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The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

An exploration of identity work and identity play processes of female trailing spouses in South Africa

Varaidzo V M Wekwete
Submitted as a full dissertation
in fulfilment of the degree M Phil (Human Resource Management) in the
Department of Industrial Psychology and People
Management Faculty of Management at the
University of Johannesburg

Study leaders
Prof A Bosch
and
Dr R de Braine

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Abstract

Orientation

This is a study exploring the experiences and identities of ten Zimbabwean trailing spouses in South Africa. Six of the women were first-time expatriates and, four were third-country immigrants. All the women had been employed before immigrating to South Africa, and they expected to find employment upon immigration. However, employment has proved elusive and the women have found themselves socially and economically isolated and they have been left grappling with identity issues, resulting in an existence that lacks focus, direction, and agency.

Research purpose

The aim of this study is to describe the experiences of the trailing spouse' in South Africa and to explore the women's identity work and identity play.

Motivation for the study

The study was motivated by my own experiences and struggles as a trailing spouse in South Africa

Research design.

This is a qualitative grounded theory study. I took an exponential\(^1\) discriminatory snowball sample guided by Glaserian theoretical sampling. Interviews were the main source of data collection and iterative data analysis was conducted with the aid of ATLAS.ti.

Findings

Without work, the women experienced identity liminality, which triggered identity work in attempts to remodel their self-concepts in line with their current existence. Identity liminality and identity work are explained later in this chapter in section 1.8.5.1 and section 1.8.6 respectively. The women have become unequal partners in their marriages, and experienced loss of self-esteem. The study provides conceptual explanations to the women's experiences and also provides theoretical propositions, and a model, regarding the women's identity work and identity play. I also provide probationary\(^2\) theorisation regarding the women's identity maintenance.

\(^1\) Exponential sampling in qualitative research is explained in section 2.5.1

\(^2\) Probationary theorisation is described and discussed in terms of identity maintenance in section 2.2
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my family for all the support they have given me over the years. This has been a very long journey.

I would also like to extend my thanks to my study leaders for their expertise.

I would also like to dedicate this piece of work to all those who have been affected by xenophobic attacks. To borrow from the French I would like to say

3 Je suis mukwerekwere; (I am a mukwerekwere)

Nous sommes makwerekwere; (We are makwerekwere)

Je suis grigamba (I am a grigamba)

We accept our identities and embrace them

A luta continua (The struggle continue)

3 Je suis is French for I am and the taxonomy of this phrase is borrowed from the Je suis Charlie slogan adopted by people in France after the massacre of 12 people at the Charlie Hebdo offices.
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

This study will be an exploration of the experiences, the identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance of ten female Zimbabwean trailing spouses. These trailing spouses emigrated to South Africa (SA) to join their husbands, who had taken up full-time employment in SA. Seven of the women had emigrated from Zimbabwe, and three were third-country expatriates, who had emigrated from the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), and Sweden. All ten participants had been employed before immigrating to SA, and were actively involved in their own careers and professional development. Since immigrating to SA, they had become unemployed trailing spouses. The women all expressed that they wanted to work in SA, even though they had come to SA as accompanying spouses. Accompanying spouse visas are issued under Section 11(2) of the Immigration Act, No. 13 of 2002, and this section of the Act stipulates that accompanying partners of work permit holders are not permitted to work. Although there are a number of general dispensations such as the special skills permits, quota permits, and treaty permits that the trailing spouses can apply for in order to change their immigration status so that they are eligible to work, the application processes are not always clear, and employers do not readily accept these permits. Only three of the women in the study managed to successfully change their immigration status so that they legally could be allowed to seek employment in SA.

SA is historically the largest recipient of Zimbabwean immigrants, and it has been suggested that almost a quarter of adult Zimbabweans have parents and/or grandparents who, at some point in their lives, worked in SA (Tevera & Zinyama, 2002). In 2008, it was estimated that between 1 million and 5 million Zimbabweans were living in SA (Polzer, 2008). These numbers cannot be substantiated, because many Zimbabwean immigrants are not formally documented, and there are many Zimbabweans who regularly travel between SA and Zimbabwe but do not permanently live in SA. Statistics South Africa (STATS SA), in 2012, reported that there were just over 2.8 million Zimbabweans who arrived by road in SA, and just over 2.3 million who departed by road from SA, suggesting considerable traffic between SA and Zimbabwe. Africa Check, a fact-checking non-governmental organisation based in SA, stated that neither SA’s Department of Home Affairs nor the Zimbabwean Consulate in Pretoria have accurate data on the number of Zimbabweans living in SA (Chiumia & Rademeyer, 2013). Africa Check suggested that the available data are not systematically collected, and are poorly disaggregated, resulting in impression-driven analysis (Chiumia &
Rademeyer, 2013). Further, the population figures obtained in the SA census of 2011 showed that 3.3% of the 51.7 million people living in SA were non-South Africans, suggesting that only between 1.7 and 1.9 million persons were immigrants or expatriates. Given that Zimbabweans are not the only immigrants in SA, the figure of up to 5 million Zimbabweans living in SA seems unreliable.

