

The social context of migrant social capital: Explaining the rise of friends and the decline of family as the main bases of support for undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Botswana

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to understand the role of social capital in the migration of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants to Botswana. It is based on a questionnaire survey (n=152) and 25 in-depth interviews. A snowball sampling method was followed. A key finding was that although kinship networks were dominant in the initial stages of the migration trajectory, their influence declined once migrants reached the destination. Here migrants preferred friendship networks and reported highly conflictual relations with relatives. Major issues in their relationship with relatives were free riding, the delegitimation of seniority-based authority relationships, and competition over status in the home community resulting in fears that relatives will put them in a bad light through malicious gossip. Social networks based upon friendship, evangelical churches and an overarching bounded solidarity among undocumented Zimbabweans seem to be the replacement of social networks based upon kinship. We argue that the economic collapse and extensive downward mobility of Zimbabweans over the last two decades played an important role in causing the decline in the role of the family as a basis of support.

INTRODUCTION

The social capital perspective is currently widely used to understand international migration (Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa & Spittel 2001; De Haas 2010). In terms of this perspective, the relationships potential migrants have with family members and friends in both the origin and destination areas produce social capital that will facilitate their migration. Potential migrants receive information about opportunities elsewhere, cash transfers, and in kind support from their social connections. This reduces the costs and risks of migration, and increases the amount of migration that occurs between an origin and a destination area.

Beyond these findings regarding the importance of kinship and community social networks as the basis for migrant social capital, not much attention has been given to the possibility that circumstance in both the sending and receiving countries may weaken networks so that they can no longer fulfil their support function. As Brown (2004) has pointed out, the social capital literature has tended to take the functionalist view that the development and maintenance of social networks are an unproblematic and inevitable outcome of the presence of migrants in the destination

area and the need for support faced by aspiring migrants. This assumption has been questioned by a few recent studies, for example Collyer (2005), Gelderblom & Adams (2006) and Engbersen (1995/6). Menjivar's (1997) study of Salvadoran migrants to San Francisco in the early 1990s also questions the simplistic assumption of inevitable network support. She uses Portes & Rumbaut's (1990) notion of the context of reception to explain why recent migrants could not rely on the support of their relatives as they tried to survive in the new context. According to Portes & Rumbaut (1990:85-93) three elements make up the context of reception for migrants: the policies of the receiving government, the host labour market, and the nature of the ethnic community. In the case of Salvadoran migrants, the policy of the American government was extremely exclusionary. They could not claim refugee status because the American government supported the Salvadoran regime, which was implicated in the death squads that many of these migrants were fleeing. The host labour market was unwelcoming, because they had arrived in California at a time of severe recession and were regarded as illegal immigrants. As a result, the new migrants could not find jobs, which made them more dependent on their relatives, and made it difficult for them to reciprocate the support they had received from their relatives. The latter were themselves recent migrants who had insecure and badly paid jobs. This unfavourable context of reception produced much conflict between family members, and eventually resulted in many new arrivals being isolated completely from family support networks.

The current study fits into that mould. It reports that, while kinship connections of undocumented Zimbabweans in Botswana are the main source of initial support for their migration, and while the family back home remains an important reference group whose goodwill migrants are trying to retain, and whom they try to support materially, the relationship of migrants with family members in Botswana is very distrustful and conflictual. As a result, friends are by far the strongest source of ongoing support of migrants in Botswana. Like Menjivar's study, this paper also finds the context of reception an important explanatory factor. However, it argues that the sending context, as well as the interaction between the two contexts, should also be taken into account.

Although migration of Zimbabweans to Botswana has been a regular phenomenon since the deterioration of the Zimbabwean economy in the 1990s as a result of the introduction of structural adjustment policies, mass migration only started following the political violence and the economic chaos produced by the accelerated land reform policies in 2000. This created high rural unemployment, which in 2005 was followed by dislocation and unemployment in the urban areas as a result of Operation Murambatsvina (the destruction of informal urban dwellings and businesses by the state) (Tibaijuka 2005). There are three reasons why Botswana became a major destination: 1) its rapid economic growth which resulted in a powerful currency, the Botswana Pula; 2) its proximity to Zimbabwe, and 3) its lengthy and porous border with Zimbabwe.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE STATISTICS

