2016; Spickard and Adogame 2010; Adogame 2010; Gelbard 2013; Dwyer, Tse, and Ley 2013). Counted (2019) argues that we need more studies that show the multidimensionality of religion amongst African diasporas. He was referring to the different dimensions of African religion including “religion as a form of support, its transnational dynamics, the fact that religion is a platform of civic engagement and activism” Counted (2019: 67). This chapter takes forward these ideas, arguing that religious ideas and networks infuse and underpin a transnational sense of diasporic belonging amongst Zimbabwean migrants: they underpin not only in-situ support within hostlands but also a plethora of engagements in the homelands, involving significant flows of material resources into church and community development projects and humanitarian relief. The ways in which diasporans give through church networks reinforces diasporic citizenship as it emphasises a sense of Zimbabwean national belonging. This is because faith can

encourage diasporans to give to areas of the homeland they are not originally from for example.

I ask the following overarching question in this chapter: how is diaspora citizenship affected by and interconnected with faith and religious engagement? I draw specifically in this chapter from 20 interviews with key informants, half of which were conducted in the UK and the other half in Zimbabwe. The UK leg of the fieldwork was conducted primarily at the London Chaplaincy which is the seat of the Zimbabwean Catholic Community in England and Wales (ZCCEW). In Zimbabwe, I followed the networks I had identified in the UK, interviewing Catholic respondents mainly concentrated in and around the capital city of Harare. I also draw from conversations with congregants who came for the chiShona and isiNdebele¹⁵⁴ Mass in Britain.

The chapter is divided into four sections with the first section introducing Zimbabwean Catholicism in the UK and the creation of the first chaplaincy for Zimbabweans in London. I reinforce arguments made by Pasura (2012, 2014, 2016) here in arguing that diaspora congregations serve as a form of insurance against social exclusion and other eventualities in the hostland. The section also details the interactions between integration and transnationalism as diaspora members straddle the hostland and the homeland (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013). I analyse gender disparities and imbalances within the chaplaincy which is important as migrants arrive in the hostland with preformed and conservative notions of gender from the homeland that can be perpetuated in the hostland. These gender disparities are also present in drives for charitable giving as the third section will show. In addition, I show how the London Zimbabwean Catholic chaplaincy is linked to the mother church in Zimbabwe in a manner that accentuates a sense of diasporic belonging. In the second section, I contend that diasporic citizenship and faith work hand in hand to encourage UK-based fellowship members to give back to the homeland church as they felt more privileged than Zimbabwean congregations. The section argues that charitable giving by Zimbabwean diaspora members has grown overtime as Zimbabwean Catholic fellowships in the UK expanded. I also stress the importance of the scale of giving by church groups compared to the civic networks in the previous chapters. In the third

¹⁵⁴ chiShona and isiNdebele are the main (not the only) local languages spoken in Zimbabwe.

section I argue that motivations to support these projects exemplified a strong national identity rather than privileging specific hometowns or regions. At the same time, I stress the importance of personal networks within diaspora transnational engagements, arguing this is also a feature of religious networks. Finally, the fourth section analyses the diversity and scope of the charitable projects undertaken, which were motivated by a desire to maintain a stake in the homeland.

6.2. A brief history of Zimbabwean Catholicism in the UK

I begin this examination of religion within the Zimbabwean diaspora by examining the creation of the London Catholic chaplaincy for Zimbabweans and how it then spread to encourage other regional centres. I dwell on reasons for choosing this location which include, my personal connection to it as a Zimbabwean Catholic based in London. I contend that formation of the Zimbabwe Catholic Community in England and Wales (hereafter ZCCEW) was so that Zimbabweans can have a place to commiserate over the hostility of the hostland following Pasura (2012). I reinforce arguments by Pasura (2012, 2014) that these forms of single nationality congregations build a home away from home and can give members a greater sense of belonging and security, and also stress the importance of examining how this is gendered. Yet, it is also the case as Erdal and Oeppen (2013) have argued, that integration and transnationalism are a two-sided coin and can exist alongside each other. My emphasis is on exploring how religious transnationalism enhances a sense of diasporic citizenship through close connections between hostland religious communities and the homeland mother church.

To begin, I share a response given by one of my respondents, who was the acting chaplain for the London chaplaincy when it was formed who explained why religion is important for most Zimbabweans by arguing;

“Religion and spirituality are very important to a vast majority of them (Zimbabweans). It is undeniable from my experience. It is that big to such an extent that even the Church of England, the Anglican church has Zimbabwean ministers who cater to the Zimbabweans. It is the same for Methodist, ZAOGA, I’m not sure about the Salvation Army, the Apostolic Church is the same and we have a vast array of Pentecostal groupings. All those involve Zimbabwean people. Even any casual observation will

acknowledge that this Vigil that has been going on around the Zimbabwean embassy over the years, had prayer at the centre of it.¹⁵⁵

ZCCEW, also sometimes known as 'ZimCatholics' was birthed in the year 2001, within the context of a surge in arrivals and can demonstrate the importance of religion and spirituality for Zimbabwean migrants. Mrs Munyaka,¹⁵⁶ a member of the chaplaincy since its creation, explained how everyone expressed they needed a place where they felt like they belonged even though they were not at home. Okure (2001) argues that globalisation does not destroy cultures but relocates them and, in this case Zimbabwean Catholic migrants moved across borders, and cherish their culture, language and customs brought with them from home. New Zimbabwean migrant arrivals in the UK, assisted by a Zimbabwean priest who had been in the UK since 1998, formed the Zimbabwe Catholic Centre in London. He explained both the motivation for initially forming a Catholic association and highlighted problems of mutual suspicion amongst new arrivals, a significant proportion of whom were irregular migrants;

"I was privileged in being exposed to a lot of Zimbabweans. I did meet the odd individual here and there but in 2001 through discussions with a few friends, Zimbabwean lay members of the Catholic Church, we agreed to launch the Zimbabwean Catholic Community in England and Wales. It started off around September 2001 and the initial response was good and then membership declined. People were unsure about what was happening, some were concerned it might be a set up to trap them since they did not have legal documentation to stay in country."¹⁵⁷

It is immediately clear that issues of trust discussed by Pasura (2008) and in the previous chapter were a problem also amongst diaspora religious communities. They were explicable through the combination of divisive politics at home in Zimbabwe, combined with insecurities relating to legal status in the UK. The former chaplain led the centre for 8 years as an 'acting' chaplain. He had emigrated to the UK to study through the support of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC).

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Mr Mamombe. London. 18/11/2017

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Mrs Munyaka. London. 11/11/2017.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Mr Mamombe. London. 18/11/2017

ZCCEW had many centres spread across the UK at the time of research. Zimbabweans fellowships were, like the London chaplaincy, embedded within their local British parishes around the UK and prayed together with the local British communities when there was no specific Zimbabwean mass (see also Pasura, 2014). This, however, could change eventually as the chaplaincy had begun a fundraising effort to acquire its own church building in the UK. The former chaplain further explained that membership rose steeply around 2004-5 such that, people were ‘fighting for places to sit in the church¹⁵⁸’ with some having come to London from as far afield as Edinburgh, Newcastle and Leeds. There were demands for local services in their areas, so the chaplaincy began to spread by setting up regional fellowships. He stated that “we then started more as the community spread and grew.¹⁵⁹” ZCCEW had 12 centres at the time of research, namely in London, Birmingham, Peterborough, Liverpool, Nottingham, Slough, Bristol, Coventry, Northampton, Leicester, Manchester and Sheffield. It had grown big over the years and also had a website, zimukcatholics.org. It also released a monthly newsletter with details of activities in England and Wales which was distributed via email. Financial reports were also sent through this newsletter and showed that the London centre had grown so much that it had a surplus of £11 200 for the year of 2018, and an annual expenditure of £100 800 which was spent on activities of the chaplaincy, retreats and maintenance for the chaplains among other things¹⁶⁰.

For the purposes of my fieldwork, I spent time at the London Centre, and I chose it because it was the nucleus of the Zimbabwean Catholic Community in England and Wales during the time of my research. It was also the original and first chaplaincy for Zimbabweans in the UK. The centre was led by two priests, the chaplain and his assistant. It had a steering council called the Zimbabwean Catholic Chaplaincy Pastoral Council. Both priests were sent from Zimbabwe to minister to Zimbabwean Catholics within the UK and they worked with all the centres named above. According to Adogame (2004) mother churches in Africa have been consciously and strategically sending representatives to Europe to promote missionary expansion with some of the

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Mr Mamombe. London. 18/11/2017

¹⁵⁹ *ibid*

¹⁶⁰ Available in the December 2018 newsletter sent to members via email

day to day work being coordinated from the homeland. In contrast, the main reason for the Zimbabwean chaplaincy was to service Zimbabweans in the diaspora¹⁶¹.

The London Centre was the main location of this network initially before other Zimbabwean fellowships were created throughout the country and they celebrate mass in Shona and Ndebele once every month, usually the first Saturday of each month. Mass was followed by a lunch consisting of Zimbabwean cuisine which was an opportunity for congregants to mix and mingle. At face value, one might think that the purpose of this lunch was to quickly eat and be on your way with a full stomach but once you look closer you realise that there was a lot happening. There were various people seeing each other for the first time in weeks, it was an opportunity to speak the familiar Zimbabwean local languages which reminded and gave everyone a sense of home and belonging. Counted (2019: 68) contends that diaspora fellowships help deal with day to day life arguing “this network of support can be empowering for negotiating the quality of life in a host country and in adapting to a new culture, while also confronting issues of marginalization and sociocultural inequities that are collectively experienced on a day-to-day basis.”

Furthermore, in my own study and in Pasura’s work (2012, 2016), I found that most people were complaining about the difficulties of creating a social network of friends at church when one only attends English Mass at local Catholic parishes. More than half the participants I spoke to raised the same issue of how in the non-Zimbabwean regular services, people just came in, sit down quietly, “stand, kneel, sit, stand kneel sit, received the blessing and go on home without even saying hello to people.¹⁶²” The English Mass is shorter than the Shona/Ndebele one and most of the songs did not include the *ngoma*, (African drums) *hosho* (rattles) and dancing. There was a sense of ownership and agency that came with praying in one’s mother tongue that most respondents shared. These features of the services reflect the Africanisation of the Catholic Church, which was restructured in Zimbabwe post-independence through an;

“[...] emphasis on the ordinary and simple way of doing theology from below created a new sense of belonging to many who had been searching for

¹⁶¹ Interview with Mr Mamombe. London. 18/11/2017

¹⁶² Interview with Mr Chishamba. London. 21/10/2017

familiar ways of worshipping and being Church as Africans within the Catholic tradition. Thus, by reaffirming African cultures and identity, the Catholic Church participated in empowering the people to reclaim their lost heritage and restore their dignity.” Dube (2008: 2)

The Shona/Ndebele mass was strongly valued by numerous attendees: for some, it brought them closer to God whilst at the same time bringing them together with other Zimbabweans in the diaspora where they could commiserate about life and raising children in Britain. To put it in different terms, the congregation was about creating a sense of diasporic identity and belonging as well as keeping in touch with home including the homeland church which I will discuss further below.

Members of the church helped each other with issues pertaining to life in the UK *inter alia* bereavement. Within the London centre, members regularly supported each other if there was a wedding or a funeral. Mrs Moyo explained that “we work together, we help each other even if it’s a sad or joyous occasion, that is the whole point of having ‘family’ around you.¹⁶³” The way she used family in this quote is not necessarily to refer to her blood relations but the community they build within the church. This community aids the process of cohesion amongst Zimbabweans in the UK. Pasura (2012: 36) contends that such diasporic congregations offer “a sense of community solidarity, resources and spiritual comfort.” All of which can aide the process of integrating in the hostland. A quick perusal of the ZCCEW social media pages reflected an array of videos and photos of congregants celebrating weddings within the Church and other sad moments for example the untimely death of the former Chaplain in October 2017. It was evident that the community also supported even those who are in Zimbabwe during trying times as members of ZCCEW went back to Zimbabwe for the Monsignor’s funeral.

One of the most important aspects of the church fellowship’s role in social support for its UK members was in relation to gender issues that members face in the UK. A noteworthy observation I made during my fieldwork was gender disparities within the London Centre. The number of women congregants far outweighed the men, which might be a reflection of churches in general – both in the UK and in Zimbabwe – where

¹⁶³ Interview with Mrs Moyo. London. 25/11/2017

women predominate. This disparity in gender was reflected in the guilds at the chaplaincy - there were 6 different guilds for women to two for men at the time of research. Even when attending the service, as a male congregant, I sat in the section reserved for men and after some men moved to the choir section, there were few men left in the main part of the congregation. Mr Chishamba explained that there used to be fewer men than there were during my fieldwork, and the Centre only started getting men after making a push specifically to get men to attend church saying;

“Men only started coming when Father Munyongani and Mr Fashamu formed the Men’s Forum. I took over from Mr Fashamu as the chair of the forum. The Father wanted us to become a guild, so we joined and formed the guild (St Joseph). More men joined in 2010, 2011, 2012 and the numbers have been going up but there is not that much consistency compared to women. The women are the pinnacle, for the chaplaincy to survive, it is the women, there is no question about that.¹⁶⁴”

As Pasura (2012; 2016) has argued, the Men’s Forum was set up as a response to the perception of a ‘crisis in masculinity’ experienced by Zimbabwean men in the UK. Yet notwithstanding the efforts to bring men into the church, from the quote above, it was clear that it was women who kept the chaplaincy going. They were the majority of the congregation and because most of them are mothers, they forced their children to come to church meaning the number of children and youth at the chaplaincy was also higher than the men. This could explain why there were four different guilds for youth. Most of the administrative roles were taken on by women though during my fieldwork period, the secretary general of the parish was male and affectionately known as *Sekuru* (uncle) by the congregants. Mensah, Williams, and Aryee (2013) in their study of Ghanaian church congregations in Vancouver, Canada similarly found women to outnumber men. The disparities in the parish reminded me of my own background as a Catholic in Zimbabwe where at some point the parish priest asked all the women to bring their husbands, fathers, boyfriends to church because he claimed there was no bass in the singing¹⁶⁵. These gender disparities and female dominance of the church thus could be attributed to migrants’ imported ideas and practices from their homeland just as in Miraflorenos that Levitt (2003a) discusses in the *Transnational Villagers*,

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Mr Chishamba. London. 21/10/2017

¹⁶⁵ Known in chiShona as ‘*kubvumira*’ (response)

though the same gender disparities also mark UK and broader European church-going.

Within the context of this gendered unevenness, however, there has been considerable change over time that is important to capture. Another parishioner, Mrs Jegere had a different opinion about the gender disparities in the church arguing that individual chaplains had significant impact themselves on the gender mix of congregations, and that in the Zimbabwean chaplaincy, there had been considerable change over time with the arrival/departure of particular chaplains;

“It really depends on who is the chaplain, when it was Fr Mamombe, the founder of the chaplaincy [...] a lot of young men used to come to church, I think he had a very good way of interacting with them. Our current chaplain finds it I think more difficult to relate to men and young people [...] The church used to get filled up that young people used to go up to the choir area because there was no space downstairs [...] There has not been another influx of young people coming in. The number of men and women would vary based on the chaplain. When the Monsignor came, he carried forward the same vision, there were more men and he started the guild for men so there were more men in church. In the last 3 or 4 years it has been different.¹⁶⁶”

Mrs Jegere recalled how the previous chaplain made an effort to personally ensure the church was attractive for men and established platforms for them to interact amongst themselves. This helped some men overcome the feeling that there was no space for them. Another male congregant and active participant in the Men’s Forum reinforced the view: Mr Fashamu explained that after he had noticed there were not that many men coming to church, he took it upon himself to rally them with the blessing of the then chaplain Father Mamombe. He wrote a concept note of what men could expect to get from being members of a specific group which was eventually adopted into the Zimbabwe Catholic Mens’ Forum (in the UK), of which he was the inaugural chair. He argues that the Men’s Forum;

“[...] got quite a lot of interest from the men as we would get together every half year or so to discuss issues that were not specifically religious, yes we would have Bible teachings but we would talk about social issues like how to bring children up in the UK, households conflicts within the diaspora

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Mrs Jegere. London. 02/12/2017

context. People who are uprooted from their homes and they are now in a foreign environment where they are stereotyped or the power of the monetary perspective of working or papers vs no papers. It drew a lot of resonance with the men and it became a very popular body.¹⁶⁷

These gender disparities thus led to the emergence of this platform for men to share their concerns and get support from one another. The Men's Forum can be described as one of the coping mechanisms that the chaplaincy had for those who were struggling with settling in the UK and life in general. Pasura (2008) argues that men use religious and social spaces to affirm the more traditional roles found in the homeland and also as some form of resistance to the gender role reversals that occasionally happen in the diaspora as a result of different gender norms in the UK – particularly gender disparities in the ease of accessing employment in the UK's feminised job market, as well as divergent ideas about gender relations in the domestic/interpersonal contexts. The St Joseph Guild for men emerged in this way and went on to establish itself within England and Wales. According to Mr Fashamu¹⁶⁸, the guild had been growing and the number of men who are members is now more than it used to be – almost double - showing an increased interest amongst men.