Although the women in this study were aware of the employment restrictions on their accompanying spouse visas, they had hoped to get work permits or change their immigration status upon immigration, so that they would be eligible for employment. At the time of the data collection, two of the participants had applied for and were granted quota permits, one participant had been granted the DZP permit, (Documentation of Zimbabweans Project) permit, enacted in 2010, and one participant had applied for a treaty permit.

Despite some of the trailing spouses having work permits, they found seeking and securing employment difficult. As a result, the trailing spouses found themselves confined to their homes, in walled or gated communities with no occupational, professional, or career prospects, which, previously, had been central to their lives and identities. Because these trailing spouses were no longer employed and spent most of their time at home as housewives, they had to contend with new lives and new selves without meaningful employment. This study will explore and describe these trailing spouses’ experiences in SA.

The experiences have affected the women’s identities, which led to identity liminality (Schouten, 1991). The women, therefore, had disrupted identities, and identities in transition (Schouten, 1991). These trailing spouses have had to create congruent, integrated identities or possible selves aligned with their new circumstances (Schouten, 1991). According to Schouten (1991), these possible selves can be created through identity work based on past identities, role models, and even hypothetical selves based on fantasy. Central to this study will be the identity work and identity play processes these trailing spouses performed to recreate and maintain their new identities as trailing spouses.

1.2 Research design

The study will follow Glaserian grounded theory. Grounded theory acknowledges that researchers does not go into the field free from ideas (Heath & Cowley, 2004). Grounded theory suggests that prior knowledge of the literature should be related the general problem area, and that reading should be aimed at alerting or sensitising the researcher to the possibilities of learning about the subject area (Glaser, 1978). I had very little prior
engagement with literature in this field, and prior reading was limited to helping me formulate the research questions and developing and sensitising my understanding of subject matter. Grounded theory is a general, inductive methodology that follows logical generation of theory through the systematic analysis of data, leading to theory discovery (Simmons, 2010). The goal of grounded theory is to develop theoretical accounts of phenomena on the basis of very close inductive engagement with primary data (Locke, 2008). I will engage Glaserian grounded theory to develop a model on the women’s identity work and identity play. Beyond inductive engagement with the data, abductive reasoning will be used to evaluate explanatory theorisation, albeit probationary theorisation, of the women’s identity maintenance.

1.3 Background to the problem

My personal experiences as a trailing spouse germinated the idea for this research. Through this study, I want to provide conceptual descriptions and explanations of the trailing spouses’ experiences, and the identity concerns of trailing spouses. I also want to understand my own experiences and find meaning in my own identity issues as a trailing spouse in SA. My journey as a researcher and a trailing spouse will not be part of the data and the study; however, in Chapter 5, I will present a reflexive account, where I describe my journey as a researcher and a trailing spouse.

The earliest known use of the term *trailing spouse* is attributed to Mary Bralove, who used the term in an article titled *Problems of two-career families start forcing businesses to adapt* (Bralove, 1981). The term was used to describe partners of expatriates. More women tend to trail (Bender & Heywood 2006); however, men also find themselves trailing their wives (Linehan, 2002). The trailing spouse is the person who gives up his or her job, life style and life cycle in order to follow a partner to a new location of employment. The phenomenon of trailing is most evident amongst dual-career and dual earning couples, because the trailing spouses have to contend with career disruptions and losses in potential earnings. (Wallston & Berger, 1978; Harvey, Novicevic, & Breland, 2009; Mäkelä, Känsälä, & Suutari, 2011). In the past, trailing spouses were found mostly in diplomatic and military communities. In more recent times, globalisation, the ease of travel, the growth of multinational businesses, and advanced communication systems have made it easier for private sector companies to send and receive employees on expatriate assignments (Wan, Hui, & Tiang, 2002), resulting in growing numbers of trailing spouses.

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*a Abductive reasoning and probationary theorisation are explained in section 2.2*
International assignments are common in today’s world of work and the growing global village. According to the United Nations (UN) the number of migrating people between 1990 and 2000 was estimated to be in the region of 154 million to 175 million (UN, 2002). The latest UN figures show that, in 2013, 232 million people were international migrants, (UN Press Release, 2013). The United Nations Development Programme (UNPD) also stated that a growing number of women migrants have joined the labour force (UNDP, 2011). Of this migrant population, the trailing spouses are most often women (UNDP, 2011).

Boundaryless careers, protean careers, and general labour mobility have also led to the globalisation of careers (Carr, Inkson, & Thorn, 2005; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Briscoe, Hall, & Frauntschy DeMuth, 2006). It has also been noted that, in dual-career settings, the trailing role can be an easier choice for the female spouse than for the male spouse, because flexible unemployed male spouses face negative stereotyping (Mäkelä, Känsälä, & Suutari, 2011). Furthermore, it is often assumed that the woman is the trailing spouse (Lineham, 2002). In line with this assumption, research on expatriate women managers found that the women expatriates were, in social settings, often assumed to be the trailing spouses, when, in fact, their husbands were the trailing spouse (Lineham, 2002).