This paper draws upon the Masters' thesis of the main author (Mutsindikwa 2012). The research consisted of a questionnaire survey as well as in-depth interviews. The respondents were undocumented migrants in Gaborone, and were recruited at BBS Shopping Mall in Broadhurst, as well as the White City and Gaborone West Phase 2 neighbourhoods where they wait to be picked up by clients for odd jobs. Informal hairdressers working at the Knockout shop near the Railway Station were an additional source of respondents. Hundred and fifty two questionnaires were completed. Once a respondent agreed to be interviewed, the questionnaire was handed out and completed in the presence of the main author. This ensured that all 152 respondents completed the questionnaires in full. In addition, the author conducted 25 in-depth interviews. The full sample therefore consisted of 177 respondents. These interviews were helpful in gaining a better understanding of the trends that were discovered in the survey. They took about an hour each, and were conducted in the respondents' place of residence.

Because there is no sampling frame of undocumented migrants in Gaborone, it was impossible to draw a probability sample. Instead, a snowball sampling strategy was used. The main author started out by getting to know Zimbabweans who congregated at these four places, and subsequently recruited five migrants whom he regarded as influential and who were prepared to talk to him. The social connections of these five were the starting point of his sample. In addition, he requested each respondent to recommend an additional respondent. Being Zimbabwean himself made it easier to win the trust of respondents. The respondents were undocumented to varying degrees. Some had legal papers, but were looking for work illegally. This was mostly because they only had tourist visas. The Botswana government also makes it difficult for foreigners to access the casual labour market, with the result that it was in any case illegal for the respondents to look for work at these places. Others were both illegally present in Botswana (crossing the border without papers or overstaying their visas) and working illegally. Many of them openly defined themselves as *zvipedagu* (singular *chipadagu*), which refers to 'hard core' women and men who can survive the dangers of apprehension in a foreign land.

There were slightly more female than male respondents in the survey (77 women versus 75 men), with the situation being reversed in the in-depth interviews (13 men and 12 women). The age range of migrants was between 18 and 50 with the majority (54%) being between 31 and 40 years old (here and elsewhere in the article n=152). These are the age groups that will be looking for employment and it explains their reason for migrating to Botswana. The majority of the undocumented migrants had worked in Botswana for 4 to 6 years (59,2%), thus indicating that Operation Murambitsvana was an important push factor (the study was done in 2011). Later arrivals (1 to 3 years ago) represented 26,3% of the sample and earlier arrivals (7-9 years) made up 13,2 % of the sample. The majority (69,7%) of the respondents had completed their O-levels (grade 11), 7,9% their A-levels, 10,5% had done some vocational training and 11,8% had only reached junior certificate level. Finally, 48% of respondents were married, 33% single and 19% divorced or widowed.

SOCIAL CAPITAL DURING INITIAL STAGES OF THE MIGRATION PROCESS

Findings revealed a more intense prevalence of kinship relations in the first stages of the migration trajectory. Migrants initially got to know about Botswana and its prospects more through relatives than any other group of people. Though friends played a significant part in informing colleagues about Botswana and its prospects (34.9%), this proved to be lower than relatives (52.6%). Another 11,8% received such information from a member of their home community. In addition 49,3% of respondents chose Gaborone as their destination because of the presence of a relative. Relatives also played a large part in financing the respondents' first trip to Botswana (55,3%), versus 36,8% who self-financed, 6,6% who depended on friends and 1,3% who borrowed from community members. There were several reasons for this pattern. Because social relations in the origin communities is still to some extent kinship based, aspiring migrants were more likely to come into contact with visiting expatriate migrant family members than visiting expatriate friends. Secondly kin members have an obligation to assist one another. This obligation is associated with a more self-interested motive in the sense that they may want to reduce the burden they shouldered of the dependents at home. Once they assisted one person to migrate they would have added one that can help those back home and reduced the number of dependents they are obliged to look after. Georges (1990:96) reported a similar motive for Dominican migrants to support prospective migrants back home.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS OF MIGRANTS IN GABORONE

Accommodation choices of migrants

Whilst a considerable number (36.2%) of respondents stated that they felt it was better to share accommodation with a relative (as the norm dictated) only 4.6% actually stayed with kin or family, with more (48%) sharing accommodation with groups of friends whom they knew from Zimbabwe or met in Botswana. The rest were divided between staying with an individual friend (17,1 %), living alone (10,5%) and living with their employer (18,4%). The trend for migrants to live with friends is not affected by how long they have worked in Botswana, with a cross-tabulation showing no significant trend in any direction. The proportion that lives with relatives can be contrasted with the 49,3% of respondents who chose Gaborone because of the presence of relatives. The latter statistic indicates that at least half of the migrants had a relative present in Gaborone.