These specific activities to support the problems men face in the diaspora were primarily about the British context and could be seen as easing integration, but at the same time, they also foster a sense of transnational connection. This was because the men's guilds were linked to partner guilds at home. Pasura (2016: 129) asserts that "guilds are transnational religious organisations as they involve the flow of religious ideas and practices, movement and communication across borders" and we can see their importance particularly in religious transnationalism. Levitt (2004) argues that the movement and circulation of migrants between parishes broadens the global religious system and transnational connections. These guilds meant that the members in the UK were transnationally connected with the homeland, where similar exist, whereas they are not a feature of local British Catholic parishes. They can be seen as an example of the balancing act that migrants play as they "live their lives locally but also connected within a transnational social field" (Erdal and Oeppen, 2016: 878): the

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Mr Fashamu. London. 13/11/2017

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*

church helps them integrate but it also keeps them in constant contact with the homeland transnationally as it receives directions from the mother church.

Indeed, there were multiple ways in which the church fostered transnational connections with Zimbabwe at the same time as fostering social support within the diaspora. Pasura (2014: 141) contends that if we focus mainly on the role of the church in integration, “we lose sight of the multifaceted transnational identities and engagements.” One way the congregation maintained transnational relationships with the homeland church and in so doing perpetuated specifically Zimbabwean diasporic identities and senses of citizenship, was through singing courses which took place at least once a year where they learnt new hymns coming from the homeland. According to an advertisement in the March 2019 newsletter, 2019’s Annual Music Course where members learn hymns with Zimbabwean language lyrics and tunes was held from the 24-26th of May in Leicester with £65 as the attendance fee. This reinforced the connections with the mother church in Zimbabwe. As diaspora congregants, they were required to submit any new hymns they composed to the ZCBC for approval first before they could teach them to their entire congregation, thus continuing to work under the guidance of the homeland church showing a direct transnational connection (cf Pasura, 2016).

I argue that religious transnationalism aided and reinforced the idea of diaspora citizenship – understood as both a sense of belonging and active practices of civic engagement in both host and homeland (see also Levitt 2004, though she does not explicitly use the idea of diasporic citizenship). This is because these Zimbabwean fellowships in the UK enabled diasporans to feel a sense of belonging and integration in the UK while at the same time reinforcing connections with home (Erdal and Oeppen 2013; Pasura 2014). That being said, the fact that these congregants were in the ‘diaspora’ meant that they were imaginatively and physically in a different space from the homeland congregations. They were in a ‘developed country’ where they occasionally experienced (or were imagined to experience) a better life, and their sense of being privileged in relation to those still at home could underpin their desire to help out in their home country. This can also be understood using Erdal and Oeppen’s (2013) exposition of the tension between transnationalism and integration, as diaspora members have to balance the resource demands of transnational ties with

those of negotiating membership in their new place residence in order to feel belonging and socio-cultural connection to both places. This two-way desire operates in relation to politics as we have seen in previous chapters, and is also cultivated within the Catholic Church, thanks to its transnationalism.

In this section, I outlined the historical context of Catholicism amongst Zimbabweans in Britain. I discussed why it felt better for them to pray in their vernacular instead of saying mass in English. I additionally argued how this gave Zimbabweans in the UK a sense of belonging and a place where they could escape the 'fast-life' of the diaspora and commiserate with others about how they were coping. It also eased the gendered problems that diasporans face, and I focussed specifically on the 'crisis of masculinity'. By cultivating mutual social support, this in itself arguably facilitated integration to a certain extent as it enabled people to keep going, and also to feel more at home in the UK, by being part of a Zimbabwean religious community. These arguments reinforce those made by Pasura (2012, 2016) and others that single nationality fellowships are ambiguous and have replicated within the church broader debates over multiculturalism. These church fellowships reinforce notions of discrete cultural identities despite performing important social support roles transnationally. The section has also begun to discuss transnational engagements between the diaspora and the homeland arguing that integration and transnationalism are two sides of the same coin (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013). I began to make the case that religious transnationalism reinforced the sense and practices of diasporic citizenship that are the main concern of this thesis. Although this section has largely reinforced prior scholarship's emphasis on the strong gendered responses both to life in the UK and in the constitution of diasporic religious associations, it is important for my argument here because engagements with the homeland through charitable giving, were also strongly gendered. Below, I now turn to transnational links with the homeland via charitable giving, and their effects, that prior studies have not investigated in depth because of their predominantly one country methodology.

6.3. Transnational engagements with the homeland: Reinforcing diasporic identity and citizenship by giving through the church

A particularly important aspect of transnational church links between the hostland and the homeland takes the form of charitable giving through church-based organisations and networks. Previous studies on Zimbabwean Catholics like Pasura (2012) did not focus on charitable giving and had a different methodology than the ‘follow the money’ multi-sited research used here. As a result, the transnational lens of religious giving has not been fore-fronted in discussion of Zimbabwean Catholic church fellowships in the UK. Levitt (2004: 2) argues that migrants “create new arenas that allow them to belong in two places by expanding already-global religious institutions.” I argue that diaspora citizenship together with faith work hand in hand to encourage diasporans to give back to the church and the homeland. The section details the creation of a charitable body with the London centre and analyses how it chose to distribute resources and the results of these initiatives within the Zimbabwean diaspora community and the homeland.

Below, I give a brief history of the Zimbabwe fellowship’s charity committee’s work, discussing the formation of a church charity committee to coordinate this in 2008. I analyse the impact of the work they were doing through donation mobilisation, arguing that it added to social cohesion amongst the church members and thus helped integration whilst also being part of diasporic identity creation and deepening transnational ties. Additionally, I bring out the scale of giving that this religious network was involved in, showing how much larger it was compared to the political networks discussed in the previous two chapters. I further argue that the enthusiasm with which the congregants gave reflects not only their faith, but also the strength of diasporic and national identity. I end by looking at the misconduct allegations that led to the end of the charity committee and how the incoming chaplain also played a part in disillusionment¹⁶⁹ amongst the congregants. This episode is important because it shows how such charitable giving was also shaped by personal networks and interests and the types of contention and fractiousness that have characteristic of transnational institutional relationships explored in other chapters.

Machoko (2013: 484) discussing Zimbabwean diaspora communities in Canada contends that they “have a religious and cultural leg in Zimbabwe and a financial and

¹⁶⁹ I discuss this more in the next section

material leg in Canada wobbling between Zimbabwe and Canada.” In my discussion of charitable giving, I show how religious organisations can channel diasporic finance through religious institutions, which have been able to provide a sense of continuity, stability and trustworthiness, despite some ‘wobbliness.’ I chose particularly to use the phrase “charity begins at home’ in the title of this chapter to reflect the importance within the diaspora of giving to people back in the homeland, in Zimbabwe. The title also reflects how the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK would rather first give back to the homeland than to the hostland. While this is an altruistic gesture or act of diasporic citizenship for the collective good, it is also self-interested in some ways (as in the case with most giving), as it can operate through personal networks, support family members and works to give diasporic communities an ongoing stake in the society at home. The sense of belonging that comes from being a part of this network of churchgoers puts them closer to the homeland.

Due to the transnational nature of the church network from the outset, the years before 2008 – which marked the formalisation of the chaplaincy’s charity committee – there were some micro-level and uncoordinated charitable projects in Zimbabwe fostered by individuals’ personal connections that were taking place amongst the parishioners. These projects contributed to the sense of belonging the members were getting from the church and also gave them agency and a sense of purpose. Based on my interviews with the different members of the London chaplaincy, there were many factors that led to them eventually creating an overarching charitable organisation in 2008. Mr Fashamu argued that the initiative grew from the fact that the centre was receiving a lot of support financially and in kind, for example from parishioners who were chartered accountants who would help the church balance its books and therefore creating a credible financial structure which was transparent. This credible financial structure he argued “communicated that exact message to the community, helped the community to be prayerful without bickering about petty issues like finance.¹⁷⁰” However, as we have seen from the previous chapters and in other research conducted amongst Zimbabwean migrants, bickering, allegations of corruption and mistrust will always be present (see Pasura 2008; Kuhlmann 2013; Bloch 2008) and indeed they were also not fully absent even in the church context.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Mr Fashamu. London. 13/11/2017

The decision to form the charity committee was underpinned by the logic that there would be more impact if everyone came together to send goods and money to Zimbabwe as a collective rather than individually. This was encouraged by the sense of belonging and togetherness that came with collective projects as Garbin (2018) argues. Accordingly, in 2008, the chaplaincy managed to get a 20-foot container which they filled with linen – duvets, pillows – and some books they had collected from local universities¹⁷¹. Most of the respondents I spoke to argued that in the UK, sometimes goods that are still in a great condition were thrown out or recycled simply because they have reached their use by date or because there is an updated version. Thus, they went around collecting these goods as they knew that they would be quite useful for those back in the homeland.

“We would ask parishioners to make contributions, to give us donations, gratis donations with no stipulated amounts. We would just tell them how much it would cost to send the container back to Zimbabwe (around £4000) and these are the things in there. We can give each of the 8 dioceses in Zimbabwe a little something from there. Some of the stuff would go to seminaries and we would ask for their support. Some we funded directly from the community account of the centre which we managed.”¹⁷²

The initiative was so popular amongst Zimbabwean Catholics and other Zimbabwean diasporans in the UK including those who were not a part of the church that it became a massive project: it was entirely voluntary. It was individual giving but giving directly to Zimbabwe, the homeland and via the collective organisation of the church. This in part was supported by the religious belief that ‘charity begins at home’ but also based on the general feeling of responsibility towards the homeland church by the Zimbabwean Catholics in the UK. And it also reflected trust in the church institutions to transfer the money responsibly.

The spontaneity and enthusiastic nature in which the chaplaincy members gave reflected the strength of diasporic and national identity and a huge desire to contribute to the homeland. Garbin (2018: 2) in his research amongst the Congolese Kimbanguist migrants in the UK and the US similarly notes that “respondents took a lot of pride in

¹⁷¹ Interview with Mr Fashamu. London. 13/11/2017

¹⁷² *ibid*

emphasising how their large collective donations reflected a spirit of solidarity and how their 'sacred remittances' contributed to the 'development' of both the church and the homeland." In 2011, the chaplaincy increased the size of the container from 20 feet to 40 feet because they were getting more and more goods to send back to Zimbabwe. This growing scale of giving culminated in the creation of a charity committee on the 1st of June 2013 which worked to try and galvanise the whole community in England and Wales and not just London. One of the things that the charity committee did after establishment was a questionnaire survey of the Catholic community in London to find out what people wanted and it turned out that in addition to sending containers to Zimbabwe, they also wanted to help support other initiatives like assisting orphans in need of school fees. Mr Fashamu explained that;

"We introduced that as the second primary pillar of the charity committee, sponsoring school children. We worked with dioceses in Zimbabwe, with the sisters, brothers there and they helped us identify children who were in need. We paired them with people here to sponsor those children. Parishioners were happy that as long as they were employed here in the UK, they would keep on looking after these children until they get even to university as part of their contributions to our communities back home.¹⁷³"

This supports the argument I made above that migrants saw their relative economic privilege as a reason to help out those back home. In this case, we see how religious engagement affects diaspora citizenship in the sense that, these migrants felt they are in a better position compared to Zimbabwe-based church members and they should therefore give: their church membership had arguably reinforced this sense of being in a privileged position. The motivation for giving was partly purely altruistic as they really want to help back home but personally, they felt a great sense of pride in this giving. None of the respondents I spoke to mentioned the desire to go back home as the reason why they were giving, in fact, they referenced the desire to see those they left behind also prosper and invoked the difficult and unstable economic situation in Zimbabwe. However, their desire to help those in the homeland was to a certain extent driven also by their need to maintain a stake in the homeland so as to maintain the connections they have with home. This is somewhat similar to what Garbin (2018) for

¹⁷³ Interview with Mr Fashamu. London. 13/11/2017

example found in his research where some of the gifts sent were to gain favours with the clergymen in the homeland.

The container initiative had some impacts on the community in the UK in terms of cohesion. Mr Mamombe, Mr Suma, Mr Fashamu and Mr Chishamba, all former chairpersons of the charity committee said that the drive for donations brought people together. It aimed to reverse or mitigate the sense of 'un-belonging in new spaces of settlement' that migrants suffer when they arrive in the hostland (Mensah, Williams, and Aryee 2013). The sense of collective worship and having a group of people they could pray with as if they were in Zimbabwe to some extent made the experience quite nostalgic for some members. Other congregants like Trust captured this sentiment, saying "when you work together as a community, you get this groove and sort of closeness comes with it because you are working towards the same goal¹⁷⁴," which can be used to summarise how the Zimbabwean diaspora Catholic community was brought together as a result of the container initiative. Similarly, Counted (2019) contends that African Christian diaspora religions are multidimensional and one role is to create a network of support for identity creation, which the container project clearly facilitated. At its height, the container would be shipped to Zimbabwe with goods that included duvets, bicycles, desks, books, computers, blankets, furniture and goods for the disabled, for example at Jairos Jiri Association (an NGO focussing on people living with disabilities). Of importance to note here is that during the period the chaplaincy was sending containers filled with goods to Zimbabwe, they included materials that were requested by different parishes, missions and centres in Zimbabwe and some goods that the diaspora congregants just wanted to donate.

Notwithstanding this trajectory of increased giving, from 2014, there began to be problems. Firstly, the 2014 container that was sent to Zimbabwe was delayed at customs and the storage company demanded large payments for it to be released. This led to discouragement amongst the congregants and conflicts among committee members and parishioners over funds not being fully accounted for and lack of full transparency. There was infighting amongst the congregants, and some members,

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Trust. London. 02/12/2017

particularly the youth, stopped fully participating¹⁷⁵. Mr Fashamu said that this was one of the reasons why he decided to leave the committee and pursue other ventures within the church community¹⁷⁶. It also coincided with the arrival of a new chaplain who was afraid of the chaplaincy having a bad name if criticism got out of hand amongst Zimbabweans in the UK. Some respondents like Vimbai argued that the new chaplain realised that the charity committee was raising more money than the entire chaplaincy was collecting from regular tithes¹⁷⁷. This led to the disbandment of the charity committee with the new chaplain insisting that all money and efforts be redirected via the Diocese of Westminster¹⁷⁸.