Trailing spouses often have to give up their jobs and their familiar social lives, which sometimes disorientates their personal life trajectories in terms of careers and social circumstances, leaving them feeling lost and without meaningful purpose (Bryson & Hoge, 2005). Some trailing spouses become resigned to spending their time shopping or performing charity work (Bryson & Hoge, 2005). Jacobs (2008) also found that many trailing spouses admitted to working illegally, risking reputational damage and future career prospects, just to find some purpose in their lives. Other trailing spouses felt that they had become second class citizens in their own homes, and that they were no longer living their lives, but, rather, were living their husbands’ lives (Jacobs, 2008).

Most studies on trailing spouses assumed employers initiate expatriation. However, other forms of, and reasons for, expatriation are becoming increasingly more main stream. These include self-expatriation (Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Al Ariss, Koall, Özbilgin, & Suutari, 2012; Selmer & Lauring, 2012), emigration, both illegal and legal (Crush & McDonald, 2000; Solomon, 2003), international internships and training, which sometimes lead people to choosing to stay in the host country after completion of the training (Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012; Baruch, Dickmann, Altman, & Bournois, 2013), globetrotting (Dickmann & Baruch, 2011), and voluntary international assignments (Devereux, 2008). Jokinen, Brewster, and Suutari (2008) asserted that self-expatriates are widely used by international
organisations, and are a hidden aspect of international labour markets. Inevitably among self-directed expatriates there are trailing spouses. Surprisingly though there seems to be a gap in the literature on self-directed expatriate trailing spouses. Literature searches on the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) database of the ISI-Web of knowledge (ISI-WoS), Google Scholar, and EBSCO Host, using the lexemes *self-directed expatriate trailing spouse(s)* and *self-expatriate/self-expatriated trailing spouses* did not provide relevant articles. There is, however, a significant body of literature on self-directed expatriation in general. Some of the more recent literature on self-directed expatriation investigates expatriates’ motivation, needs, and expectations of host countries (Altman & Baruch, 2012; Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011). The literature also investigated whether self-directed expatriates are driven by a need for adventure or change, better family prospects, or an escape from undesirable situations (Richardson & Mallon, 2005).

Self-directed expatriates play different roles in the socioeconomic dynamics of their host countries than do corporate-sponsored expatriates (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011). Self-directed expatriates are more likely to become immigrants, therefore expecting to socially and economically integrate into the host country, while corporate-sponsored expatriates are more likely to return to their home countries, and therefore minimally integrate (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011). In the present study, nine couples were self-directed expatriates, and one couple self-initiated expatriation (the husband requested a lateral transfer to an office in Johannesburg), and the organisation facilitated and paid for the expatriation.

In SA, the immigration laws determine whether or not a trailing spouse may seek employment. Section 11(2) of the Immigration Act, No. 13 of 2002, states that an accompanying spouse granted temporary residence in SA is not permitted to work. Therefore, trailing to SA meant that the women had to take forced career breaks, or even sacrifice their careers and career aspirations in order to make the expatriate assignment viable for the family.

1.4 The research problem

This study will be an exploration of the experiences of ten formally employed Zimbabwean female trailing spouses who had emigrated to SA. Emigration had forced these women into unemployment. When the participants’ husbands decided to expatriate, it seems the husbands did not consider their wives’ work arrangements in the host country. The husbands also did not negotiate visas that would allow their wives to seek employment in SA. The husbands’ employers also did not concern themselves with the trailing spouses’ and the families’ settling needs, let alone the trailing spouses’ work needs.
The experiences, identity work, identities and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse

“Work is one of the primary means by which adults create their identities and form their characters” (Gini, 1998, p. 708). The loss of work came with identity struggles, which became burdensome for these trailing spouses. These women have had to navigate their identity struggles by reconfiguring their identities through identity work and identity play. Not much is known about the identity work and identity play processes of self-expatriated trailing spouses. This gap in the literature may have been because self-expatriated trailing spouses are generally an unmonitored population group. Organisations do not concern themselves with their needs, and society in general is possibly oblivious to their existence as a sub group in expatriate communities and therefore little attention is paid to them.

1.5 Research questions

The primary research question is:

What are the identity work and identity play processes of Zimbabwean female trailing spouses in South Africa?

The sub-questions are:

- What are the experiences of these trailing spouses in South Africa?
- What identity work and identity play processes do these women perform?
- What identities do these women who wish to work adopt?
- How do these trailing spouses maintain these identities?

1.6 Research objectives

The research objectives are:

- To describe the identity struggle experienced by Zimbabwean trailing spouses in the South African context;
- To describe the experiences of these trailing spouses in South Africa;
- To explain the identity work and identity play processes that these women perform; To describe the identities that female trailing spouses develop; and
- To understand how these trailing spouses who wish to work maintain their adopted identities.
1.7 Motivation for the study

There is a gap in empirical research and literature on the topic of trailing spouses’ identities in general. The closest literature available on trailing spouses’ identities is the work done by Bryson and Hoge (2005). Bryson and Hoge (2005) wrote on coaching and counselling trailing spouses when they experience a crisis in their personal growth as a result of trailing. In terms of organisational research, trailing spouses have been studied in so far as they affect decisions on expatriate assignments (Harvey & Buckley, 1998) and the impact they have on the success of expatriate assignments and spousal adjustment (Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree, & Smith, 2012). Literature is also available on the support that can be offered to trailing spouses by the organisations as proposed by McNulty (2012). There is also a gap in empirical research and literature on the topic of trailing spouses and trailing spouses’ identities in South Africa.