The preference for friends is exemplified by the story of Thomas, a young man with a sister and brother-in-law in Gaborone (Interview 15 July 2011¹):

My sister had told me to come and that she would be waiting for me at the bus rank, but we failed to get in touch and I became stranded. It was luck that I arrived during the day. I started roaming around *spotos*² in the White City neighbourhood until I met three Zimbabwean men who, like me, spoke Shona and I told them my predicament. One of the guys who happened to be staying with a Zezuru lady offered to take me to his house. He said he 'could not abandon a 'brother'...I met most Zimbabweans at *spotos*, funerals and so on, and got friends. They showed me where to wait while looking for jobs and to expect trouble from the police...Now that I know Botswana, I found no need to bother my sister and her husband

because I thought I could be a burden on accommodation, as you know it is not easy in Botswana. Besides my elder sister would want to play 'elder sister' to me and command me around, a situation I was not really looking forward to with pleasure.

Besides saving money, another reason migrants gave for sharing accommodation is security. They feel that when they are together others can easily notice if someone was in trouble, for instance if someone was arrested or got sick. Friends and colleagues would be willing to help knowing that it might be themselves who may fall into police hands in the future. Friends contributed resources without the overtones of obligation associated with having to assist a kinsman.

Help with finding employment

About 73% of migrants believed that they were more likely to get job related information from friends (with 71% actually finding a job through them), and only 27% thought they will get such information from relatives (with the same percentage actually finding a job via them). Since they also mostly lived together with friends, this makes sense. As in the case of where they lived, length of residence in Gaborone did not make any difference to their opinion on who would be helpful in finding a job. Friendship networks are very potent in job seeking, particularly if their current employer needs extra hands. A typical example among domestic workers (who are mostly women) is the case of Senzeni (Interview 26 July 2011):

My friend referred me to my current employer three months ago. Like me, her husband also died and in-laws abused her. We became sisters in a way... Her friends asked if I did not have other friends who were like me who needed jobs. So far I have managed to call four ladies, two friends and two relatives who are now working for my employer's friends here. They clicked well and I feel better because my employer now trusts me as I have good and trustworthy friends.

The case of Saddam explains how this works among men in construction (Interview 20 July 2011):

After working for 3 months my supervisor was fired and he found a job at another company. Before that I had to help him with money to get by. After he got a new, better paying job at another brick maker where he had friends he called me to join him... 4 months later I left the job for Gaborone where friends told me there was better money... After doing waiting for piece jobs at the White City waiting area I got a four month job to make and install tiles. Two people were needed so I invited a friend I slept and cooked with at the Zimbabwean house...After that contract I got another job related to construction again at Evergreen Landscaping Company...They think since I do my work well my friends can do the same kind of work.

Relatives are often avoided because they could cause more stress to the one who referred them if they were dishonest and steal from an employer. Some of the reasons for shunning relatives which typically arose were shown in the story by Vongi, a domestic worker (Interview 15 July 2011):

On jobs it's the same case. When you have more than you can handle you call your friends to take some piece jobs. Like when neighbours of one of my piece job employers noticed how well I did my laundry, she wanted me to come to do hers also, but alas, I was busy, so I called Hannah my friend's friend. I do not call relatives because if they mess up in their jobs or disappear with their employers' property I get into trouble. Moreover if I want to leave my employer discreetly they (relatives) can be used to trace me. At home they talk too much about you too! Friends keep secrets. In Botswana keeping good relations with your friends is the road to getting anything you want. You cannot do without these 'sisters', you see?