The disbandment of the charity committee did not mean that efforts by the parishioners stopped, but rather fuelled the formation of splinter initiatives – though it also led to the chaplaincy further formalising their efforts. A recent initiative was a Virgin Money giving page¹⁷⁹ set up on behalf of the chaplaincy, where they fundraised for different projects. The page listed the following as their main initiatives:

- “Raising funds for acquiring our own church in the UK (Long term project)
- To Assist less privileged (needy) members of our UK ZimCatholic community.
- Priestly and Religious formations i.e. fund for Priests and Sisters' training and welfare.
- Zimbabwean Dioceses Projects support. To support Rural/Remote parishes e.g. with Boreholes and general welfare.
- Fees for disadvantaged bright children in the church, focussing on remote areas in Zimbabwe.¹⁸⁰”

It is clear from this listing that charitable giving or at least fundraising was still ongoing at the chaplaincy, and seemingly growing in scale. The chaplaincy was putting effort to help struggling members of the UK community as shown in the second bullet point, easing the shortcomings of life in the diaspora, but was also paying fees for

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Shelly. London. 16/10/2017

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Mr Fashamu. London. 13/11/2017

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Vimbai. London. 14/10/2017

¹⁷⁸ Evidence of the new charity website set up for the London Chaplaincy:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1014316>

¹⁷⁹ Accessible here: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1014316>

¹⁸⁰ Accessible here: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1014316>

disadvantaged children within the church at home. The page however shows that the efforts were now being coordinated via the Diocese of Westminster as it is named Westminster Roman Catholic Church Diocese Trust (WRCDT) Zimbabwe Chaplaincy. The idea was to ensure that the money that was given towards this charity is earmarked specifically for Zimbabwe, rather than being dispersed more broadly either within the UK (to non-Zimbabweans) or internationally.

This section has given a brief history of the collective efforts of the chaplaincy to mobilise donations. I have begun to show the significant scale of these efforts and the funds raised (which becomes clearer below when I discuss impacts in Zimbabwe). These efforts to fill the containers of goods to be donated to Zimbabwe strengthened national identity and sense of diasporic citizenship amongst congregants. The section has also nonetheless demonstrated the 'wobbliness' of the organisation, given the new chaplain's disbandment of the charity committee, causing disillusionment amongst congregants. This also creates a link to the theme of the next section, on break-away groups.

6.4. Of breakaway groups and personal networks

In this section, I give further evidence of the strength of diasporic and national identity created by congregants and argue that despite the charity committee being disbanded, members of the chaplaincy still felt a need to help out communities in the homeland directly. This resulted in giving through a variety of splinter groups. The strength of the desire to assist at home and give to those less fortunate than themselves in the homeland and hostland continued to be a means of expression of diasporic citizenship. The gendering of these charitable groups reflected the broader gender dynamics of the church, discussed above, in that they were dominated by women, while also providing notable instances of women's leadership. These groups showed members' sense of primary obligation to Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans, and their lack of desire to give to others in the UK or to other global projects that the Catholic Church was supporting. I argue that they were trying to find another way to maintain a stake in the homeland considering the charity committee through which they had access to the homeland was disbanded, and the scale of giving continued to increase.

Most of my respondents argued that once their financial contributions were redirected via Westminster, there was no guarantee that they would be received by the specific Zimbabwean communities they wanted to target and could be redirected anywhere in the world. Moreover, the groups I spoke to all claimed to be doing “things quietly on the side¹⁸¹” and not necessarily through the official channels at church, evidence of some disillusionment amongst the parishioners together with a need and desire to maintain a stake in the homeland. One respondent said that “the Father is not really aware of what we are doing, and we want to keep it that way¹⁸²” showing ambivalence towards the new directive instituted by the chaplain. They formed networks of individuals who knew each other through church and gave to specific individuals and projects in the homeland that they knew personally. Boyd (1989) discusses the importance of personal and family networks in diaspora transnationalism and how that affects engagement with the homeland. One such group I interacted with that can exemplify the importance of such personal connections, was the “Friends with no boundaries” WhatsApp-based group/forum.

The Friends with no boundaries group was coordinated by Mrs Moyo, a church member, who explained that anyone who was a member of the group was free to message the group with requests. She explained:

“[...] whenever I hear of a need, I tend to form a WhatsApp forum/group with people from the area where the need is and I get a hold of someone who comes from the mission station or area that we are focussing on and they give us names of people they know from home, their numbers and together we form a group of people here in the diaspora and those at home, I spell out what the need is, what I have heard and we come out very open, and we say if you come on this forum, we will ask you to contribute, if you contribute we are going to ask you to tell the whole group how much you have contributed for the sake of transparency¹⁸³.”

This quote clearly states how the group operated: after the contact had been made with representatives in Zimbabwe, the members of the group based in the UK put together what was required, each declaring in the group how much they were giving

¹⁸¹ Interview with Mrs Moyo. London. 25/11/2017

¹⁸² *ibid*

¹⁸³ *ibid*

and then it was sent to Zimbabwe. Mrs Moyo would then get another contact in Zimbabwe to exchange the money into whatever currency was being used at that moment before contacting the person in charge of the project they were trying to assist. This can illustrate several features of giving through church networks. Firstly, it provides another example of how religious transnationalism facilitates migrants' engagement with the homeland via religious intermediaries at home. Secondly, this demonstrates Adogame (2013)'s point that African Christian communities in the diaspora are constantly and consciously appropriating new media technologies to help with their connection with the homeland (see also Machoko 2013). Third, it reveals personal, familial and church networks as central, as they are underpinned by trust: Mrs Moyo's usual 'go-to' contact in the homeland was actually her sister who used to live and work in the UK and had also been a member of the chaplaincy but returned to Zimbabwe after retiring. There is trust when dealing with such individuals.

When Mrs Moyo was explaining how they sent the funds to 'her sister,' she said it in a way that made me assume she meant sister as in 'my sister from another mother' like most other Africans say culturally. She did not specify that this was a blood relation of hers (which would have prompted further interrogation from me). This seems to support the argument that elite networks founded in personal relationships can skip processes of verification and add a layer of trust as they may involve personal networks (Nugent and Shore 2003). Another contact for this breakaway group, Davidzo, based at Makumbi mission, about 30 KM outside Harare was also Mrs Moyo's sibling, a younger sister who had been based in the UK, and a chaplaincy member at some point, before returning to Zimbabwe to care for their sick mother. Fechter (2019) terms these individuals who act as intermediaries for transnational giving 'aid brokers' and goes on to ask questions about what they gain out of it, which is a very important question. In this instance, Davidzo and Mai Makura who were the brokers both answered by saying they 'gain nothing except feeling good about oneself'¹⁸⁴.

As I was talking to Mrs Moyo about their initiative, I also noticed that she kept referring to everyone who's in the group as "she" and "her" indicating that these were her close

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Mai Makura, Harare. 28/02/2018

friends and contacts within the UK, as well as family in Zimbabwe. In addition to the fact that all the donors were female, it was notable that the group's contacts in Zimbabwe were also women. Mrs Moyo argued that it was straightforward to include female friends from church as they trusted each other:

"It is easy to add people onto the platform because I either usually have their numbers or we know each other at church [...] we also all add each other as we are all friends.¹⁸⁵"

Mrs Moyo did not mention specifically that there were any men involved in this initiative. As argued above, it is clear that men did have their own Forum, which was institutionalised at the church, but it suggests that the breakaway groups specifically oriented to charitable giving to Zimbabwe were a brainchild of the women who also operated them. This mirrored the way 'after-church' activities can be gendered in the homeland whereby women and men usually meet separately either as guilds or as friends to discuss other matters that may or may not be religious.

Notwithstanding the fact that they were just one breakaway group, the 'Friends with no Boundaries' group managed to do tremendous work on the ground embarking on a number of projects that I will briefly discuss. They helped refurbish the Sacrist at Makumbi Mission, put in floor tiles in the main church and also bought trunks for the priests to store their robes and other belongings when leading services in local smaller centres away from the main mission¹⁸⁶. Also, at Makumbi, they installed solar geysers and water tanks for the nun's convent as there was a water shortage. Additionally, they bought 76 pairs of school shoes for the 76 children resident at the mission's orphanage and helped them pay their school fees too. Mai Makura recalled how pledges were made following her request to the Friends group via WhatsApp:

"I contacted the (WhatsApp) group and told them that Sister Mary had 76 orphans, they need school fees, shoes, uniform, books etc so what we did was that we let the people in the group know that school shoes are \$15 a pair so people were pledging the money until we had 76 pairs. Then we said uniform and people pledged.¹⁸⁷"

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Mrs Moyo. London. 25/11/2017

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Mai Makura. Harare. 28/02/2018

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*

It worked exactly the way Mrs Moyo had described it and, in this case, we have an example of a request coming from the homeland and then those in the diaspora responding. Social media platforms (in this case WhatsApp) had provided powerful feedback: I eventually found out that after all the shoes and uniforms were acquired, photos and videos were sent into the group with the children wearing them. Social media gives strong visual feedback, augmenting a sense of accomplishment for givers which might make them inclined to give again if another need arises. Mutanana (2016) using the example of the shutdown in Zimbabwe in 2016, shows the importance of using these channels to interact across borders and how ideas spread transnationally. In Headlands and Marondera, the group helped finish construction of a chapel of adoration and a church building respectively. Most of the efforts done by this group were in direct response to a need and were through consultations with church 'brokers' on the ground.

This section has argued that members of these church-based charitable groups realised their economic privilege which pushed them to carry on giving to the homeland despite the fact that the charity committee was no longer functional. They were looking for other means to maintain homeland giving after the main channel, the charity committee, had been disbanded. Gender dynamics were important as the groups comprised mainly female members, and they depended on personal networks, which itself showed their disillusion with sending money through the Diocese of Westminster. Moreover, any desire to help those in need in parts of the world other than Zimbabwe was weak. In the next section, I turn back to the projects that the chaplaincy undertook to show the sheer scale and efforts that went into giving through transnational religious networks.

6.5. Diversity of charitable projects undertaken: The visibility of diasporic church aid in Zimbabwe

This section analyses other projects undertaken by the chaplaincy and church groups. These projects were sometimes initiated in response to particular requests from home congregations as well as taking the form of relief for humanitarian disasters. Choice of project did not follow any particular formula but was legitimised in relation to need within the homeland. Research into diaspora humanitarianism has mainly focussed on

conflicts and their aftermath (see Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Adamson, 2005; Kleist, 2008; Hammond, 2013; Van Hear and Cohen, 2017). Here, I follow Rubyan-Ling (2019: 220) in arguing that “diasporas are important examples of more ‘heterodox’ humanitarian actors, who act less out of generalized, globalized altruism than out of concrete loyalties to a particular ‘homeland.’ As much as the diaspora based Zimbabwean Catholics were giving out of their own kindness, they were also strategically picking projects that they felt a close connection to, which allowed them to maintain a stake in the homeland. I agree with Adogame (2004) and Burgess (2009) who argue that religious transnationalism contributes to civic engagement in the homeland through the use of social, spiritual and financial capital.

When the Tokwe-Mukosi dam in Masvingo Province burst after torrential rainfall hit the region in February 2014, the chaplaincy decided to offer their support to some of the 1500 people who were displaced and were living in transit camps in Chingwizi, Chisase and Masangula downstream from the dam. The chaplaincy first got the news of the extent of the damage from a video that was posted by Sister Mhizha who works for Life Lines, a Catholic media production company in Zimbabwe. The video showed the extent of damage that the dam had caused and included interviews with some of the victims about life in the transit camps¹⁸⁸. The video reached the chaplaincy in London who then contacted Sister Mhizha in person to ask how they could help, requesting her to be their contact person in Zimbabwe¹⁸⁹. We see here the importance of media amongst diaspora groups and how it can be used to spread messages from the homeland (Bernal 2013). The Zimbabwean diaspora Catholics then made an appeal via their centre in London for well-wishers to donate. The dam disaster was controversial in the way it was represented by the media, which emphasised the lack of state response to relieve citizens, and the partisan distribution of what little state assistance there was. By stepping in where the state had failed, UK-based Zimbabweans Catholics could demonstrate their diasporic citizenship, potentially giving them future leverage, through their reputation for helping.

¹⁸⁸ Available here: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/24447>
And here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2HpSKcg0Zo&feature=youtu.be>

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Sister Mhizha. Harare. 07/02/2018

According to Sister Mhizha, the UK-based Zimbabwean Catholics sent her about £10 000 which was to be used to purchase school materials for the schools in the transit camps. She explained the crisis in education that this helped to alleviate:

“There was no structure at all [...] at some point they had put up poles, we met with the parents, the teachers and we asked them what they wanted and they told us that they needed textbooks to begin with, exercise books to enable the pupils to start learning. We had four schools, one secondary school and three primary schools. They had nothing at this point. The one thing that they had was the district or province had realised that there were four schools that had been started so they somehow provided a teacher or two for each school, qualified teacher. The rest were just volunteers from the community. People do not want to stay in a situation like this one.”¹⁹⁰

What the quote above shows is the extent of damage that the dam had caused and the desperate situation of those in the transit camps. This sort of disaster relief stimulated UK-based Zimbabwean Catholics to come together quickly and send money to be used to help in the camps. Sister Mhizha said they used the money to buy various school supplies including chalkboards, wooden dusters, white chalk, counter books, mighty markers, pens, pencils, wooden clipboards *inter alia*. This was for both the primary and secondary school. Specifically for the secondary school, Sister Mhizha realised that some of the students who were to sit for their ordinary level exams that year did not have money to pay for the exam fees so they went with them to a nearby secondary school that had examination facilities and registered them, also paying for their exam fees. Like the Sierra-Leonean diaspora’s response to the Ebola crisis as discussed by Rubyan-Ling (2019), the Zimbabwean Catholics intervened in this humanitarian disaster to mitigate some of its effects.

Because of the appeal that Sister Mhizha had made, she also received support from local Catholics with schools like the Dominican Convent College in Harare donating used textbooks to be sent to the camp. Educationally, this was important and added to the development of these students in the camps who otherwise would not have gone to school or would have lacked resources such as books. Mercer, Page, and Evans (2013) discuss how diasporas can provide social services in their homelands using the example of education in Tanzania. When I met with Sister Mhizha in 2017,

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Sister Mhizha. Harare. 07/02/2018

she still had the records of all the material they had bought and delivered to the camps including some of the acknowledgement letters and communication she had with Mr Fashamu in the UK representing the diaspora-based Catholics. This showed how the church in Zimbabwe was seen as a trusted and responsible institution - Catholics in the UK chose to work with her instead of local authorities in Zimbabwe. As mentioned above, there was a lot of politicisation of relief aid via government channels in the transit camps during this period ('Politicisation of Food Aid Hits Chingwizi Holding Camp - Zimbabwe' 2014; 'Food Used as Political Tool at Chingwizi' 2014¹⁹¹). This meant that only those showing support for the ruling party could access government provided relief, emphasising the value of additional church and diaspora aid. This again reinforced the value to many givers of church routes for giving and supports the idea that they used their spiritual and financial capital (Burgess, 2009) to engage with the homeland, opening up a space for themselves in the process to be seen as useful.