Self-expatriation was not a sampling criterion in this current study; therefore, it was expected that at least a significant number of the participants would have been organisation-expatriated. However in the present study, nine of the ten participants were self-expatriated. As stated earlier, literature searches on self-expatriated trailing spouses on the SSCI database of the ISI-WoS, Google Scholar, and ABSCO Host showed that research has not examined the issues affecting self-expatriated trailing spouses. It is therefore evident that there is a gap in literature regarding self-expatriated trailing spouses and their experiences, which the present study will aim to address.

The motivation for the present study was to explore the trailing spouse experiences of ten trailing spouses in SA, and to determine the identity work and identity play processes the trailing spouses performed to build and maintain their new identities.

1.8 Overview of the literature

In this section, a preliminary discussion of the literature on trailing spouses, identity, identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance will be provided. The literature study will frame the research questions, and provide a framework for the research concepts.

1.8.1 Trailing spouses

The trailing spouse phenomenon has been amply studied in so far it affects expatriate assignments (Harvey, 1995; Copeland, 2002; Eby, Douthitt, Noble, Atchley, & Ladd, 2003; Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, & Riedel, 2006; Harvey et al. 2009; Pruetipibultham, 2012; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012). The topics covered by these authors range from the impact of
The experiences, identity work, identities and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse international assignments on dual-career families, expatriate preparations for international assignments, spousal adjustment and support before, during, and after expatriation, cultural adjustments during expatriation, and reasons why people take on expatriate assignments.

There has also been research done on how to help trailing spouses cope with their experiences (Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001, Copeland & Norell, 2002; Vogel, van Vuuren, & Millard, 2008). Shaffer et al. (2001) found that a perceived lack of support for the spouse by the organisation can lead to families withdrawing from international assignments. Copeland and Norell (2002) found that social support is important for trailing spouses, and that allowing accompanying spouses a say in the decision to move will enhance the expatriate employee’s productivity during an international assignment. Vogel et al. (2008) found that preparation and support of, together with settling and cultural diversity training for, both the expatriate and the accompanying spouse are vital for successful international assignments. Literature on the globalisation of careers has also highlighted how trailing spouses affect the success of international assignments. Carr, Inkson, and Thorn (2005) postulated that families’ abilities to settle in can affect the success of international assignments. If the family is not in agreement about an international move, some family members are likely to resist the move, or inadvertently or deliberately sabotage the success of the international assignment. Harvey, Novicevic, and Breland (2009) maintained that organisations that nurture hope and expectations of a better future and curiosity for adventure in expatriates and their spouses increase the possibility of successful international assignments. Mäkelä, Känsälä, and Suutari (2011) also highlighted that trailing spouses provide daily emotional and practical support and home comforts to their expatriate partners.

Trailing spouses from dual-career settings often fail to adjust to not working and attending exclusively to family-oriented roles (Mäkelä et al., 2011). The trailing spouses no longer enjoy the support and social interaction of a workplace and the support of their extended families. Social support for trailing spouses is therefore of paramount importance if international assignments are to be successful (Cole, 2011). McNulty (2012) found that it is necessary for organisations to provide practical, professional, and social support to trailing spouses.

Practical support is necessary for adjustment, professional support is necessary to address dual-career issues, and social support helps to alleviate marital stress (McNulty, 2012). Changes in the trailing spouses’ social situations and failure to settle in and make sense of their new circumstances often lead to adjustment problems, which may result in high levels of expatriate turnover (Black, 1988), pre-mature expatriate departures, (Andreason, 2003), and even the failure of expatriate assignments (Harzing, 1995; Shaffer & Harrison, 1998).
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The body of literature on trailing spouses, discussed above, originated mainly from Europe, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand. Some research on trailing spouses has also come out of Asia. In Hong Kong, Selmer and Leung (2003) researched organisational support for male trailing spouses. Selmer and Leung (2003) found that companies generally failed to provide meaningful support to male trailing spouses, and that the men felt that they were “the forgotten partners on global assignments” (Selmer & Leung, 2003, p. 20). In Singapore, Wan, Hui, and Tiang (2002) researched factors affecting families accepting international assignments. They found that the respondents prefer to take international assignments in culturally similar host countries (Wan et al., 2002). Wan et al. (2002) also maintained that, the smaller the cultural divide between the host country’s culture and the expatriate’s culture, the easier the adjustment will be, and the higher the probability of a successful expatriate assignment becomes.