In the area of skills development, friendship also topped the list. Most Zimbabwean migrants do jobs that they never did in Zimbabwe. They generally cannot leverage their relatively high levels of qualifications into better paying jobs and are restricted to doing the low skill jobs that were available to undocumented migrants. Some manual jobs such as plastering, landscaping, flooring, roofing (for men) and using washing machines and domestic gadgets (for women) needs advice and help from those who are more experienced. In line with this information, migrants ascribed their success as a migrant to their friends (66,4%) by a large margin. Relatives were credited by only 32,2% of the sample.

Communication with relatives back home

Respondents try to maintain contact with relatives back home. All the respondents visit home at least once a year, with 39% visiting twice a year or more often. Sending money and goods remain a critical means of maintaining meaningful and tangible relations with the home front. Most migrants have dependants at home and have to justify their absence from home to the family members who are looking after their dependants. In addition, since they do not intend to stay in Botswana for good but return home eventually, homeward relations are critically important to almost every migrant. The home is the key pole of expenditure and investment for migrants. Since the home front continues to control resources the migrant would need upon returning to Zimbabwe, such as land for farming and building a house, remittance flow is necessary for another reason: it ensures that absent migrants remain in control of their stake at home in Zimbabwe.

The use of relatives (13,8%), bus drivers (3,9%) and friends (3,9%) to take money back home has declined in importance recently in favour of Western Union (78,3%). According to Senzeni (Interview 26 July 2011):

We used to send money through people like relatives and bus drivers. This used to cause a lot of tension. Sometimes you felt others were using you to take money to their people, and yet they never told that they were planning to go to Zimbabwe and you may also wish to send something. There was this problem of someone using your money when you send to

your people....and he would say it was stolen or something. Sometimes they would talk about the amount you sent just to humiliate you to other relatives and tarnish your image at home...With Western Union these problems are over.

This extract captures some of the reasons for the decline in relatives as a remittance channel. The main reason seems to be that most do not want relatives to know how much they are earning. If they are earning more, their relatives have a tendency to think they can borrow and never repay. If they are earning less, relatives can tell people at home about their 'poor' job and 'struggling existence'. This indicates competitive behaviour and feelings of jealousy among relatives if others are sending home more money. In general, the undocumented status of the migrants presents a risk in using them as conduits of remittances, because they can easily be arrested on the way there. A problem affecting relatives, friends and bus drivers as remittance conduits is the conflicts that erupted after some fellow migrants failed to convey money or goods to intended recipients at home. The temptation to disappear with the migrant's money was worsened by the desperate situation many people found themselves in because of the acute economic and political problems and drought that affected Zimbabwe. This problem was rampant and destroyed many friendships and set kinsmen apart until Western Union provided an alternative means of remittance flow.

Support in case of illness and bereavement

Evidence indicated that sick migrants preferred care from friends if they are moderately ill rather than from relatives. Of the sample, 45,4% preferred to be cared for by friends, 34,9% by relatives, 14,5% by an immediate family member and a further 5,3% by others. The reason for this seems to be that relatives typically fear that they would be obliged by home based norms to pay for the transport of the sick or dead relative. Relatives were viewed as causes of much stress because of these fears. Friends look after each other when sick because they live so closely together. However, relatives and kin become critically important when a migrant falls seriously ill. In that case friends inform relatives either in Botswana or in Zimbabwe to come and take him or her for medical attention in Zimbabwe since access to treatment is hard to get for people without documents in Botswana. In addition in Zimbabwean culture people believe that there are stages in illness when relatives need to come and summon ancestral spirits. Death and illness draw families together even if they may have their differences and the migrants are no exception to this trend. Migrants who did not attend funerals are castigated by people back at home in Zimbabwe and by relatives in Botswana. Relatives 'come into the open' at funerals and take 'ownership' in that they are expected to play the major role even if they never got along with the deceased as migrants in Botswana. Relatives in Botswana remain answerable to those at home for a fellow migrant's demise because they are assumed to have been working together. Thus while most migrants leaned towards friends in Botswana they still had to confront issues like serious illness and death together with relatives to show an impression of solidarity to the home front.