In addition to this, there were other projects that Zimbabwean diaspora-based Catholics were working on. During my fieldwork period, they had just completed a project at Chishawasha seminary, the main seminary in Zimbabwe, installing fibre-optic cable for broadband. Father Mhosva, the Rector of the seminary shared with me how he had approached one of the internet service providers in Zimbabwe, TelOne and had been given a quotation of \$17 000 which was a sum the seminary could not afford to pay in full at the time but were contemplating repaying in instalments. But the diaspora transferred the funds: Father Mhosva explained;

"This is when the UK people came in because I got a call from the Secretary General (of ZCBC) saying I have received here some cash from the UK, \$6 500 and we were already contemplating paying the money ourselves [...] these guys did not even ask for an application or anything, they sent cash, which was already difficult to get. We went to TelOne, paid and we got them to start the work and by June, the work was finished, and connection was made.¹⁹²"

The UK-based Zimbabwean Catholics sent funds to cover the seminary's bill and paid it all off in the end. Father Mhosva further added that "this entire connection project

¹⁹¹ Also see here: <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/politicisation-food-aid-hits-chingwizi-holding-camp>

¹⁹² Interview with Father Mhosva. Harare. 15/05/2018

was something undertaken fully by Zimbabweans in the UK. They had already sent us second-hand computers, TVs, blankets, duvets etc in addition to this money and we are very grateful.¹⁹³ By giving connectivity to the seminary, the diaspora-based Catholics had enabled students there to easily access information and emails. It also meant that the rector and his administration, lecturers and the like did not need to rush into town whenever they needed to send an email or download information, saving on fuel and transportation costs. Castles, Delgado Wise, and International Organization for Migration (2008) remind us of the importance of diasporas in homeland development and this is a good example. It is also an example of transnational civic engagement as discussed by Burgess (2009) as they take part in the community life of home. The seminary had about 200 students who now had full access to the internet thanks to the assistance they received from fellow Zimbabweans. Interestingly, the former chaplain of the London centre, the late Monsignor Munyongani (by then Bishop Munyongani), had previously been a lecturer at the seminary, which, according to Father Mhosva, could be the reason why UK-based Zimbabwean Catholics responded in the manner they did when the Bishop sent out an appeal – because of this personal connection. Once again, this specific ‘act of kindness’ can also be seen as self-interested in some ways, because by making sure such amenities like the internet are provided, they were facilitating priests in training, encouraging new recruits and hence ensuring the future of the church, including a supply of individuals to minister to the UK-based Zimbabweans.

There were numerous other projects that were undertaken by the diaspora-based Zimbabwean Catholics including donations of a variety of goods and material to different missions, convents, orphanages and care homes for the disabled like St Giles Rehabilitation Centre and Mashambanzou. I spoke to Mrs Njiva who used to be in the UK but is now based in Zimbabwe and worked specifically with Mashambanzou Care Trust, an organisation working with HIV/AIDS patients in Harare (which is Catholic-led and hence attractive to UK-based Zimbabwean Catholics to fund). She narrated how UK groups would include donations specifically for this organisation, as part of larger donations from the church, they would:

¹⁹³ Interview with Father Mhosva. Harare. 15/05/2018

“[...] ask them what they wanted, we would contribute and then when we had enough, we would send or when the ZimCatholics used to send a container, we would also send stuff earmarked for them specifically. Some things we would just give because over the year, we would have collected them but then send one final request for what we can help with at the end. Sheets, nightdresses, wheelchairs, walking assistance, all sorts of medical stuff were usually what we sent.¹⁹⁴”

The above quote shows the variety of charitable projects supported within the chaplaincy – either directly or via a variety of ad hoc groups of church members.

This section has shown how Zimbabwean-based Catholics’ charitable giving allows them to maintain a stake in the homeland. As such it can be seen both as an expression of, and grounds for claiming diasporic citizenship. Additionally, it has shown the wide scope and range of projects that were undertaken by the chaplaincy to assist those in Zimbabwe, ranging from humanitarian relief to different sorts of development initiatives to build the home church and support its members. The projects supported by the chaplaincy and groups of church members were on a significant scale and had a very visible impact on the ground in Zimbabwe. The section has also stressed the role and use of social media in facilitating the response to disaster situations.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has shown the importance of religious transnationalism in how diaspora groups engage with the homeland by examining Zimbabwean Catholics in the UK’s charitable giving at home. These transnational connections via the church kept UK-based diaspora congregations in touch with the homeland constantly and reinforced their sense of economic privilege in relation to congregants back in Zimbabwe. The first part of the chapter discussed the expansion of Zimbabwe fellowships within the Catholic church, elaborating their gender dynamics. I argued that gender disparities within the church reflected ideas imported from the homeland by members of the church, as well as reflecting the ‘crisis of masculinity’ of male members’ experiences in the UK (Pasura 2012). The church offered a platform for men to discuss issues pertaining the hostland due to the fellowships’ embeddedness with the mother church.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Mrs Njiva. Harare. 12/03/2018

I discussed the ways in which mutual support roles in the UK could build on a sense of transnational connection and reinforce diasporic identity, additionally deliberating the way diaspora members play a balancing act as they seek belonging in both host and homeland (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013). My account differs from prior work in its emphasis on charitable giving via the church, from diasporans 'economic foot in the hostland' (Machoko, 2013) and the ways this could reinforce a sense of responsibility towards Zimbabwean congregations.

This charitable giving, I argued, is central to identity creation by diaspora church groups in the hostland: it helps them cope by adding to their sense of transnational religious belonging, which in turn reinforces faith based charitable giving to the homeland. This faith-based charitable giving cements diasporic identity and acts of citizenship as drives for donations gave congregants a sense of responsibility and pride in knowing that they are doing something for the less well off in their homeland. It can build mutual support networks among Zimbabweans, arguably facilitating their integration while also privileging giving to the homeland rather than broader global communities in need.

The scale of giving by Zimbabwean based Catholics was notable and the projects facilitated by the charity committee and church-based groups were visible on the ground in Zimbabwe. Prior studies have not looked at these charitable initiatives, moreover, their impact is in some ways more tangible than that of the political and civic networks discussed earlier in this thesis. The analysis of charitable giving in this chapter is thus an extension to prior work on transnational Zimbabwean Catholic fellowships. Focussing on transnational giving also reveals women's agency in the church, as they were not only predominant in the mobilisation of funds but have also taken leadership roles in doing this aspect of church work. Additionally, I have shown that charitable giving is not always only for altruistic purposes and sometimes can have individual or group interests attached to it and could also be a means of maintaining a stake within the homeland.

Like the political and civic networks explored in previous chapters, church institutions in charge of giving to the homeland are shaped powerfully by personal networks and brokers, and have not been immune to problems of distrust, allegations of

embezzlement and disillusion, which led to the formation of breakaway groups. Yet the continued growth of Zimbabwean fellowships, and the scale of funds channelled through church groups and institutions nonetheless demonstrate the on-going importance of the church and religious transnationalism as a feature of the Zimbabwean diaspora and its impacts on the homeland. Transnational faith-based giving that strengthens diaspora-based church groups is assisting the church at home in many ways, from humanitarian relief to building the capacity of church organisations and meeting broader developmental needs. As such, this chapter showed the importance of including religious transnationalism as part of this thesis' elaboration of diaspora citizenship, as a concept and set of practices.

Chapter 7: The effects of transnational family practices on diaspora citizenship amongst UK-based Zimbabweans

7.1. Introduction

“Most people came to the UK thinking that the Zimbabwe situation would change soon, and nobody really thought it would take this long for the situation to resolve itself. With every passing year, you tend to grow roots where you are, and it will then become difficult for someone to go and settle in Zimbabwe because it means uprooting everything which is not easy. You also will not have the same quality of life when you get to Zimbabwe.¹⁹⁵”

Morgan (1996) posits that families now exemplify a ‘set of practices’ rather than something that is static in nature. This means we also have to shift our thinking from the traditional way of understanding family to move to a more deterritorialised conceptualisation, constituted of sets of practices that acquire meaning in certain circumstances (Madianou 2016). Morgan (1996) further postulates that in this vein, family has to be understood as a verb, ‘doing family’ rather than being family and that such an understanding helps us explore transnational family practices. As alluded to in the previous chapters, family is one of the most important aspects of diaspora life and one important reason why Zimbabweans moved out of their home country to settle in countries like the UK, Australia, South Africa etc. Their migration was motivated by their desire to either provide for their families or get them out of the terrible economic and political situation that Zimbabwe was in. This chapter aims to explore connections between family practices and diasporic citizenship.

Bryceson and Vuorela (2002: 4) define transnational family as “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, i.e. “familyhood”, even across national borders.” This transnational stretching and sense of belonging is one reason why they attempt to influence the homeland’s civic sphere from afar as has been shown in the previous chapters. Many of them want the situation in the home country to change for the better because they still have siblings, children, or parents there. For some it is the general idea that when you have ‘made it,’ you should take care of those you left behind. In some cases, those people back in the homeland would

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Timothy. Manchester. 27/10/2017

have sacrificed money and other financially related items to get you out of the country in the hope that when you reach your final destination you will be able to help them out.

The interviews I draw from in this chapter were conducted both in the UK and in Zimbabwe as part of the wider data collection I undertook for my fieldwork. For every interviewee I spoke to, I asked questions relating to family and this chapter is informed by the full set of 85 interviews I conducted. Interviewees were, however, not always forthcoming with their responses and the scope of the questions asked did not go into deep detail about the family lives of my respondents. I argue here that acts of diasporic citizenship are also shaped by family in many ways. For some people, the reasons for political engagement are to protect their families in the hostland and homeland. Diaspora citizenship is again shown to be enmeshed with a sense of belonging and civic engagement, but this is also expressed through ‘doing family’, as members engage with the hostland and homeland in ways that are shaped by decisions and practices related to providing support or ensuring particular futures for family.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first section, I argue that legal status is not only one of the motivations for transnational ‘acts of citizenship’ as we have seen already, but this activism is closely shaped by, and also reflects decisions related to family support and ideas about family futures. The chapter’s initial focus on legal status shows how immigration status and related socio-economic hierarchies play a shaping role in how family is practiced by Zimbabweans in the UK. While legal status matters profoundly, family networks themselves also shape experiences and the capacity to navigate legal exclusion. The variation in individuals’ family networks and practices mean that while some generalisations can be made about how legality/illegality interconnects with family practices and diasporic citizenship, there are also many exceptions. In the second section, I turn to family and religion and explore how family relationships shape religious transnationalism and diasporic citizenship. I argue that family can be exercised in multiple ways, but that faith communities and religious practices have been particularly important in creating a sense of extended family and networks of support both in situ and transnationally. The sense and practices of extended family reinforced through church communities can aide belonging by providing a solace from the adverse psychological effects of migration.

In the third section, I concentrate on communications technology and argue that the use of mobile phones and social media by Zimbabweans in the UK has shrunk the gap between the homeland and hostland and mediates family practices. The 'ambient co-presences' of family these technologies make possible can also enhance a sense of diasporic citizenship and related practices. Even though social media plays a role in mediating transnational family relationships, the Zimbabwean case also shows how many people face challenges in regular communication via new technologies due to overpriced data and broadband service *inter alia*. In contrast to studies in other global contexts, this Zimbabwean case shows the importance of social media but also to some extent reveals the challenges emanating from difficulties in charging or accessing phones and data.

7.2. Snapshot of family life in the UK for Zimbabweans: Legal status and cultural difference

In this section I will analyse the ways in which that Zimbabweans living in the UK are managing their family ties in situ and transnationally, dwelling on how they navigate legal status and cultural differences, and teasing out implications for diasporic citizenship. As already established, Zimbabweans present in the UK come from different socio-economic classes and this to an extent affects how they live their lives in the hostland. Most of what I argue in this section furthers already established arguments about transnational family practices, but it also provides new empirical evidence about doing family in situ and transnationally using a Zimbabwean case. Plus, it seeks to make connections between 'doing' family transnationally and practices of diasporic citizenship. I argue that possession of legal status has a fundamental impact on the possibilities of co-residence for close family members, in contrast to those without papers for whom enforced separation is a central feature of intimate relationships. For individuals with legal status, most (not all) in this study had managed to bring in their close family (children, spouses, and in some cases, parents) into the country and this is specifically true for those who moved to the UK legally because of jobs, to study and stayed on after (Bloch 2006; Bloch 2008). Yet, ways of doing family are more complex and do not map straightforwardly onto a legal/illegal binary. Most respondents – both those with and without status – remain very much connected to the homeland in various ways – all have a strong sense of diasporic

belonging. Thus, while legality/illegality matters profoundly both for doing family and diasporic citizenship, I argue that mobility, family relations and transnational civic activism are closely intertwined in complex ways such that generalisations about the effects of legal status also require qualifications and exceptions.

I will start here by discussing immigration status and how having it or not having it impacts family practices and networks. For most UK-based Zimbabwean diaspora members with legal status, going home was an option available to them and was usually just a matter of saving up for the trip as they were mostly gainfully employed with some participants of this study working in professional jobs. This meant that their interactions with the homeland were increased as they visited more often, thus had stronger social ties with family in the homeland. However, it does not mean that irregular migrants automatically had fewer social ties with their homelands, as shown in chapter five, even those without legal status did also have strong ties with the homeland and may even had a greater interest in speedy transformation in the homeland because they knew that they could be sent back home at any moment. Moreover, many may still have children at home and social media platforms mentioned above make it easier for people to communicate. Of all the people I spoke to with legal status, only a few did not go back frequently and that was because of reasons such as having no one to visit or because their siblings and parents visited them in the UK. Tashinga was an example of such an individual, he came to study in the UK in 2004 and has not returned home. At the time of research, he did not have any children in Zimbabwe but was married to a Zimbabwean woman whom he met in the UK and they both lived in Manchester.

“I have always had this attitude since I came to the UK that I want to go to other places, home is home and will remain home so since 2004 I have not gone back. Whenever I would travel, I would go to other parts of the world, my parents also visit here often, and they come for months so there is no need to go to Zimbabwe. They come every 3 months and they are the important bits of my family, so I do not need to go back to Zimbabwe.”¹⁹⁶

From what Tashinga said, we can see the huge socio-economic difference within the Zimbabwean diaspora itself. He came from a wealthy family in Zimbabwe, additionally,

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Tashinga. Salford. 29/10/2017

he was one of the respondents who came to the UK for the purpose of undertaking university studies in 2004. His parents could afford to pay for his fees and upkeep in the UK and his close attachments are otherwise not in Zimbabwe. Interestingly though, Tashinga played a leading role within ZCI and was part of the team driving the organisation forward. Arguably, he had time and resources to invest in this partly because he did not have heavy financial responsibilities to family at home. In his case, Tashinga used ZCI to create a sense of identity, to enhance his sense of belonging to the Zimbabwean diaspora considering he had not been home in a long time. ZCI in some ways was the extended family that he used to engage with the homeland. Unlike other middle-class Zimbabweans in the UK, originally from a wealthy Zimbabwean family, many of who have onerous obligations to provide for kin at home, Tashinga's sense of identity and diasporic citizenship was enhanced by his participation in ZCI – he did not have financial responsibilities in the homeland, something that forces other diaspora members to maintain connections with family in Zimbabwe. This was not always the case for other middle-class Zimbabweans in the UK, many of whom still need to support their extended families and parents back in Zimbabwe.

Mobility (through having papers and earning well) can enhance embeddedness with the homeland as people can move between homeland and hostland easily, strengthening family ties. Legal status can also act as a catalyst for them to participate in diaspora political activity as they seek to make things different in the home country for their siblings and relatives, they left behind. As seen in the conversations with members of the political networks, some of the work they were doing is to make sure that their family back in the homeland did not suffer politically and economically. Many like Garai still had parents and children albeit older (young adults) in Zimbabwe whom they wanted to have a comfortable life¹⁹⁷. Garai also visited Zimbabwe frequently to see his children and parents and he argued it was through such visits that he likewise managed to share positive experiences from the UK about corruption and policing for example with them. He contended that through his interactions with family in the homeland, he managed to share examples of 'best practices' from the UK regarding dealing with government corruption and how the police should protect citizens and not

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Garai. Manchester. 05/09/2017

beat them¹⁹⁸. Acts of citizenship become related to family relations and doing family and activism becomes intertwined.

For those migrants who did not have legal status, there were strong constraints on movement, with implications both for doing family and activism. Yet this does not mean they were cut off from kin. Some respondents said they came to the UK to visit parents/relatives and never went back, or they had family that also came to the UK using other means to study or visit. Transnationally, those without legal status also had close links with home as they sought to maintain connection with their close relatives based in Zimbabwe – children, spouses, parents – through social media. Their legal status however put a limit as to what extent they could maintain physical contact; hence they practiced family more using other means. For instance, if a relative were to visit, they could not support their relative or family members' visa applications since they would have to declare their residency status in the UK. Additionally, they themselves could not travel back home since they did not have legal status in the UK. If they were to leave the country, it meant they could not come back into the UK. This left them only with options like using social media and phones to stay in touch with their family. These limitations in some cases put strains on families both in the hostland and homeland as some parents left their children in Zimbabwe and had to rely on video chatting services, missing out on raising them. In this instance, as mentioned above, family becomes more of a set of deterritorialised and physically disconnected practices rather than hinging on being together as in the conventional understanding (Morgan 1996).