There is little research on trailing spouses in Africa, and research from SA has followed the main themes of Europe and America, which are pre- and post-assignment support, and practical and social support for the trailing spouse (Vogel et al., 2008). The pre- and post-assignment social support referred to in these studies include cross-cultural training, helping trailing spouses with work permits, helping the trailing spouses find employment, and helping children settle into schools (Vogel et al., 2008).

Bryson and Hoge (2005) suggested that, as coping mechanisms, trailing spouses need to create new self-identities while abroad, to help them adjust to new environments. In line with the opinions of Bryson and Hoge (2005), the present study will provide empirical results on the experiences, identities, identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance of ten Zimbabwean trailing spouses in SA.

1.8.2 Identity

Identity studies can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosophers, who were interested the dynamic interplay between cosmic determinism, will, and stoic calm in an endeavour to acquire sage and sagacity. The Stoics maintained that the best presentation of an individual’s philosophy is how he presents himself to others, and how he behaves. The cogito principle and the works of the French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher Descartes on the relationship between mind and body have influenced modern studies on identity (Descartes, 2003). The cogito principle — **Cogito, ergo sum** (I think, therefore I am) — suggests that the

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5 Higher wisdom
The experiences, identity work, identities and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse

act of thinking somewhat guarantees the existence of the self, and that everything about the self can be explained through systematic philosophical reasoning (Descartes, 2003). The existentialists of the mid-19th century opposed this philosophy. Existentialists emphasised individuals’ existence, freedom, and choice before moral and scientific thinking, thereby providing the primary ontological foundations for current identity studies.

Pioneers in modern identity studies, such as James (1892) and Mead (posthumous, 1934), advocated a more holistic concept of the self. James’s (1890) *Principle of psychology* proposed an account of the self where distinctions are made between the self as a subject — I, and the self as an object — me, concluding that the ‘me’ has three forms: the material me, the social me, and the spiritual me. The ‘I,’ on the other hand, does the thinking, and does not go beyond the physical being (James, 1892). Mead, a social behaviourist, maintained that individual selves are products of social interactions, as opposed to logical biological preconditions (Mead, 1934). Mead (1934) proposed that the self is not present at birth, but rather develops through social experience and interaction. Mead also distinguished between ‘me’ and ‘I’. The ‘me’ is the social self, the organised set of attitudes of others that a person assumes, while the ‘I’ is the response of the individual to the attitudes of others (Mead 1934). The concept of ‘me,’ therefore, dovetails with social identity theory, while the concept of ‘I’ aligns to identity theory. Both social identity theory and identity theory are discussed later in this chapter.

Recent identity studies have straddled the fields of psychology and sociology, and had their foundations in the field of social psychology (Weinreich, 1986). From a psychology perspective, a psychological identity relates to an individual’s self-image, the mental model that an individual has of him- or herself, and issues of self-esteem and individuality (Weinreich, 1986). In sociology, on the other hand, identity is based on role behaviours and social roles that a person adopts (Stets & Burke, 2000). Psychologists use the term *personal identity* to describe a person’s characteristics, habits, and mannerisms that make him or her different from the next person, while sociologists use the term *social identity* to describe group memberships that define an individual.

Identity studies, as we currently know them emanated from the work of Henri Tajfel in sociology, and the work of Erick Erickson in psychology. In sociology, the work of Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament (1971) on social categorisation led to the development of the earliest theorisation on social identity. Erikson’s ego identity approach in the field of psychodynamics investigated how identities are formed over a life span, suggesting stages in identity formation processes (Erikson, 1956). Erickson (1956) further suggested that a strong ego identity,
coupled with good integration of an individual into a stable society and culture, can result in a strong sense of identity. If good integration does not take place, the individual may experience an identity crisis (Erickson, 1956). Erickson’s theory of personality and theory of psychosocial development have led to present-day identity theory.

Social identity theory has its roots in the work of Tajfel, and is closely related to self-categorisation theory (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament, 1971). Identity theory leans heavily on the work of Erickson, and is guided and influenced by symbolic interactionism and perceptual control theory (Powers, 1973). These two theories currently prevail in identity studies, and both hinge on the fundamental relationship between an individual and his or her social environment.

1.8.3. Social identity theory

A social identity is a perception of oneness within a group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Groups have a profound impact on individual identity and group behaviours, with the emphasis on the “individual in the group” (Hogg & Abram, 1998, p. 3). Social identities and social identity theory contradict this traditional perspective of the individual in the group, and focus on the “group in the individual” (Hogg & Abram, 1998, p. 3). Social identity places attributes such as gender, race, and ethnicity into social structures within the context of the group in the individual (Hogg & Abrams, 1998). Stryker (1987) called the attributes of gender, race, and ethnicity master statuses. Master statuses are culturally based identities that reflect the social structures within which role identities are embedded (Hogg, Terry, & White 1995). Master statuses do not carry behavioural traits as their pivotal attributes, but rather emphasise socio-cognitive aspects of identities, linked to group processes, intergroup relations, and social selves (Stryker, 1987). Therefore, social identity theory is a social, psychological self-concept theory that sets out to explain individuals’ group memberships, intergroup and intragroup dynamics, and group processes (Burke, 2006). Social identity theory explains individuals’ sense of self based on their chosen or inherited group memberships (Hogg & Abrams, 1998). According to social identity theory, affiliations enhance and cement the status of the in-group (us), while discriminating and holding prejudiced views against the out-group (them). The mental processes that take place, according to social identity theory, are that individuals socially categorise themselves; they identify with particular social groups, and compare the in-group with the out-group, (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In doing these comparisons, self-esteem and pride (or lack thereof) are developed and maintained for the in-group, while prejudice, hostility, jealousy, and discrimination against the out-group is propagated and perpetrated (Hogg &
The experiences, identity work, identities and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse Abrams, 1998). Individuals socially categorise themselves in terms of group membership. Through these social categories, individuals aim to achieve and maintain positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their in-group, and discriminating against the out-group, reinforcing group traits (Haslam & Ellemers, 2005).