Rotating saving associations and burial societies

Some migrants indicated that they belong to informal savings clubs. These clubs give them the opportunity to accumulate lump sums to send home to finance their projects and to buy larger items which they would not otherwise have been able to afford. More women (48%) than men (20%) belong to these saving associations (known as *marounds* among Zimbabweans). Men are more mobile because they often work in industries such as construction that demand that they live on or close to the site. Because they often do piece jobs, their income was also more intermittent. Being part of a savings association with men therefore carries a greater risk that they will abscond. Women, on the other hand, are less mobile because many of them work as domestic servants, often living with their employers. Due to these factors, as well as gender differences, there was a perception that women are more trustworthy and more likely to keep on contributing once they have had their pay-out from the collective.

Close friendship networks most often serve as the basis for savings clubs. Usually friends would have been through a lot together and have known each other long enough to have build trust (either in Zimbabwe or in Botswana). Trustworthiness is fostered by the fact that they know each other's places back in Zimbabwe. As a result, they considered it less likely that their friends can disappear without honouring their commitments. Of the respondents 37% indicated that they no longer belonged to a money saving club but did belong in the past. They had given up due to deteriorating levels of trust among members, some of whom defaulted leading to the club's demise. In some cases, members were deported and never returned, making some club members lose out. Vongi, a woman from Harare, gave this important revelation (Interview 15 July 2011):

(Y)ou must learn never to do 'rounds' with a stranger. Mostly you have to know where they come from back in Zimbabwe or know them for a long time or have been in thick and thin with them and know where they are from. You must be able to understand your colleagues and trust is very important. In fact it is the most important thing.

Kinship was not a basis for savings clubs because kin were often seen as free riders. If a relative became dishonest, the other relative would be blamed for introducing the dishonest person and suffer loss of reputation. The following case of Themba, a male migrant, was typical among savings groups involving relatives (Interview 20 July 2011):

I shall never again join these groups because of my cousin. He was deported and never returned, yet he was supposed to fulfil his obligations paying back these guys. He came back, not here, but to Francistown. The guys think I know where he is and they will not let me join. They think I should pay for him. These (relatives) people can mess you up.....

Recovery of debt from relatives usually proved difficult because of the home relations, which do not allow enforcing restitution by holding something from the debtor in lieu of owed money - something which would be easy with a friend or colleague. Another problem is obligations that a migrant may have built up in the past towards the family of their relatives, as indicated by the story of Sipho (Interview 18 July 2011):

I used to belong to another group where my cousin was a member also. When my turn came to get my money from the group my cousin started to drag, but I could do nothing to make her pay up. I think she was taking advantage of the fact that she knew that her father used to pay my fees when my father passed away back in Zimbabwe. If I fought with her over my money what would people at home think...? Obviously that I am ungrateful for the help her father gave me at that time. I left the group. We will see if she gets rich with that money...now nobody trusts her!

Despite the numbers involved in rotating credit association among Zimbabwean undocumented migrants, the extent of these activities did not match those among migrants from the Dominican Republic in the United States (Reynoso 2003) and among Mexican migrants in the United States (Orozco and Rouse 2007). From the extracts reproduced above, it seems that the threat of deportation and the general instability of migrants' lives, as well as negative perceptions regarding relatives, reduce the levels of trust needed to maintain successful savings clubs. These were also the reasons why they tended to regard the other typical migrant insurance mechanism, burial societies, as unimportant. Fifty seven percent viewed burial societies as either extremely unimportant or unimportant, and only 17% had a positive perception of them (with 26% being undecided). Migrants were however prepared to contribute to the burial costs of friends and family on an ad hoc basis. This was regarded as a more practical option. Church membership seems to be an important factor in motivating migrants in this regard.

Religion as social capital among Zimbabwean undocumented migrants

Thirty-eight percent of the respondents regarded church attendance as important or extremely important, 26% were neutral and 36% considered it unimportant or extremely unimportant. There was a distinct gender difference in this regard: 24% of men and 51% of women attached a degree of importance to church attendance. Religion plays a part in easing the lives of undocumented migrants in many ways. Some respondents saw the church as a refuge from bad luck caused by witchcraft from jealous relatives (such as having encounters with the police and not finding well-paying jobs). Some migrants even reported that they do not reveal to some of their relatives back home when they are leaving for Botswana, fearing evil spells which would be cast to imperil their journeys. They believed that it is mostly relatives who have something to gain by bewitching them, rather than anybody else, because they perceive relatives to be in competition with them. The presence of such sentiments shows to what extent the extended family has declined as a unified institution. The issue of evil spirits was one reason why migrants preferred to attend prophetic churches which claim to have powers to exorcise evil. Examples are the Madzibaba and Bethsaida Apostolic Churches which originated from Zimbabwe. One male migrant, Bruce, gave the following story common among the migrants (Interview 25 July 2011):

When I come from home I am careful because some evil people can cast evil spirits on you. Most relatives are not happy that I would be coming to Botswana, making money. They become jealous and the spirits they send give me bad luck. When leaving home for Botswana, I don't tell anyone.