These years of separation put a lot of strain on migrants' relationships with their families especially if they were in the UK illegally since they could not work full time and therefore, could not afford sending money every week for example. Based on the availability of communication technology in the homeland, it might even be difficult even to try constructing a proxy or virtual transnational family through guardians as Mazzucato et al. (2015) argue. In other cases, husbands and wives had to go years and years in different parts of the world which resulted in marriage problems as some men took on second wives as Maita explained:

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Garai. Manchester. 05/09/2017

“[...] you know, some especially African or Zimbabwean men find it hard to live without a women in their lives so if they are stuck in Zimbabwe or in the UK alone [...] they take another wife and usually without discussing it with the other person. I have heard many stories amongst the Zimbabwean community here in the UK of such things happening [...] it affects the relationship, the people involved and sometimes the children suffer.¹⁹⁹”

Tinarwo and Pasura (2014: 528) remind us of “*mapoto*²⁰⁰ marriages” which have happened for years in Zimbabwe whereby two people move in together and cohabit for the purposes of improving their economic and social well-being. They argue that what we are seeing is a transnational mirroring of what happened in Zimbabwe earlier when there was rural-urban migration (Tinarwo and Pasura, 2014). This again further shows how family can be conceptualised as a series of practices, informed by different calculations of short-term need or longer-term duties and responsibilities, that also shift over time.

In both cases, whether someone had legal status or not, managing families at a distance proved to be somewhat of a struggle for my interviewees. It was specifically difficult for those who were the family breadwinners because they managed to leave Zimbabwe and were viewed as being in positions of ‘economic privilege.’ This usually meant there were more expectations from the family in the homeland as discussed by a few respondents. As argued above, this contributed to reasons for engaging in civic activism to effect positive change in Zimbabwe so that the pressures of taking care of the family could be eased. One interviewee, Courage, shared experiences with his family and how the onus would always fall on him stating:

“I am the only son, second born and the last three sisters I have, I had to send them all to school, my father passed away a long time ago, so I sort of took on the responsibilities once I became an adult. I sent my last-born sister to a boarding school, the other failed but tried getting her to do something else and she ended up doing a course in dress making. I tried assisting with her children as well because the husband left her so now, I am taking care of my nieces and nephews. I send money for food, pay for fees, buy uniforms. It is not much but it is still a lot by Zim standards.²⁰¹”

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Maita. London. 23/09/2017

²⁰⁰ Mapoto is the chiShona word for “cooking pots.”

²⁰¹ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

The burden of taking care of his entire family landed on him since he was the only one to be successful enough to make it to the UK. Courage arrived in October 2002 and applied for asylum which he was lucky to be granted in 2007 and explained how even during the years when he was not meant to be working, he had to send money back home to support his family. This added to his financial burden significantly as he occasionally had to borrow money from others when there were emergencies in the family. At the same time, it also put him closer to the homeland as he had to stay in touch regularly. In addition to him being a political activist by the time he fled from Zimbabwe, these family issues were also motivating. Courage joined the Zimbabwe Vigil to promote democratic practices in Zimbabwe so that the economy could stabilise (the economic crisis also being blamed on the government) and his siblings could possibly find employment and not have the burden upon himself to maintain the family. Eventually, he got together with his sisters and provided funds for his family to start a pig farm so that they could generate income and support themselves. He provided the bulk of the capital to start up the business and when I spoke to him in 2017, the project was still going albeit with some problems here and there based on the state of the Zimbabwean economy. Through this case, we can see how family relationships and practices are closely imbricated with diasporic citizenship, first in a period of irregularity and thereafter in circumstances of legality.

For those who had family in the UK or had managed to bring in their families, the differences in backgrounds and contexts between raising children in Zimbabwe and in the UK were a major concern. Both those with and without legal status shared these concerns. There was a lot of talk about “*misikanzwa*²⁰²” a chiShona word for naughtiness/unruliness which most of the parents used to describe their UK-raised children. One of the respondents who was mother of three argued:

“You know, the context here is very liberal, and on top of that, you can’t really give your child a hiding otherwise they’ll be taken away from you, some of them talk back to you [...] Sometimes one worries about taking the kids home to Zimbabwe because they may misbehave in front of relatives [...] they think you are too soft.”²⁰³

²⁰² Interview with Mrs Jegere. London. 02/12/2017

²⁰³ Interview with Kundai. Manchester. 12/12/2017

The quote above illustrates just how worried Kundai was about her children misbehaving whilst on a visit to the homeland, it also shows how the UK laws and the society in general made it difficult to discipline children the way they would in Zimbabwe. Parents complained that it was very hard to discipline their children in the UK because of the many different laws that protect children and argued that because of this, they end up growing up with little or no castigation. Debates that arose online in the early 2000s when many Zimbabweans were arriving in the UK show us how such discussion of morality and behaviour is strongly gendered: Mano and Willems (2010) take the case of the high-profile discussion in Zimbabwean media (in the UK and in Zimbabwe) over the *Big Brother* series in 2005 which proved to be a litmus test for Zimbabwean culture and identity in the UK, because there was a Zimbabwean participant – a nurse called Makosi Musambasi. Makosi's behaviour was widely debated by Zimbabweans both in the UK and in Zimbabwe, as she initially claimed to be a virgin, went topless, kissed a housemate and allegedly became pregnant, moreover she had been irregular before her nurse's training. This provoked wide-ranging debates not only about naughtiness, but of 'Zimbabwean' values, as well as racism, gender, sexuality and child rights, legality/illegality, and cultural differences more broadly between the UK and Zimbabwe.

The differences in cultural and social context between the UK and Zimbabwe are very marked, and to an extent, this caused a lot of strain on the parents, with some developing psychological problems (Sibanda 2010). This can be related to culture shock among both the parents and children, as all parties were experiencing a new life. However, due to the stigma associated with such problems as mental health in Zimbabwean culture, most ended up not being able to seek the help they needed to cope and took out their stress on children and families both in hostland and homeland. The previous chapter showed just how useful religion can be for people in these situations. Caarls et al. (2018) shows the importance of upbringing backgrounds in how African diaspora families survive in countries of settlement. This is not peculiar to just those with families but is an issue that Zimbabweans and indeed other migrant communities in general encounter in the UK as shown by Caarls et al. (2018). In some cases, this issue of unruly children was the reason why parents ended up seeking out churches in the diaspora as I shall discuss further below. The church became the

‘extended family’ which could be used to admonish unruly children and became an important aspect of the practice of family.

Notwithstanding these cultural problems, for most UK-based Zimbabweans who had legal status and had managed to bring their children and spouses into the UK, life was generally easier on their part as they did not have to travel back and forth between the UK and the homeland to visit, nor did they have to rely on social media to manage family at a distance to such an extent. Some did visit home nonetheless, for the sake of seeing their parents, usually those who had the means and whose parents were ailing. Also, some visited to invest in homes in the homeland which can be used to house close family or as a source of income for those in the homeland through rent. Mingot and Mazzucato (2019: 142) allude to this when they argue that migrants provide transnational social protection in this way, by supporting parents and/or building homes. Eleven respondents said they specifically visited their parents in Zimbabwe mainly because they were of old age and were not feeling well. When asked how often she went back to Zimbabwe, Mrs Moyo argued:

“Once a year because my mom is elderly, so I go and visit her. Thing is, my husband and children are all here. If we had left some of the children, there then that would be different, and we would have had to go back more frequently.²⁰⁴”

The quote above shows that for some Zimbabwean diaspora members, one of the most important reasons why they travelled back to the homeland frequently was because they were still caring for their parents and other siblings but as soon as that was out of the picture, they did not see a reason why they should be going to the homeland frequently. Mazzucato et al. (2015) talk about care between migrant parents and their children but in this case, we see Zimbabwean diaspora members returning home to care for their parents.

This section has focussed on trying to tease out some of the ways in which legal status and reactions to cultural difference shape the ways of ‘doing family’ and their interrelationship with practices of diasporic citizenship. I have argued that family

²⁰⁴ Interview with Mrs Moyo. London. 25/11/2017

relations can motivate and influence political engagements for both migrants with legal status and without legal status. I also argued that there is pressure on diasporans regardless of legal status, as those in the homeland feel that family in the UK is in a position of economic privilege and should help them out. This obligation shapes ongoing engagements at home but can also motivate political and civic action in the home and hostland. I also showed how moral debates over cultural differences between host and homeland were imbricated with ways of practicing family and transnational connections, including political engagements. For some Zimbabweans however, the relationship between family and diasporic citizenship is particularly closely linked to faith and religious practices which I turn to below.

7.3. Transnational family and religion

In this section I explore the connections between transnational religion and doing family, arguing that religion offers a way for migrants to mitigate familial challenges and shocks within the hostland and homeland, which also has implications for diasporic citizenship. Debates over religious transnationalism and interconnections with acts of citizenship were covered in the previous chapter. Here, I will explore how doing family specifically can be shaped by religion. I argue that religion allows diaspora members to extend their practices of family – creating a sense of belonging and practical support transnationally beyond narrow conceptions of kin or extended family networks. In this particular section, I will draw on data collected amongst Zimbabwean Catholics in London and also cross reference that with data collected amongst other Zimbabweans in the UK and in Zimbabwe.

For most Zimbabwean Catholics in the UK, the church offered an ‘extended family’ which one could use for religious and moral support or when the need arose; be it a bereavement, a joyous occasion such as a wedding or christening. Pasura (2012: 36) discusses how religious congregations can create modern-day transnational extended families arguing that they provide members with “a sense of community solidarity, resources, and spiritual comfort.” The idea of family is broadened in church contexts not just to mean your immediate or extended family, but individuals around you with whom you share a religious, ethnic background or nationality. This shows how, for Zimbabweans, Morgan’s (1996) argument that family is a set of practices needs to

extend into the domain of faith and its influences on doing family. Mrs Moyo explained in relation to her understanding of church community that “we work together, we help each other even if it is a sad or joyous occasion, that is the whole point of having ‘family’ around you.”²⁰⁵ Family in this case was used to refer to all the congregants who share a diasporic identity with you. Such deeds also further strengthened the bonds between immediate family members as I came to realise through the research. A conversation I had with Mr Suma revealed that in some instances, when your immediate family realised that you are getting support from other ‘strangers’ around you who are not your ‘blood’, they decided to do more in terms of being there for you²⁰⁶. It is a form of petty jealousy that one is getting support from others who are not one’s immediate family argued Mr Suma. This was an interesting reflection, and there could also be a range of other emotions involved – a sense of shame, or fear of a loss of reciprocity. The church was also one of the few places people that some Zimbabweans sought out on arrival to the UK as it offered a friendly face and voice *vis-a-vis* the shock they were probably experiencing in their new environment. The church also accommodated those without status. Based on the fieldwork I conducted, it indeed seemed to be true that churches were offering a solace and familial surrogate to some Zimbabweans²⁰⁷.

Additionally, the church offered an escape from the harsh realities of the hostland, the culture shock that most families struggled with, discussed briefly above. For some who have managed to bring their families to the UK, they had turned to the church to assist with issues like raising their children in the diaspora for example, gender roles, relations, racism or legal status. As already discussed above, one of the concerns most Zimbabweans have is to raise a child with no manners and homeland culture, so they turned to the church where they met and discussed ways in which to bring up children. Mr Fashamu argued that:

“[...] yes, we would have Bible teachings, but we would talk about social issues like how to bring children up in the UK, household conflicts within

²⁰⁵ Interview with Mrs Moyo. London. 25/11/2017

²⁰⁶ Interview with Mr Suma. London. 13/11/2017

²⁰⁷ A famous example of churches offering help to new arrivals is the Central Methodist Church in central Johannesburg which by the time of its closure had sheltered more than 30 000 refugees in a space of 18 years under Bishop Paul Verryn. See here for more:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/01/south-african-church-refugees-johannesburg>

the diaspora context. People who are uprooted from their homes and they are now in a foreign environment where they are stereotyped or the power of the monetary perspective of working or papers vs no papers [...]”²⁰⁸

In this quote, it is clear that apart from helping the migrants acclimate, church communities also lent an ear to the issues that everyone goes through when they arrive in a new country and cannot always discuss freely with close family. The former chaplain of the Zimbabwe Catholic Chaplaincy in London revealed that he was a trained counsellor and occasionally he had sessions with church members where they discussed matters related to family and life in general²⁰⁹. Palmary (2018) argues that there should be a shift to a greater focus on transnational families and psychological problems, considering the multiple forms that families take and the strain this stretching over space has on relationships. In the Zimbabwean case, we can see the church mediating family to a certain extent therefore shaping the practice of family. It does so by providing counselling, social and cultural support roles as well as by fostering transnational ties through charitable giving, which can also cement a sense of being part of an extended family.

However, not all Zimbabwean diaspora members relied on the church for support when they arrived in the country. There were some participants in the research who claimed they were not particularly religious even though they might have been brought up in a religious family in the homeland. Timothy for example had his family in the UK but did not go to church. He argued that “he never found enough time to go to church when he arrived in the UK so stopped”²¹⁰ and further added that his wife who was originally from Zimbabwe, was also not that religious. They were a young family with two children younger than 8 and he said they got family support from home and from their fellow Zimbabweans in the diaspora. Like Tashinga, Timothy was also a member of ZCI and was involved in transnational civic engagement through the organisation which also helped them create a diasporic identity as well as providing a network of friends who could be called upon for social support. There were also other respondents I spoke to who noted that they did not specifically go to church but relied on extended family in Zimbabwe if they were ever going through troubles or were

²⁰⁸ Interview with Mr Fashamu. London. 13/11/2017

²⁰⁹ Interview with Mr Mamombe. London. 18/11/2017

²¹⁰ Interview with Timothy. Manchester. 27/10/2017

finding it hard to raise children. Others who had fully integrated were now part of the British society and went about their day to day business like any other British family and in some/most cases, church attendance was not a part of it. Tichaona for example explained that he married a British woman who was not religious and had to forego religion himself²¹¹. Tichaona came from the sample of respondents who were outside the main networks I studied but was a Zimbabwean and professional knowledgeable in the subject matter. This shows that although the church played a role in the way many Zimbabweans in the UK ‘practiced family,’ it was by no means all of them who used it for support: others find support from family members in Zimbabwe or the UK, or through practices of diasporic citizenship and transnational engagements with the homeland.

In this section, I have argued that religion was important in mediating family amongst many Zimbabwean diasporan families in the UK. The strong sense of ‘extended family’ that can be created through church organisations is important as an underpinning for the forms of transnational giving via the church that I explored in the previous chapter. Despite this, it is not every diasporan that relies on religion for support. In the next section, I will discuss the various communication technologies that allow members of the Zimbabwean diaspora to stay in touch and ‘do family’ with their churches, relatives and other loved ones in the hostland, homeland and across the globe.

7.4. ‘WhatsApp family?’: Communication technologies and interactions within and with the family at home and abroad

In a world of polymedia and where communication technology is always changing, families also adapt to these changes which enhance the way they practice family. Diasporans the world over have employed the use of communication technologies which include social media and general mobile telecommunication. Madianou (2016) argues “the proliferation of new communication technologies has given rise to new, potentially rich interactions at a distance, which largely overcome some of the constraints associated with earlier forms of mediated communication” (Madianou 2016, 186). These methods of communication are not only used for speaking with relatives across borders but are part of the vehicle that drives ‘social remittances’

²¹¹ Interview with Tichaona. London. 21/10/2017

(Levitt 1998), and the 'political remittances' that are a central concern in this thesis (Boccagni et al, 2015). Transnational families rely heavily on communication technologies as a way of maintaining relationships at a distance (Madianou 2016). I argue in this section that whilst communicating transnationally with family, diaspora members share ideas, cultural practices and at the same time consume media messages and news coming from the homeland. As such, these media shape the interlinkages between 'doing family' and diasporic citizenship.