1.8.4 Identity theory

Identity theory is a micro-sociological theory that sets out to explain the multifaceted role-related behaviours of individuals (Hogg et al., 1995). Identity theory developed from Mead’s (1934) view of the nature of the self as proposed and symbolic interactionism, Erickson’s (1956) theory of psychosocial development, and Powers’ (1973) perceptual control theory. Symbolic interactionism focuses on the dynamics of the self, where the self is the axis for keeping behaviours consistent, and ensuring that the individual is motivated to verify his or her sense of self in the eyes of others (Turner, 2013). Erickson’s (1956) theory holds that the environment in which children grow up is important to their growth, adjustment, self-awareness, and identity. Perceptual control theory explains how individuals control what happens to the self, thus explaining the relationship between actions and goals, perceptions and actions, and perceptions and reality (Powers, 2005). Perceptual control theory attempts to explain how thoughts become behaviour as a result of internally organised control processes, as opposed to behaviour being a result of external stimulus response processes or cognitive activities (Powers, 2005). Perceptual control theory in identity theory provides a basis for understanding how identities function (Burke & Stets, 2009). Therefore, perceptual control theory gives direction to identity theory in terms of how identities are exhibited and controlled.

Identity theory also explains social behaviour in terms of reciprocal relationships between individuals and society, as set out by the symbolic interactionist views of Mead (1934), which propose that society affects social behaviour through its influence on the self and vice versa, therefore intrinsically linking the self and society. Identity theory focuses on the self-defining roles people play in society, as opposed to different social attributes, such as gender, race, and ethnicity that can be socially assigned to the self (Stryker, 1987). According to Stryker (1980, p. 60), a person has an “internalised position designation” assigned to each of the roles the person holds in society. Therefore, identity theory also makes clear distinctions between the person and the agent (Burke & Stets, 2009). According to Burke and Stets (2009, p. 8), “both person and agent are abstract concepts,” however, “the empirical instances of persons are easily visible to our senses, while the empirical instances of agents as separate from
persons are not.” The person is therefore the visible being, while the several identities the person has are agents. Each identity is therefore an agent, but not necessarily a person (Burke & Stets, 2009). The different identities within a person interact with social structures, as well as with the different identities of other persons (Sims, 2005). Therefore, each of these self-defining roles (identities) is a multidimensional construct that is arranged in a clear hierarchy, influenced mainly by the individual’s commitment to the identity and his or her role in society. Hence, identity theory puts together role identities, and behavioural and affective outcomes.

1.8.5 Social identity theory and identity theory

With regard to the previous discussion of identity theory and social identity theory, Cote (2006, p. 6) stated that the term identity is used at “all levels and manifestations of identity when it would be more accurate to use specific terms like social identity and personal identity.” Hogg et al. (1995) suggested that identity theory and social identity theory are different and useful in their own domains, while Stets and Burke (2000) proposed that the two theories overlap, and will converge and possibly integrate to form a single substantive theory. Although Hogg, et al (1995) present identity theory and social identity theory as a tale of two theories, Stets and Burke (2000, p. 224) maintained that there are “substantial similarities and overlaps between social identity theory and identity theory,” which are likely to “cause these theories to be linked in fundamental ways.” There are three fundamental linkages between identity theory and social identity theory that Stets and Burke (2000) recognised. These linkages: are categories and groups for social identity theory versus roles in identity theory; secondly, both theories subscribe to identities being adopted, that is identity activation in identity theory (Stryker 1980), and identity salience in social identity theory (Oakes, 1987); and finally, the third linkage involves the cognitive and motivational processes of depersonalisation in social identity theory (Hogg et al., 1995) and self-verification in personal identity (Swann, 1983; Burke, 1991). Both depersonalisation and self-verification portray the underlying processes that take place when an identity is activated, followed by identity maintenance. Depersonalisation entails an individual seeing him or herself as a member and an embodiment of the in-group (Hogg et al., 1995), while self-verification in identity theory entails role adoption and role development (Burke & Cast, 1997).

The differences between identity theory and social identity theory therefore seem to be compartmentalisation of the theories, which points towards a possible future fluid integration of the theories; however, it is not clear which direction identity studies will take, the divergent route or the converging course. Nevertheless, for the current study, it is necessary to be aware
of identity theory and social identity theory perspectives in identity studies, and to recognise how each has influenced research and literature on identity.