They should just hear that you have already left for Botswana. If you tell relatives and say goodbye they give evil prayers and you end up coming burdened with spirits which make sure you do not succeed. They want success for their own sons.

Respondents claimed that the church played a critical role when losing loved ones. Church members provide moral and psychological support to the bereaved members. Many respondents also reported the provision of material support in cash and in kind to help in funeral proceedings and contacting relatives of deceased people at home. The role of the church in social control and morality is also highlighted by the study. Young men and women learned to avoid infidelity and avoid getting AIDS, according to some respondents. Some respondents claimed that they were accommodated by the church when they lacked accommodation and sometimes church members provided funds to help migrant members facing deportation. In times of sickness, church members also provided much needed support. In general, we can say that church membership has acquired new significance for undocumented migrants in Botswana. In Botswana they encounter numerous sources of insecurity that the evangelical churches in particular can assuage. In this process, it seems, religion fills some of the gaps left by the declining role of kinship in the lives of undocumented migrants in Botswana.

Bounded solidarity

Migrants felt that, given the adversities they faced as undocumented Zimbabwean in a foreign land, it is extremely important (63,2%) or important (25%) to help fellow migrants when they are in need. This near unanimity indicates a strong feeling of what Portes & Sensenbrenner (1993) refer to as bounded solidarity. This sentiment develops when people develop a common bond based upon shared adversity. The story of Senzeni above is a demonstration of this kind of solidarity. The basis of her relationship with her friend is that '(I)like me, her husband also died and in-laws abused her'. Bounded solidarity is often found among immigrant groups in a foreign country and is in these cases based upon nationality (although particular gender-based experiences, as in the example above, as well as racial and class oppression can also give rise to it). As a result of this willingness to help their countrymen and –women it is not surprising that that only 5,3% of respondents were not satisfied with the level of cooperation among migrants. Of the rest, 47,6% rated the level of cooperation high and 48% regarded it as very high. This is consistent with the fact that 41,4% of migrants reported that they had helped other migrants many times to come to Botswana and half claimed to have helped others sometimes. Only 8,6% claimed never to have helped others to migrate. The basic Zimbabwean division between the minority Ndebele and the majority Shona population does impact on this solidarity, however, since only 29,6% of respondents reported to have a friend from the other grouping.

This solidarity was also reflected in the way in which information about impending police raids spread throughout the undocumented community. Some migrants managed to befriend Botswana police officers and when they hear of police plans via these friends, they immediately let others know. Since all migrants have access to cell phones, news travels very fast. The source of such information was 69,1% friends, 16,4% relatives and 2,6% strangers. It seems, however, that this information is not hoarded in any way (unlike perhaps knowledge about job opportunities), and is freely shared.

Existence of rules and social control

The study points to the existence of a hierarchy among the migrants for maintaining order. Migrants were willing to adhere to rules set by informal leaders among them. This willingness probably also was a reflection of bounded solidarity. There was evidence of leaders, with consent from the people, enforcing minimum wages by banishing those who were willing to settle for less from the job-seeking spots. This helped to avoid exploitation of the group's labour by unscrupulous employers who wanted to pay less. In one case, leaders searched people who refused to contribute to funerals, claiming they had no money at all. All this had group support. A lady, Melody, clarified how leaders typically enforce conformity (Interview 17 July 2011):

Our leaders always ensure that we cooperate. They are more serious on issues of funerals and sickness when some stingy people do not like to contribute. Like there was a time when we had to help this lady whose infant child died here in Botswana...After most of us paid BWP5 each (about USD0,60), one lady said she did not have a penny. One lady leader took her handbag and shook it....and out came some money! It was shameful! The girl was punished by being chased from the place where we seek jobs for quite a while, and we supported it. She was banished until she apologised. We learned a lesson here...Leaders are free to punish anyone and mostly they will be right...They can even beat someone if it's a serious issue. It is for their own good! Even when some employers underpay our leaders can chase away the prospective employers and advise them to come back when they have a fair price.