I explore here how family practices were mediated by new technology and tease out the implications for diasporic citizenship. I argue that social media is critically important (as in other transnational diasporic contexts) but that there are particular constraints in Zimbabwe due to the costs and difficulties of access. I also show some direct connections between 'doing' family over social media and practices of diasporic citizenship, as the same technologies are supporting both personal and familial exchanges whilst at the same time enabling the circulation of political remittances and facilitating the connections that are necessary for transnational civic engagements. It is often the case that family members at home remain able to access social media and phones due to the material support (for handsets or the costs of charging) from family in the diaspora. In such instances there can be a very direct connection between 'doing family' and acts of diasporic citizenship that hinge on possession of phones and online connection.

Madianou and Miller (2012: 95) introduce the idea of polymedia in relation to transnational family practices, defining it as, "an emerging environment of communicative opportunities that functions as an 'integrated structure' within which each individual medium is defined in relational terms in the context of all other media" (Madianou and Miller, 2012: 95). Most of the respondents I spoke to confirmed the use of a variety of new media in the form of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp. It did not matter whether the respondent was in the UK legally or not, they all used mobile platforms as they require only a smartphone that can connect to mobile data. WhatsApp for example has no specific layers in the sign-up process that require you to divulge your legal status and the platform only picks up your location based on the country code so those without legal status did not feel they were risking exposure or identification by the authorities in participating. For

most, including myself, WhatsApp has revolutionised the way we communicate with our families, both in the UK and in the homeland. The availability of such cost-effective ways of communicating has brought some families closer as they can all now keep in touch with what is happening in their everyday lives as it is happening. Madianou and Miller (2012: 3) argue that “navigating the environment of polymedia becomes inextricably linked to the ways in which interpersonal relationships are enacted and experienced.” This shows us how decisions to use certain forms of media can affect how relationships are formed, and, in this case, transnational family connections as I shall argue.

Some respondents mentioned that they had WhatsApp family groups in which all issues related to the family are shared and discussed. The advantage of such a mediated group is that you can add anyone regardless of their geographical location, as long as they use WhatsApp, and you have their number, it is a simple process. It then means that family members spread across the globe are able to communicate in real time with one another if all group members are connected to the internet. Madianou (2016: 184) argues that these are “ambient co-presences as they increase awareness of the everyday lives and activities of significant others through the background presence of ubiquitous media environments.” What makes such connections ambient is the ‘peripheral awareness of distant others’ which is made possible by using mobile phones and social media. This means that families can check on each other using social media by following what one has been doing on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp (WhatsApp status stories²¹²) and Instagram. These ambient family co-presences can also enhance diasporic citizenship – either intentionally or inadvertently, and they can influence a host of decisions. Both parties may feel further attached whether those in the hostland are there legally or illegally and in some instances such family communications can encourage or force those in the diaspora

²¹² WhatsApp Stories like Instagram stories are status updates that one can upload on WhatsApp and can be short videos, photos or voice recordings which most users employ to share public content with others what they are up to during the day. The videos and pictures disappear after 24 hours meaning a user can constantly share them. Read more here: <https://metro.co.uk/2017/11/14/what-is-whatsapp-status-how-to-use-the-story-feature-7078698/> and here <https://techcrunch.com/2017/02/20/whatsapp-status/>

– including those that in the diaspora illegally - to stay on knowing they are connected with their family constantly.

New media in the form of WhatsApp have also completely transformed how diaspora consume the news, and there are interconnections between families' engagement with social media and consumption of homeland news. Because of how easy it is to contact family on WhatsApp, most respondents who were involved in diaspora political mobilisation mentioned not only that they used WhatsApp to corroborate news stories coming out of the homeland, but that they also used family members and their networks in relation to these practices. They asserted that WhatsApp in particular made it easier to corroborate news stories coming out of the homeland (see Ogunyemi, 2013 for other different types of media used by African diasporas in the UK). WhatsApp together with social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and other internet-based websites allow people to connect easily and quickly – whether for family or political activities. Corroboration with those at home is regarded as important to combat 'fake news', which is also being fuelled by social media (see Giglietto et al. 2019; Talwar et al. 2019 for more on fake news and the media). When I asked Courage for example what his source of news was, he responded:

“Social networks, relying on info from people on the ground. Getting it first-hand means that it is not manipulated, it has allowed us as people based outside the country to participate and get involved with situations as they develop. For example, the rumour that Mnangagwa was dead. You can verify information, you don't just take it as it is, this is another danger of social media.²¹³”

In this instance, one can see how it was easy for Courage to verify with his family about news given his trust of family members, who could confirm or deny the news. This can increase family interaction as such discussions then lead to more conversations. The quote also shows the dangers involved with using social media, however, as rumours can also spread easily. This reliance on social media does not mean that diaspora members avoid online newspapers and online diaspora forums, quite opposite as Peel (2010), and Mano and Willems (2010) argue.

²¹³ Interview with Courage. London. 12/08/2017

Other respondents said they used new media to stay in touch with friends and family whom they had not seen in a long time, rather than emphasising its role in maintaining their closest family ties. Depending on preference, some of them used their real full names, some just their first name, and some preferred to use a pseudonym. Maita acknowledged that she used her real name on Facebook and Twitter because she wanted to stay connected with her friends and family all around the world. The convergence of these new types of media with transnationalism in general enables sets of practices that support ‘a new type of connected family at a distance’ meaning families are staying connected despite the distance through social media (Madianou 2016). Maita’s family was scattered all over the world with a sister in Australia, another sister in the USA and the rest in Zimbabwe. She said she interacted with them very regularly on Facebook and tagged them in news stories, photos and the like. Maita also used Facebook to share messages about the Zimbabwe situation with her large number of followers since she was a political activist who did not have legal status in the UK.

Nonetheless, to be able to practice family through polymedia means that everyone has to be connected to the internet. This was not always straight forward because in Zimbabwe, the internet, whether home broadband or cell phone data is quite expensive. During my fieldwork in Zimbabwe, Liquid Telecom which offered home broadband was priced at US\$39/month for bandwidth capped at 25GB and US\$89/month for bandwidth capped at 50GB respectively. TelOne offered a slightly cheaper package but it was still around US\$15/month. This is discriminately high, and several families would rather spend this much money on food and utilities. Additionally, such costs could become a burden for those in the diaspora. One of the respondents I spoke to in Zimbabwe, Martha argued that:

“the price of data in Zimbabwe is high enough to put a lot of people off and it becomes a luxury if you look at it closely. It is difficult even for me as someone who’s employed to afford data every day, now imagine a family that doesn’t have an income²¹⁴”

²¹⁴ Interview with Martha. Harare. 05/03/2018.

Martha works as a project manager for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and her project is based in the remote south-east lowveld of Zimbabwe in Chiredzi.

The prices put those who can afford such packages in the middle class. Cell phone data was also priced at US\$1 for 250MB or US\$2 for 1GB expiring after a day. On average, you would have to buy at least a dollar of airtime credit for your data per day which considering the levels of income in the country, does not sound feasible for many²¹⁵. In addition to this, there were issues with geographical location since some diasporans had family living in the remote parts of Zimbabwe lacking cell phone network coverage. It meant their family in the diaspora would have to wait until they were in a place with network to reach them. This put extra strain on families, and it made it difficult to practice family as they could not share converse or share news in real time

To add on, smartphones that can access platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp are not always cheap and are unaffordable for some families in Zimbabwe. The burden then fell on their family in the UK to provide them with the smartphones and then send them money for airtime credit. On platforms like World Remit²¹⁶, which I discuss below, it is possible to send someone airtime credit directly. These financial hindrances were not only on the Zimbabwean side but even in the UK. For families in Zimbabwe that could not afford broadband, nor smartphones, making voice calls from the UK to Zimbabwe could be very expensive for diasporans. Many respondents argued that they did not use their airtime credit nor monthly minute allowances to call home but relied on WhatsApp and other voice over internet protocol (VoIP) software like Skype. To be able to call Zimbabwe via Skype, one needs to load credit onto their account using a credit or debit card and this could be challenging for individuals like Tadiswa, Danai or Shamiso who did not have secure status, did not have bank accounts and were not fully employed. They had limited access to such platforms as they could not load credit onto them unless they asked someone else to do so on their behalf (see Atkinson's, (2006) report on Migration and Financial services in the UK for more on financial inclusion amongst migrants). This can be problematic as there is lack of privacy, and one might be reluctant to divulge reasons for not being

²¹⁵ In July 2008, the BBC ran an article on their website where they gave information regarding the Zimbabwean economy and based on it, 74% of the population lived on less than \$5.50 a day, 21% in extreme poverty and a 94% unemployment rate – see here for more:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-42013720>

²¹⁶ World Remit is a money transfer service available on the web or as a mobile application

able to add credit themselves. Many Zimbabweans also did not want to use internet cafes, for concerns regarding privacy, as Tichaona explained:

“You know when you are on the phone, you want your privacy. Some of the things you are discussing are so personal that you do not want anyone else hearing what they are. This is why it is easier with things like WhatsApp because you can even record a voice note in private and send it later on. Having to shout out your personal business in public is not ideal.”²¹⁷

Tichaona’s emphasis on privacy is important, particularly in relation to those with insecure status, but also more broadly, people prefer not to discuss or share financial or family affairs to a wide public audience.

Moving on to other types of family interactions involving new communications and technology, the idea and practice of financial remittances is also key to maintaining family relationships. Financial remittances increase conversations beyond simply the transfer itself, as it is important to discuss how to spend the money among other issues. Adugna (2018) through a study of Ethiopian households with one or more members based outside the country shows that digital communication media and financial remittances are connected as transnational families are increasingly keeping in touch to either send remittances for those abroad or to request funds, for those in the homeland and also general discussions about the remittances and other aspects of life. One of the ways that Zimbabweans in the UK sent money back to Zimbabwe was through communication technologies such as phones and the internet in general via different money transfer services. My respondents used mobile money transfer platforms and websites like World Remit, MoneyGram, Western Union, Cassava Remit, Mukuru, Senditoo *inter alia*. Most claimed they preferred the convenience involved in services available on their phone. “Once you join and enter your details and are verified, that’s it, you don’t have to do it again and can send money easily”²¹⁸ said John in relation to World Remit when I asked him why he preferred it. In 2017, he said he frequently sent money to his family directly for cash pickup or straight into their Ecocash²¹⁹ mobile money wallets meaning they would not need to travel to the

²¹⁷ Interview with Tichaona. London. 21/10/2017

²¹⁸ Interview with John. London. 09/09/2017

²¹⁹ Ecocash is a popular cell phone based mobile money platform used to transact on a day to day basis in Zimbabwe.

towns/cities to collect cash and can use it straight away. This is a very convenient way of sending and receiving as it limits the transaction costs involved in both cases. Family can have the money immediately after and is useful in case of emergencies. While such transfers can make a huge positive difference, the ways in which money flows through transnational family networks can also provoke conflicts and tensions.

Financial remittances therefore are also central to the way in which people 'do family' transnationally. A breadwinner based in the diaspora can call or message to make sure that money is being spent wisely, moreover the interactions over remittances can be shaped by assumptions that money is easy to make or get in the diaspora (UK). Both the money transfer and the broader conversation are mediated by new technologies. There are both direct and indirect connections between these family practices and the forms of political and civic diaspora engagement that I have explored in other chapters.

7.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed family life in the UK for Zimbabwean diasporans paying particular attention to how they do family transnationally, adopting an approach to family that is practice-oriented (Morgan, 1996). I argued here that family practices are complex and are shaped profoundly both by immigration status, and by views on cultural differences between homeland and hostland. Irregularity can have a negative impact on family co-residence, as it can be difficult for those without status to bring family to join them as they lack mobility. Yet I also argued that generalisations about a legal/illegal binary and its impacts on family and diasporic citizenship also need to be qualified, especially as these statuses change over time. Diaspora citizenship seen as a sense of and practice of transnational civic engagement is shaped by family relations in a variety of ways, not least by the motivation of having family still resident in the homeland and, wanting to effect positive change for their benefit.

The chapter also explored relations between doing family and religious transnationalism arguing that churches could act as an extended family where diasporans can get material support or help to offset psychological effects of difficulties in adjusting to the hostland including help with family in situ and transnationally.

Finally, the chapter focussed on communication technologies, exploring in what way these mediate how families interact and practice family. Social media is bridging the gap between hostland and homeland allowing family members to stay constantly in touch making doing family at a distance possible. I argued that as families communicate more via these platforms, there can be direct links to practices of diaspora citizenship, as for example, where those in the diaspora fund social media access for family at home, allowing the latter better access to the news and to the networks of political and civic activism. Or alternatively, providing means through which diasporans can corroborate news from home. However, there are sometimes severe constraints: the costs of data and Wi-Fi are out of reach for some Zimbabwean families in the homeland, I argue, putting pressure on their diasporan family members as they take on responsibilities of sending them money. The economic privilege of the diaspora, can however, itself also increase family tensions. The connections between 'doing family' and diasporic citizenship are therefore multi-faceted and complex.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In this conclusion, I first revisit my research questions before reflecting on potential further avenues of research. The thesis was guided by the following overarching question; how do concepts of diaspora 'citizenship' shape political, socio-economic, religious and familial interactions with the homeland? In answer to this question, I developed the concept of diaspora citizenship itself arguing that it is enmeshed with both a sense of belonging and active practices of civic engagement in both host and homeland, developing arguments by Laguerre (1998) and Cohen (2011). The understanding I adopted here differs from work that understands diaspora citizenship through a lens of formal rights, and those who use it loosely without scrutinising connections to legal status, and often excluding displaced or irregular populations. My conceptualisation encompassed Cohen's (2011) emphasis on active contributions from the diaspora in situ and transnationally, but also extends the analytic focus back to the homeland itself, which allowed me to examine a range of specific networks and their impacts. Diaspora citizenship therefore provides a banner of mobilization, not just for undocumented or irregular migrants in countries of settlement, but also for a range of diasporic activists whose formal citizenship is not fully recognised in countries of origin.

This hinged on a particular understanding of diaspora as a claim, rather than defined by set of features, such that diaspora is considered as being political or social construct. I argued treating diaspora as a stance or claim allows us to explore different transnational domains and how these claims to diasporic positionality inter-relate to imaginations, acts and practices of citizenship in both the home and hostlands. Being labelled and acting as a diaspora is one possible way of transnational political mobilisation and has certain political consequences regardless of any fit with more conventional, fixed academic definitions. Furthermore, I deemed diaspora an object of organisation, shaping, and influencing political, religious and familial engagement with the homeland. I additionally argued that diaspora does not just shape diasporic actions, as these diasporic engagements are also the concern of citizens within the homeland: many of the latter look up to those in the diaspora and associate diasporic claims with notions of status, creating expectations.

The conceptualisation of diaspora citizenship hinged on a social view of citizenship, as developed by Glick Schiller (2005). Understandings of citizenship that reach beyond the letter of the law to socio-political claims with a focus on action brings back migrants with insecure status into debates over citizenship and gives them a voice. In addition, I argued that it matters that the group under study in this thesis, Zimbabweans in the UK, call themselves a diaspora, a name they are also referred to by those at home despite not fitting the typologies of a diaspora. I extended the usual conceptualisation of 'acts of citizenship' (Isin, 2008) by exploring transnational domains of activism. I argued again that Isin's understanding of "acts of citizenship" can be usefully extended into a transnational domain of political practice, and to do so, I used Boccagni et al's (2016) ideas of "political remittances" and "circulation of ideas." These ideas can be religious, or social in general and not only strictly civic or political.