Individuals have both personal and social identities. Identities are psychological and sociological constructs that answer the question ‘Who am I?’ within the context of identity theory (IT) (Stryker, 1968; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Turner, 1978; Burke, 1980), and ‘Who are we?’ within the context of social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetheell, 1987). In order to understand identity and its manifestations, I draw on both identity theory and social identity theory.

1.8.5.1 Identities and identity work

People spend most of their lives with identities that are relatively stable, with little tendency change (Schouten 1991). This is called a state of non-liminality (Schouten, 1991). When existing life structures are disrupted, such as when an employed spouse becomes an unemployed trailing spouse, the stability of the self-concept is disturbed, leading to a state of identity liminality. A transition of identity requiring identity work begins. Identity liminality is a state of identity between-ness and ambiguity of identities (Beech, 2011), which results in a disruption of an individual’s internal sense of self or place in society (Noble & Walker, 1997). Transitions from non-liminality to liminality and back to non-liminality occurs in three stages, a separation from the current non-liminality, characterised by symbolic detachment; a stage of ambiguity, where attributes and traits from the past or the future are exhibited, aggregated identity work and the adoption of new identities (Beech, 2010).

1.8.6 Identity work

Identity work is the processes associated with creating identities. In stable life situations, identity work is often resolute, instinctive, and automatic (Giddens, 1991). In situations when life structures abruptly change, such as when employed career women become trailing spouses, engaging in identity work may be conscious and cognisant (Giddens, 1991). Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) presented the concept of identity work as people’s engagement in forming, maintaining, repairing and strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness. Identity work, therefore, is more or less continuous, engaging with identity changes during identity crises or identity transitions.

The processes of identity work are relational and intrinsic, that is a product of inward introspection. Relational identity is interactive and includes work, identity negotiations (Gini,
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1998; Warriner, 2004; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006; Saayman & Crafford, 2011) and identity tactics (Kreiner et al., 2006; Kreiner, Ashforth, & Sluss 2006). Watson (2008) defined identity work as internal and external self-reflections of agency, and outward and external engagement of a social identity through talk and action. Watson (2008) defined identity work as a process that:

involves the mutually constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, to influence the various social-identities which pertain to them in the various milieux in which they live their lives. (p. 128)

Ibarra and Petriglieri (2010) suggested that identity work are formal processes by which individuals adapt, tailor, maintain, and change their identities, in an attempt to reduce differences in what others see — an external public display of role-appropriate characteristics, and a need for desirability of internal identity coherence.

Identity work is therefore not just an internal, self-focused process of creating a self-identity, but is also a process of creating a social identity, which is affected by social structures. Therefore, identity work also involves the interaction between personal/self-identity and social identity.

A self-identity, for the purposes of the present study, is defined as a “multi-dimensional phenomenon that refers to an individual’s understanding and perception of self” (Walsh & Gordon, 2008, p. 46). Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock (1996 p. 120) proposed that identity work is not only an individual process, but a group process, which they called “subcultural identity work.” They suggested that subcultural identity work consists of both sequential and simultaneous processes. Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock (1996) say that these processes are:

• defining or the creation of a social representation that brings an identity into existence;
• coding, or the creation of opportunities for enacting and validating claims to an identity;
• affirming, or the creation of opportunities of opportunities for enacting and validating claims to an identity; and
• policing, or the protection of the meaning of an identity, and enforcing of the code for signifying it. (P. 123).
These processes highlight the fact that identity work involves not just the internal reflexive processes within the individual, but also the society within which the identity is created (Gabriel, 2003). Identity work is necessary in maintaining people’s emotional and cognitive equilibrium, a sense of sanity, and, indeed, a sense of who they are to themselves and to others (Schwalbe & Mason-Schtock, 1996). However, identity work processes do not always produce positive results. Ineffective identity work may result in feelings of anxiety, isolation, a sense of insignificance, identity confusion, and even identity inauthenticity (Schwalbe & Mason-Schtock, 1996). To counter or minimise ineffective identity work, Ibarra and Petriglieri (2010) proposed the alternative and complementary concept of identity play as part of transitional identity work. Identity play provides an environment for exploration, discovery, and tailoring, and even rehearsal of possible new identities.

1.8.7 Identity play

Identity play is an alternative but complementary notion of identity work, whereby people engage in provisional but active trials of possible future selves (Ibara & Petriglieri, 2010). The aim of identity play is to generate varieties of possible selves, rather than to claim desired selves (Ibara & Petriglieri, 2010). Identity play, therefore, is a process of playful or experimental enjoyment and discovery of identities through role play and rehearsal of possible future identities — “the crafting and provisional trial of immature (as yet unelaborated) possible selves,” (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010, p. 3). Identity play therefore allows individuals engaged in identity work to explore a variety of possible future identities (Ibara & Petriglieri, 2010). Provisional identities allow the development of transitional identities, which can become catalysts for and facilitators of new identities. Therefore, provisional identities can provide playful bridging identities for individuals experiencing identity liminality. Identity play also allows salient, non-intrusive identity work processes that permit exploration of possible identities that may never be exhibited, but may inform current and future identity work and identities (Ibara & Petriglieri, 2010). Identity play, therefore, can inform and be part of identity work, rather than an isolated, independent process.