There was also evidence for the existence of rules governing the settlement of disputes. The rules included that migrants are not supposed to report any cases among themselves to the police, but rather settle them internally or refer them to leaders. An indication of this is that 57,9% of respondents thought that conflicts among migrants were mostly resolved, as against 40,2% that said conflicts were sometimes resolved and only 2% that thought conflicts were hardly resolved. This self-organisation was designed to remove police involvement so that the police would not find excuses to raid and remove the Zimbabwean undocumented migrants. As in the other cases of bounded solidarity above, shared adversity in the form of a common experience of insecurity is the basis of these rules, as one young man, Thomas, explained (Interview 15 July 2011):

People can quarrel about money, girls, men, debts...everything but others are always there to arbitrate. If you refuse their advice you are on your own. So you have to listen to the elders as always in our tribe. All I know is that when you fight and injure one another there must never be a police report. The police can have a bad image of us and find reasons to hunt us like animals. Besides they can come to the house and find most of us who do not have valid papers.

Existence of communication hubs

Bounded solidarity was facilitated by the existence of well-established social spaces where migrants could meet amongst themselves and exchange information (and meet local Botswana friends). The key social spaces are the *spotos* in the neighbourhoods where Zimbabweans stay. The beer itself is shared between drinkers making it a social drink. Most transactions originated here for mostly men and a small number of females. People sell their phones here after going broke, *marwanas*³ sell their booty from shoplifting and those who need jobs and accommodation ask those with information. Even non-drinking men come to the *spotos* to get news of what was happening both in Zimbabwe and in Botswana. In case of sickness and death, or the arrest or deportation of a colleague, the *spoto* is the communication hub to convey the news. It is an informal 'newsroom'. Spontaneous committees of trusted persons are set up at the *spotos* to collect money for any urgent matter such as arrests, sickness and death. Those who were not behaving are also shamed here, mostly in jocular but direct ways. It is also a space for networking between local Botswana and migrants.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT AND THE SHIFT FROM KIN TO FRIENDSHIP AS BASIS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

In this section we compare our findings with that of Menjivar in order to see if we can get closer to an explanation for the decline in family relationships in Gaborone. The main difference between the Salvadoran and Zimbabwean cases was that the inability to reciprocate that Menjivar identified as the cause of the breakdown in family relationships does not apply in Gaborone. Unlike the Salvadoran migrants, who could not access paid employment, the sample of Zimbabweans all participated in the labour market. The costs of migration are also far lower for Zimbabweans than it was for Salvadorans. Undocumented Zimbabweans face a dangerous journey in crossing the border with Botswana, often necessitating payment of people smugglers. However the investment needed to migrate to Botswana is nothing compared to what is necessary to get to the US from El Salvador. El Salvador does not share a border with the US, unlike the case of Botswana and Zimbabwe, and is indeed a long distance away from it. Salvadoran kinship relationships were therefore challenged both by the high levels of support demanded from relatives due to the costs of migration and the absence of the means to reciprocate the help received. None of these applies in the Gaborone case. What did trouble Zimbabwean migrants was not the inability to reciprocate, but a perceived unwillingness, which was experienced as free riding. They believed that this undermined their success, as in Themba's narrative. Relatives tended to feel they had rights in the resources of the migrant. Free riding is demonstrated by the story of Kelly, a young woman staying with her twin sister in Gaborone. She fears being 'pulled down' by her sister. Also, note the sister's angry reaction when Kelly informs on her activities to their parents, which demonstrates the fear of gossip referred to below (Interview 21 July 2011):

At first I came alone (to Botswana), and then my parents asked me to take my twin sister with me so that she could work for herself. We used to stay together, but I could not stand her. All she did was go around with married men, and I left her because I was the one paying rent and buying food and

even her sanitary pads.... Imagine such laziness. She was pulling me down. Now she has a kid with this boyfriend, whom I hear has a wife back there. When I told the news back home she came and fought me here. She never goes home... She says I sold her out to my parents, but what could I do.