This thesis also hinged on a particular methodology to show how diaspora practices relate to understandings and practices of citizenship in a transnational frame. I traced specific networks of activity in the UK diaspora back to the homeland through multi-sited fieldwork in both the host and homeland. I used this to show how the shifting contexts in both host and homeland affected diaspora political, religious and familial engagements. This provided novel insights because there is scant literature analysing post-2013 shifts in the arenas of Zimbabwean diaspora politics, mobilisation and associational life. I highlighted some of the continuities and changes that have taken place within the Zimbabwean diaspora context since previous research was done on this group arguing there has been some continuities but in general the Zimbabwean diaspora has been politically demobilised to certain extent due to socio-political situation in the homeland, and energies have been rechannelled away from political parties directly into the types of civic, rights, religious and familial networks I explore.

The thesis thus not only explored the potential utility of the concept of 'diaspora citizenship' at a theoretical level but also contributed to the body of research specifically on Zimbabweans and the diaspora.

In addition to the main overarching research question, the thesis was also guided by some more specific sub-questions. Below I show how each of these was addressed

through the substantive empirical chapters of the thesis, that traced UK-based Zimbabwean political, religious and familial networks.

The first sub-question asked;

- Can a broad transnational understanding of ‘citizenship’ beyond the purely legal domain shed light on diasporic political practices and their impact in the homeland?

In addition to elaborating the notion of ‘diasporic citizenship’ conceptually, as detailed above, I also addressed this question empirically. Two chapters in particular focussed directly on diasporic transnational political practices devoted to civic and rights activism (chapters four and five) and aimed to shed light both on ‘acts’ of citizenship in situ and impacts in the homeland. These chapters showed how the Zimbabwe diaspora remains politicized and mobilized, notwithstanding some disillusion and diminution in engagement with party political structures when compared to the early years of exodus post 2000. Over the years as people have received their settlement status in the UK, they have shifted their political energies to other aspects of their lives like families and also civic organisations or online political and social movements. But many remain engaged, if not directly with party politics, then with forms of civic activism that were closely related to the political opposition and aimed to further rights and democracy in the homeland.

I compared two UK-based organisations that had contrasting social bases. I studied ZCI comprised of middle-class Zimbabwean professionals based in Manchester and the ZimVigil, which is supported by Zimbabwean migrants most of whom have insecure status. Both organisations were concerned with legal rights of members themselves, but their activism in each case was much broader and demanded attention beyond the narrow legal domain of citizenship to support wider goals of democracy and human rights. ZCI showed how UK-based Zimbabwean middle-class members have been involved in numerous forms of political mobilisation seeking to challenge the Zimbabwean state from abroad, including but not limited to legal issues of dual citizenship. The case of the ZCI additionally showed the importance of widening the concept of diasporic citizenship beyond the usual frame of reference of

rights in the hostland to also consider activism in relation to the homeland and its effects. It showed the importance of the legal domain for 'acts of citizenship, as for example focussed on campaigns for the diaspora vote and dual citizenship, but also argued for a wider social lens to incorporate other forms of civic and political activism related to rights and democracy in advance of the 2018 elections. The study of ZimVigil, on the other hand, demonstrated how irregular migrants' demands for citizenship in situ also extended to transnational activism in the homeland. I argued that despite members of the two organisations having different socio-economic and legal statuses in the UK, they are both engaged in transnational civic engagement with similar goals of positively influencing the homeland and bringing about democratic changes.

The modus operandi of furthering transnational citizenship adopted by both these UK-based civic organisations was to work through and partner with organisations and civic and political activists based in the homeland who act as a form of proxy on behalf of them. Both networks also depended strongly on personal networks of key founding and activist members. For transnational political and civic networks, I argued that personal networks also reflect the entanglement and intertwining of histories of political opposition with civic and non-partisan rights-based mobilisations. Some of these diaspora members used to be members of opposition parties, particularly the MDC formations in the homeland or worked for civic society organisations after they had left politics. As such, they still have connections and links in the homeland whom they used to create these transnational networks. This is also true in the case of religious giving (explored in chapter 6) where some of the breakaway charity groups at the Zimbabwean Chaplaincy in London used returnees and family members based in Zimbabwe to coordinate charitable giving on their behalf in the homeland. For political, religious and familial networks alike, the issue of maintaining a stake in the homeland and the creation of a diasporic identity was central. As such, these networks demonstrated in empirical terms the importance of a broad transnational understanding of diasporic citizenship beyond the purely legal.

Another way of relating notions of diasporic citizenship to political practices and their impacts in the homeland was to explore diaspora members' lived experiences of citizenship in the hostland which can also shape their political engagements. Middle-

class professionals on the one hand possess mobility as a result of their formal citizenship in the hostland meaning they can easily travel to the homeland and they are able to remit their ideas more frequently and directly increase influence at home; the transnational networks they supported linked with well-established rights organisations at home. Additionally, key figures in the ZCI had brought histories of rights and constitutional activism with them from Zimbabwe, but they were also influenced by experiences of voting and democracy in the UK. These were transmitted home through conversations with family as well as through the formal partnerships with rights organisations, resonating with Boccagni et al's (2016) notion of political remittances. On the other hand, membership of the Zimbabwe Vigil is a mixture of people with secure and insecure status in the UK. For some who are insecure, membership can be motivated by reasons that include creating an activist profile to challenge the notions of deportability and to increase their chances of staying in the UK. The Vigil's transnational networks were affected by turbulent politics including allegations of misconduct and also a split can be attributed to a lack of accountability that is produced partly by the legal insecurity of their membership. I used the notion of unruly politics (Khanna et al, 2013) to explain the nature of lobbying that the Vigil does, and the controversy surrounding its international partner ROHR, so as to capture the organisation's internal tensions and contentious politics, the self-interest of the leadership that produced accusations of unaccountability and a turbulent political trajectory.

The impacts of these diasporic political activities were more difficult to evaluate. Efforts to influence the homeland had different outcomes for the two organisations with ZCI having some successes, for example in helping Zimbabwe-based civics roll out new technologies for reporting rights abuses, whilst ZimVigil's programs in the homeland remained controversial. This contrast, I argue, reflects the differences between the Zimbabwe-based partner organisation. ZCI partnered with the Forum, a well-established donor-funded NGO that had a track record in defending and strengthening human rights. In contrast, ZimVigil used its sister organisation, ROHR Zimbabwe International, an organisation formed on behalf on the Vigil to drive campaigns on the ground in Zimbabwe. As such, ROHR heavily relied on financial support of the UK members and had no donor support within Zimbabwe at the time of research. More broadly however, any conclusion about the impacts of diasporic activism to achieve

improvements in terms of citizenship in the homeland – both narrowly legal and understood socially – has to take account of the fact that Zimbabwe's political trajectory has not shown a shift into improved substantive citizenship for most people, enhanced democracy and rights – arguably the opposite.

The second sub-question I asked was;

- How does religious transnationalism affect diaspora citizenship and decisions to charitably give back to the homeland and, what are the effects and interpretations of these diasporic donations?

To answer this question, I looked at a Zimbabwean Catholic fellowship in London which was the focus of chapter six and argued that religious transnationalism shapes how Zimbabwean migrants interact and engage with the homeland and it particularly encourages how they engage charitably. This giving is not just an expression of faith, but also a reflection of diasporic citizenship. I extended Pasura's (2012) work on Zimbabwean transnational religion by using a methodology that followed charitable giving through diasporic fellowships back to the homeland, and argued that these faith-based networks need to be included in discussions of diasporic citizenship. Religious transnationalism is usually seen as a way to integrate in the hostland but the impacts it has on charitable giving have rarely been foregrounded as the lens of many studies has primarily focussed on countries of settlement. In addition, I argued that whilst religion might help members of the diaspora integrate, it also helps them connect with the homeland which fosters a sense of belonging in both societies. Religious networks that span host and homeland can provide a good example of how transnationalism can work hand in hand with integration (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013). Mutual support roles in the UK could build on a sense of transnational connection and reinforce diasporic identity and practices of diasporic citizenship.

I showed how faith shapes significant community development projects within the homeland. Through religious transnationalism, the congregants I studied found themselves in direct contact with the homeland since they take directives from the mother church in Zimbabwe. These transnational connections kept them in constant touch with the homeland. These communications provided frequent reminders that

they were in a position to help out in the homeland given their economic privilege in the hostland. In addition, since they had a cultural foot in Zimbabwe and an economic one in the UK (Machoko, 2013), they sought to balance the two and make them complement each other. Charitable giving, I further argued, is part of identity creation by diaspora groups in the hostland. At the same time, giving to projects linked to the homeland church can also be about maintaining a stake in the homeland. As argued above, this charitable giving further cements diasporic identity as mobilisations and drives for donations gave congregants a sense of pride in knowing that they are doing something for their homeland. The continued growth of Zimbabwean fellowships, and the scale of funds channelled through church groups and institutions to disaster relief and a wide range of other projects demonstrates the on-going importance of the church and religious transnationalism as a feature of the Zimbabwean diaspora and its impacts on the homeland.

Donations and charitable giving by the diaspora also spark altruism within the homeland itself as local communities get involved in some instances and realise, they too can assist. Members of the communities that benefitted from some of the charitable initiatives by UK-based Zimbabwean Catholics also showed an immense amount of appreciation and argued that without their diaspora-based counterparts' support, they would not have managed the projects. Interpretations of diaspora giving through the church thus reinforce the notion of economically privileged Zimbabwean church fellowships in the UK, motivating further relief and development work, and deepening transnational ties.

The third sub-question asked was;

- How does the legal and socio-economic status of diasporans in the hostland shape transnational family practices and how do these practices affect diasporic citizenship?

I addressed this question by looking at transnational family life amongst UK-based Zimbabweans in chapter seven. The chapter argued that adopting a practice-oriented family approach following Morgan (1996), is particularly important in relation to acts of citizenship, as it focusses on 'doing family' instead of 'being' one. I argued that

although family practices are quite complex, a centrally important shaping factor is legal status in the hostland, which is closely bound up with socio-economic status. Perceptions of cultural difference between hostland and homeland also matter, but legal status shapes the possibilities of action and physical movement. Members of the diaspora with secure status possess mobility, allowing them to travel between host and homeland frequently and also bring their immediate family into the UK. Insecure status, on the other hand can impact negatively on co-presences as those who leave cannot travel freely. This does not however mean they are less connected and embedded with their families transnationally. Transnational families practice communication using social media and other new digital communications that have bridged the gap between worlds and some maintain what Madianou (2016) calls 'ambient co-presences' using these technologies. Yet, I also showed that the literature can exaggerate the ease of access to these platforms, and that costs in Zimbabwe could be prohibitive for some. Generalisations about a legal/illegal binary and their impacts on family and diasporic citizenship also need to be qualified, I argued, not at least because these statuses change over time.

Transnational family practices and acts of diasporic citizenship are thus related in a variety of ways. One direct connection is that family members in the diaspora are motivated to seek to effect positive change in the homeland for the sake of their relatives present there. In some instances, the funds they send home provide access to news that can also enable those at home to engage more easily in acts of citizenship. I further argued that the ways in which people 'do family' and their relationship to diasporic citizenship can also interconnect with religious transnationalism. This is because church communities are often spoken of as an extended family (Pasura, 2012) where diasporans can get support to help them mitigate psychological effects of difficulties in adjusting to the hostland including help with family in situ and transnationally. The connections between 'doing family' and diasporic citizenship are therefore multi-faceted and complex.

8.1. Final reflections and potential further research

The elaboration in this thesis of the notion of diaspora citizenship to understand transnational political, religious and familial engagements with home used the case of

Zimbabweans in the UK, focussing in particularly closely on the period 2013-18. In this final section of the thesis, I reflect briefly on further potential avenues of research.

To begin with, there were certain limitations particularly with the geographical scope of the research. Thus, further work would be useful in order to understand attitudes of Zimbabweans in other parts of the world. Particularly, when comparing Zimbabweans in the UK to Zimbabweans in South Africa, does proximity to the homeland play a part in the sense of diasporic citizenship? Do Zimbabweans in South Africa feel more embedded in the hostland and thus do they rely less on expressions of diasporic citizenship? It has been suggested in the literature that there is a class dimension to the use of the term 'diaspora' and that many labour migrants and informal workers in South Africa do not consider themselves and are not considered as such (McGregor 2010). So, does this mean that the idea of 'diaspora citizenship' is limited to those in more western nations? Or has on-going xenophobia towards Zimbabweans within the Southern African region rendered this concept meaningful in such proximate countries?

It would also be useful to find out how and why ruling party supporters engage with the homeland together with their political party. Are the motivations behind their activism the same as those of opposition supporters? What might a study of ruling party supporters' transnational activism look like? Who are their intermediaries, what sort of social base does this group draw from and what are their socio-economic statuses in the hostland? Would it have a similar emphasis on rights and democracy, or on giving back and assisting in other ways? Is it based on a similar sense of diasporic citizenship? Would the notion of diasporic citizenship as elaborated in this thesis be useful to assess their transnational engagements?

In addition to this, the scope of this study's investigation of religious networks in relation to diasporic citizenship was limited to the Roman Catholic church. Further research could usefully include a comparison of transnational charitable engagements between the traditional mainstream church congregations (not only Roman Catholics, but also Methodists, Anglicans etc) in relation to the growing number and influence of Pentecostal megachurches in Zimbabwe and amongst the diaspora. How is their giving similar or different, both in terms of what sort of projects congregants chose to

support, and whether these are connected to a sense of diasporic citizenship? Have these Pentecostal churches also fostered relief and developmental interventions on a similar scale?

An attempt to upscale the scope of this research could also further investigate impacts, which this study only touched upon selectively, because of its methodology of following specific networks based in the diaspora. What might the conclusions about the influence of diaspora citizenship be if the starting points for tracing networks and impacts were based in the homeland? How might a study begin to map out a methodology for assessing political, religious and familial networks and impacts within the Zimbabwean public and familial spheres of diasporic civic activism.

In short, however, through the specific Zimbabwean case, methodology and networks analysed here, this thesis hopes to have shown both empirically and conceptually the importance of extending the concept of diasporic citizenship to transnational domains of action. Zimbabwean professionals, irregular migrants, church congregations and family members engaged not only in 'acts of citizenship' in situ, but have mobilized transnationally in a variety of ways that expressed and consolidated their own sense of belonging while at the same time seeking to transform broader civic spheres and substantive meanings of citizenship. The impacts of their endeavours were variable, but diasporic citizenship has thus become a recognizable sphere of action in both contexts. The thesis added a new dimension to prior scholarship on the Zimbabwe diaspora, and developed a concept of broader potential utility in migration, diaspora and citizenship studies.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Participant Information Sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title

Diaspora Citizenship and the Transnational Domain: Political, Religious, Charitable and Familial Practices Amongst Zimbabweans in the UK

Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

Over the past decade, there has been a lot of activity amongst Zimbabweans in the UK politically and philanthropically. The study seeks to understand the contributions of those who left the country to what is currently happening. This will be done by tracing the activities of Zimbabweans based in the United Kingdom back to Zimbabwe to see how they have contributed. The study also seeks to find out how those in Zimbabwe view these activities in general and those citizens who left the country. The study will run from 2016 and will end up with the completion of a research thesis by September 2019.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been chosen to take part in this project because of your direct/indirect link to the associations and groups under study. About 80 other people will also be asked to participate in the study.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to participate, I will ask you a series of questions in interview format and record all your responses. Your responses will be recorded on audio, but it will remain anonymous. The consent form which I will ask you to read and sign should you wish to take part gives more details on audio recording and also your permission. The interview should last for about an hour but could run longer based on how you respond. Questions about your participation in this network/organisation and the reasons behind this will be asked among others.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By taking part in this study, you will be contributing to our understanding of how diaspora groups and associations contribute to their homelands. You will also be helping us understand more on how those who do not emigrate feel about the diaspora. This could eventually improve how the relationship diasporas have with their homeland governments.

Will my information in this study be kept confidential?