In the Salvadoran case, the ethnic community was divided between recent migrants who were desperately poor and those who had migrated when conditions were much better. A lack of connections between those two groups increased the new migrants' dependence on struggling relatives. While there were divisions in Gaborone between Shona and Ndbele migrants, overall the Zimbabwean community was characterised by a strong sense of bounded solidarity. It was easy to make friends in a context where migrants felt responsible for assisting their countrymen and –women. This reduced the need to depend on relatives.

Our findings reveal that in the case of Zimbabwean migrants it was not just the receiving context that influenced kinship relations but also the sending context and its interaction with the receiving context. The primary factor in the sending context was the economic decline and downward mobility experienced by Zimbabweans over the last decade and a half. This increased competition for resources among relatives and reduced kinship solidarity. This was worsened by the fact that the occupations available to undocumented Zimbabweans in Botswana were low status compared to what they were used to in Zimbabwe. To give an example of this: back home in Zimbabwe only 2% of respondents worked as domestic labourers; in Botswana this percentage increased to 36,8%. Whereas only 16,4% of respondents worked as manual labourers when they were living in Zimbabwe, in Botswana this increased to 50% of respondents. The host labour market that typified undocumented Zimbabwean migrants as fit only for manual labour intensified competition among kinsmen in a context where their successes in Botswana were subject to comparison by relatives at home. This created the fear that relatives will say negative things about them back home which will affect their status in the home community, as was reported in the interviews with Vongi and Senzeni. Those who were engaging in criminal activities such as shoplifting and prostitution were even more concerned to keep their occupation secret. There is also a gender dimension to the fears about gossip. Conservative relatives are eager to typecast migrant women as promiscuous and therefore suffering from AIDS. Some respondents indicated that they did not like their kin to claim some credit for helping them in life and later brag about it. Fears were even expressed that jealous relatives will bewitch them if they know of their successes (interview with Bruce). All of these were reasons for why migrants tried to associated as little as possible with relatives and thus reduce the amount of information their relatives could report about them.

It seems that norms that were acceptable in the sending context are no longer experienced as such in the receiving context. A good example of this is the respect traditionally associated with seniority in Zimbabwean families. In Gaborone, where everybody occupies the same low status in the occupational world, and where the dominant norm is bounded solidarity among friends based upon shared hardship, such status distinctions clearly becomes less tolerable. Migrants complained about too much social control by older relatives and provided this as a reason for their declining association with relatives. Thomas, for example, complained that his sister will want to play 'elder sister' to

him. Another example of this was Viola, who said: “Here friends can take care of you: relatives just want to abuse you just because you are younger or something like that.”

The narrative of Melody, a young woman (Interview 17 July 2011), provides a neat summary of the problems migrants have with their relatives:

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I did not want to go and stay with the cousin brother because I thought as he had a family I would be bothering them. Also I felt that visiting a relative without warning would make him uncomfortable and would expose his lifestyle or the extent of his ‘poverty’. Most people think you say things about them back home. My sister’s friend had also advised me that living with a relative would create very demanding obligations... She also advised me that they might become jealous if I was successful. Relatives also expect you to remain in low paying jobs. Relatives also talk too much when they visit back home and say you are doing bad things here in Botswana like, prostitution. They can even bewitch you. That’s why I chose my sister’s friend.

CONCLUSION

This article demonstrated that Zimbabwean undocumented migrants used kinship connections during the initial stage of the migration process, but then move towards friendship networks at the destination. Friends were preferred above relatives for finding jobs, sharing accommodation, help in learning new job skills, providing care in case of illness, and as partners in savings associations. By all accounts, the relationship of respondents with their relatives in Botswana was very conflictual. This indicates that social capital can decay if the social context for its continuation is unfavourable. In this article we have also tried to make the case for the importance of the interaction between the sending and receiving social contexts as an important factor in explaining this decay.

NOTES

1. Interviews were all done in Shona. Some of the interviewees were isiNdbele-speaking, but this was not a constraint, because of the general fluency of isiNdbele speakers in Shona.
2. *Spoto* is a Setswana word for a traditional opaque beer drinking place.
3. *Marwana* is a slang name for shoplifters.

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