The information I collect here will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations) and I will ensure that none of it leads back to you. The data will be kept securely on an encrypted computer which is password protected. All details that may lead back to you will be anonymised before use in the public. You will also have the right to withdraw any of your data from the research up until October 2018 should you wish.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you wish to take part, all you have to do is to let me know and we can schedule a time and place for the interview or if you are free, we can even start talking immediately.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research will be used in the writing of a thesis for my PhD in International Development. The thesis will be made available on the university website upon completion and you should be able to view it there.

Who is organising the research?

I am conducting this research as a student in the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex where I am based in the Department of International Development.

Who has approved this study?

This research has been approved through the School of Global Studies ethical review process.

Contact for Further Information

Should you require any further information, please contact me on t.mutambasere@sussex.ac.uk or if you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact my supervisors Professors JoAnn McGregor and Michael Collyer on j.mcgregor@sussex.ac.uk and m.collyer@sussex.ac.uk respectively.

University of Sussex has insurance in place to cover its legal liabilities in respect of this study.

Thank you for taking your time to read this information sheet.

Date

26 June 17

Appendix 2: Interview questions with UK political networks

Personal History and Background

- When did you come to the UK?
- What brought you here?
- Do you have a family here and did you have family (siblings/parents/extended family) present in the UK before moving here?
- Were you employed in Zimbabwe before you left? If so, what did you do before that?
- Have you invested in or undertaken tertiary or further education since you arrived in the UK?
- Would you say you feel settled in the UK? Why? Or Why not?

Work and Social Life

- What do you do for a living now? How long have you worked there/had the same job?
- Have you lived in the same city since arriving in the UK?
- Would you say there are many Zimbabweans in your area/community?
- What kinds of diaspora-based associations have you been a member of in the past?
- How often do you engage with other Zimbabweans in your community or in the UK?
- Are your friendships/social networks mainly Zimbabwean?

Organisation

- Why did you join this organisation? Could you tell me a bit about the history of the organisation? Do you know whose idea it was? Who the key members are? Aims? Sources of funding, if any?
- Are there any periods/episodes/events that the organisation has undertaken that are significant?
- Where do other members of this organisation come from?
- What kinds of activities and events are you usually a part of here?
- How often do you go to these events/do these activities?

- How do you as member see yourself contributing to the objectives of the organisation?
- Do you have any partner organisations in Zimbabwe? If so, who are they and why did you choose them?
- How do you partner? Do you support them financially?
- How has the relationship been? Do you think you are giving more?
- Do you think your activities with this association have helped change things?

Diaspora Life and Citizenship

- Do you see yourself as a citizen of both the UK and Zimbabwe? Is your participation in these activities based on this?
- What is your understanding of diaspora? And what is your understanding of citizenship?
- Do you think you can be both a member of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK and a citizen of Zimbabwe/UK at the same time?
- Do you think that what you do here has an effect in Zimbabwean affairs? If so, how/what?
- Based on your knowledge; have there been any consequences in Zimbabwe based on the actions of the Zimbabwean diaspora?
- What would you say is your main source of news about Zimbabwe?
- Do you use or are you active on any social media? Twitter? Facebook? Other? If so, would you say you get some of your news from these platforms?

Homeland Based

- How often do you visit Zimbabwe? Do you go with your family? When was the last time you were in Zimbabwe?
- Is the rest of your family in the UK or majority are still in the homeland?
- Do you frequently send gifts and money back home to your family? What do you send more if so? Money or gifts?
- What are the channels that you use? Do you send money via Western Union, World Remit or with other people? Have you experienced problems sending money/gifts home?

- When you send the money, do you give specific instructions on how it can be spent?
- Have you invested in the homeland? Business? House? Education for family members?
- Would you say you contribute more to your family back home than you did previously or you give less?
- Do you think that diaspora members should be involved in affairs of the homeland? If so, what are your reasons? (are they related to citizenship? Or are they related to something else?)
- Do you think you as a member of the diaspora should be allowed to vote in Zimbabwe?
- Do you think the hostland (UK Government) encourages different diaspora groups to engage with their homelands? Have you interacted with them?

Change Over Time

- How would you say your views/life have changed over the period you have lived in the UK? What are the main reasons behind this?
- How do you think the Zimbabwean diaspora has changed since 2009? How would you explain the “demobilisation” of many of the members of the Zimbabwean diaspora?
- Are there other aspects of your life in the UK that are notable in terms of your ideas about belonging and citizenship into the future?

Appendix 3: Interview questions with UK religious networks

Personal History and Background

- When did you come to the UK?
- What brought you here?
- Do you have a family here and did you have family (siblings/parents/extended family) present in the UK before moving here?
- Were you employed in Zimbabwe before you left? If so, what did you do before that?
- Have you invested in or undertaken tertiary or further education since you arrived in the UK?
- Would you say you feel settled in the UK? Why? Or Why not?

Work and Social Life

- What do you do for a living now? How long have you worked there/had the same job?
- Have you lived in the same city since arriving in the UK?
- Would you say there are many Zimbabweans in your area/community?
- Are your friendships/social networks mainly Zimbabwean?
- How often do you engage with other Zimbabweans in your community or in the UK? Do you engage with them at church? How often do you go to church?
- Are Zimbabweans in the UK religious? Would you say there is an equal number of men and women who are religious and go to church frequently?

Organisation/Church

- Were you a member of this church before you left Zimbabwe? If not, why did you join this church? Are all members Zimbabweans?
- Where do other members of this church come from, which areas of the UK?
- What kinds of activities and events are usually organised by the church? Why did you chose to be a member of this organisation?
- How often do you go to these events/do these activities and meetings?

- How do you as member see yourself contributing to the objectives of the organisation? Do you think other members of the organisation do more than you do?
- Do you have any partner organisations or churches based in Zimbabwe? If so, who are they and why did you choose them?
- How do you partner? Do you support them financially? What sorts of things do you send?
- How has the relationship been? Do you as an organisation send the same as when you started?
- Do you think your activities with this association have helped change things within your community here and in Zimbabwe as well?
- Do you think that the diaspora in general is doing enough?

Diaspora Life and Citizenship

- Do you see yourself as a citizen of both the UK and Zimbabwe? Is your participation in these activities based on this?
- What is your understanding of diaspora? And what is your understanding of citizenship?
- What is your understanding of development? By working together with this network, do you think you are helping develop Zimbabwe? If so, how?
- How do you see what you are doing affecting people in Zimbabwe?
- Do you think you can be both a member of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK and a citizen of Zimbabwe/UK at the same time?
- Do you think that what you do here has an effect in Zimbabwean affairs? If so, how/what?
- Based on your knowledge; have there been any consequences in Zimbabwe based on the actions of the Zimbabwean diaspora?
- Do you use or are you active on any social media? Twitter? Facebook? Other? If so, would you say you get some of your news from these platforms?

Homeland Based

- How often do you visit Zimbabwe? Do you go with your family? When was the last time you were in Zimbabwe?

- Is the rest of your family in the UK or majority are still in the homeland?
- Do you frequently send gifts and money back home to your family? What do you send more if so? Money or gifts?
- What are the channels that you use? Do you send money via Western Union, World Remit or with other people? Have you experienced problems sending money/gifts home?
- When you send the money, do you give specific instructions on how it can be spent?
- Have you invested in the homeland? Business? House? Education for family members?
- Would you say you contribute more to your family back home than you did previously or you give less?
- Do you think that diaspora members should be involved in affairs of the homeland? If so, what are your reasons? (are they related to citizenship? Or are they related to something else?)
- Do you think you as a member of the diaspora should be allowed to vote in Zimbabwe?
- Do you think the hostland (UK Government) encourages different diaspora groups to engage with their homelands?

Change Over Time

- How would you say your views/life have changed over the period you have lived in the UK? What are the main reasons behind this?
- How do you think the Zimbabwean diaspora has changed since 2009? How would you explain the “demobilisation” of many of the members of the Zimbabwean diaspora?
- Are there other aspects of your life in the UK that are notable in terms of your ideas about belonging and citizenship into the future?

Appendix 4: Interviews with political networks: Zimbabwe

Background and History

- Were you born in this area/city or have you been staying in this area/city for long? Is the city your home?
- What level of education do you possess?
- Do you do this type of work full time or you have something else? Would you call this your job?
- Have you always been active in politics and such issues?

Diaspora Based (Personal)

- What is your understanding of the word diaspora? What does it mean to you? What do you associate it with?
- Have you ever travelled outside of Zimbabwe?
- Do you have family members who live outside the country? If so, how often are you in touch? Do you share ideas over the phone? Do they also send you gifts and money? How often do they visit?
- Have you heard anything about the lives people live “in the diaspora” particularly in the UK?
- Do you think they still remain Zimbabwean citizens even after leaving and staying out of the country for sometimes decades?

Organisation

- How long have you been working with this organisation/movement/network?
- Were you present when it was formed? If not, what made you join? Who formed it?
- What are primary goals of the organisation? How long has the organisation been active?
- What are the key aims of this particular organisation/initiative? What is the general idea behind this initiative? What does it seek to achieve?
- Who are the key people? Where are the members from?
- What sorts of activities does the organisation do? Which ones are you usually a part of?

- How do you mobilise? What have you achieved so far? What can you say are the successes of the initiative based on your personal and organisational experience?
- Have you had any experiences or clashes with the government? What did they say?
- Are there any issues that your organisation struggles with that you might say are avoidable?

Diaspora Involvement

- I understand you work hand in hand with diaspora based Zimbabweans, do you work with mainly organisations or individuals too?
- Do you approach them? How does the arrangement work?
- What sorts of issues did you have before they came on board? Has it been easy to implement your activities?
- How does the diaspora support your activities? Financially? Ideas?
- How much do you value their input? Do they motivate you?
- Are all the ideas about activities home-grown or do some come from partners and the diaspora?
- How has your relationship with them been? Do you work well?
- Do you think that diaspora members should be involved in affairs of the homeland? If so, what are your reasons? (are they related to citizenship? Or are they related to something else?)
- Do you think you as a member of the diaspora should be allowed to vote in Zimbabwe? Please give a reason for your answer.

Impact

- Would it have been possible for you to carry on without the help of the Zimbabweans in the diaspora?
- Are there any recent changes regarding how you do your work that you can attribute to the involvement of the diasporans?
- Would you say your views have changed over the period you have worked with Zimbabweans in the diaspora? What are the main reasons behind this if so?

- How do you think the organisation has done in terms of the political and civic sphere in Zimbabwe? Do you feel you have contributed to it?
- Do you also have other sister organisations that you work with on the ground? Has that partnership also benefitted from the involvement of Zimbabweans in the diaspora?
- Has the government hampered or attempted to interfere with the work/activities your organisation is doing?

Change Over Time

- Has your relationship with diaspora organisations changed over time? What is the reason behind this?
- Has your relationship with diaspora based Zimbabweans changed over time? Why?
- Do you think Zimbabweans based outside the country are doing enough to contribute to the country? Why?

Appendix 5: Interviews with Religious Networks: Zimbabwe

Background and History

- Were you born in this area/city or have you been staying in this area/city for long? Is the city your home?
- What level of education do you possess?
- Do you do this type of work full time or you have something else? Would you call this your job?
- Have you always been active in issues of development and charity?

Diaspora Based (Personal)

- What is your understanding of the word diaspora? What does it mean to you? What do you associate it with?
- Have you ever travelled outside of Zimbabwe?
- Do you have family members who live outside the country? If so, how often are you in touch? Do you share ideas over the phone? Do they also send you gifts and money? How often do they visit?
- Have you heard anything about the lives people live “in the diaspora” particularly in the UK?
- Do you think they still remain Zimbabwean citizens even after leaving and staying out of the country for sometimes decades?

Organisation

- How long have you been working with this organisation/network?
- Were you present when it was formed? If not, what made you join? (Mind that most of them might be Priests and Nuns unless if it's based on church groups)
- What are primary goals of the organisation? (some of the donations went to orphanages and hospitals)
- How long has the organisation been active? Where are the members from? The surrounding community?
- What sorts of activities does the organisation do? Which ones are you usually a part of? What have you achieved so far?

Diaspora Involvement

- I understand you work hand in hand with diaspora based Zimbabweans, do you work with mainly organisations or individuals too?
- Do you approach them or do they approach you? How does the arrangement work?
- What sorts of issues did you have before they came on board? Would you say they helped solve these problems if any?
- How does the diaspora support your activities? Financially? Ideas?
- How much do you value their input?
- How has your relationship with them been? Do you work well?
- Do you think that diaspora members should be involved in affairs of the homeland? If so, what are your reasons? (are they related to citizenship? Or are they related to something else? Like maybe faith? Ties to the area?)

Impact

- Would it have been possible for you to carry on without the help of the Zimbabweans in the diaspora? Where else would you have sort for help?
- Are there any recent changes regarding how you do your work that you can attribute to the involvement of the diasporans?
- Would you say your views have changed over the period you have worked with Zimbabweans in the diaspora? What are the main reasons behind this if so?
- How do you think the organisation has done in terms of the political and civic sphere in Zimbabwe? Do you feel you have contributed to it?
- Do you also have other sister organisations that you work with on the ground? Has that partnership also benefitted from the involvement of Zimbabweans in the diaspora?
- How has this partnership you have with the Zimbabweans abroad helped develop this area? And general development in Zimbabwe?
- Has the government hampered or attempted to interfere with the work/activities your organisation is doing?

Change Over Time

- Has your relationship with diaspora organisations changed over time? What is the reason behind this?
- Has your relationship with diaspora based Zimbabweans changed over time? Why?
- Do you think Zimbabweans based outside the country are doing enough to contribute to the country? Why?

Appendix 6: Interview questions with UK ‘outsiders’

- Have you always stayed in the UK? If not, where are you originally from?
When did you come here and what do you do for a living?
- What is your knowledge of the Zimbabwean diaspora? Activities, associations, organisations and the like.
- How do you see the Zimbabwean diaspora contributing or not to the objectives?
- Do you think their activities with these association have helped change things? If so, what things? When? How so?
- What is your understanding of diaspora and citizenship and development?
- What are your views about dual citizenship? In the Zimbabwean case. Do you think it is useful or necessary? How?
- Do you think these activities are forcing any changes in Zimbabwe? Attitudes of the citizens and government for example?
- Do you think that diaspora members should be involved in affairs of the homeland? If so, what are your reasons? (are they related to citizenship? Or are they related to something else?)
- What is your opinion of the diaspora vote? Logistically, do you think it is possible in Zimbabwe? How would you see it implemented suppose it happens?
- Do you think the hostland (UK Government) encourages different diaspora groups to engage with their homelands?
- How do you think the Zimbabwean diaspora has changed since 2009? How would you explain the “demobilisation” of many of the members of the Zimbabwean diaspora?

Appendix 7: Interviews with Zimbabwe Based ‘outsiders’

- Were you born in this area/city or have you been staying in this area/city for long? Is the city your home?
- What is your understanding of the word diaspora? What does it mean to you? What do you associate it with?
- Have you ever travelled outside of Zimbabwe?
- Have you heard anything about the lives people live “in the diaspora” particularly in the UK?
- What is your knowledge of the Zimbabwean diaspora? Activities, associations, organisations and the like.
- How do you see the Zimbabwean diaspora contributing or not to the objectives of the various organisations?
- Do you think their activities with these associations have helped change things? If so, what things? When? How so? Attitudes of the citizens and government for example?
- What is your understanding of diaspora and citizenship and development?
- What are your views about dual citizenship? In the Zimbabwean case. Do you think it is useful or necessary? How?
- Do you think that diaspora members should be involved in affairs of the homeland? If so, what are your reasons? (are they related to citizenship? Or are they related to something else?)
- What is your opinion of the diaspora vote? Logistically, do you think it is possible in Zimbabwe? How would you see it implemented suppose it happens?
- Has your relationship with diaspora-based Zimbabweans changed over time? Why?
- Do you think Zimbabweans based outside the country are doing enough to contribute to the country? Why?

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