1.8.8 Identity maintenance

Identity maintenance is associated with self-verification (Swann, 1983; Burke, 1991) in identity theory, and with depersonalisation in social identity theory (Hogg et al., 1995). Self-verification entails role development and role adaptation (Burke & Cast, 1997), while depersonalisation entails the self embodying membership of the in-group (Hogg et al., 1995). It has to be considered how, once identities are adopted, individuals keep these identities, given that
identity work is a weaving and writing of one’s own story, which is written by others into their stories, and seeking to write one’s self into the stories of others (Sims, 2005). While there is individual agency in identity work, individuals are constrained by the structures of other people’s lived narratives, and these other narratives can affect adopted identities (Gabriel, 2003). The present study will therefore also explore how these trailing spouses’ work at identity maintenance.

1.9 Proposed contributions of the research

This research will provide practical and theoretical contributions that will aid in the understanding of these trailing spouses’ experiences, and the needs of self-expatriated trailing spouses. The study will also provide insight into the identities these women adopt, and the processes they use in creating these identities. At organisational level, the findings can help policymakers understand self-expatriated trailing spouses’ experiences, with the hope that policies will be developed to help self-expatriated trailing spouses settle in to their host countries.

1.9.1 Practical contributions

The research is anticipated to provide practical contributions to the understanding of the trailing spouse phenomenon as self-expatriated Zimbabwean trailing spouses in SA experience it. This information may be valuable for future self-expatriated trailing spouses when making the decision to move abroad, since self-expatriates and organisation-sponsored expatriates are two very different and distinct groups, driven by very different motives, needs, attitudes, and expectations as discussed in section 1.3 above. The findings can help human resource (HR) practitioners define the support that needs to be extended to both self-expatriated trailing spouses and organisation-expatriated trailing spouses. The findings can also help trailing spouses understand their experiences, their identities, and their identity work processes. Understanding these can help alleviate the burdens associated with trailing.

1.9.2 Theoretical contributions

This study will provide a possible theoretical framework within which to place the identity work and identity play of trailing spouses. Understanding these processes can be used to provide models for women’s identity journeys. The study will also provide probationary theorisation on trailing spouses’ identity maintenance.
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1.10 Outline and synthesis of the remaining chapters

Chapter 2 will outline and discuss the research design and the methodology of the study.

Chapters 3 and 4 will contain a presentation of the findings. Chapter 3 will provide the findings relating to the trailing spouses’ experiences, while Chapter 4 will report on the findings regarding the women’s identity work, identity play, the identities they took on, and their identity maintenance.

In Chapter 5, I will present my personal reflexive journey during this research process. I will use reflexivity at critical moments throughout the research process, using the critical moments reflections methodology (CMRM).

Chapter 6 will provide a discussion of the findings from a grounded theory perspective. The findings will be discussed, and relevant literature will be presented.

Chapter 7 will contain the conclusion and suggestions for further research.
Chapter 2: Research methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and the research methods used to investigate the experiences of ten Zimbabwean trailing spouses in SA, their identity work, the primary identities they adopted, and how they maintained these identities. Firstly, the philosophical and methodological strategies for this research will be discussed. Secondly, a discussion on qualitative research will be provided, highlighting the qualitative research methods of the social sciences used in this study. Finally, the research design and the research methods will be discussed.

2.2 Philosophical considerations and research approach of this study

On the continuum ranging from the objectivist to the interpretivist to the to the constructionist paradigm (Morgan & Smircich, 1980), the present study took an interpretivist approach. Objectivists engaging in positivist methodologies attempt to explain and predict phenomena in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between variables and constituent elements (Burrel & Morgan, 1979). The underlying assumptions of positivist methodologies are that the social world is as concrete, real, and external as the natural world, and that the findings of positivist research are true, given that positivist research is based on objective observations.

Social sciences, however, do not have the same starting point as the natural sciences. Schutz (1962) stated that objects investigated by methods used in the natural sciences are first-order constructs, and inanimate objects are investigated within the world of the observer. Objects of research in the social sciences, on the other hand, are not only objects of observation, they are organic, living beings who have their own pre-interpreted worlds, who do their own observing; they are thinkers concerned with the creation and interpretation of social reality (Schutz, 1962). These social 'objects,' then, are second-order constructs (Schutz, 1962). As a result of this second-order nature of social reality, not only does what an individual knows differ from what the next person knows, but also how both know the same facts (Schutz, 1962). Schutz (1962) concluded that, because of this kaleidoscopic nature of social reality, social knowledge has multiple degrees of clarity, distinctiveness, precision, and familiarity. The present study followed a qualitative approach, mindful of interpretivist epistemological considerations and constructivist ontological perspectives. Inductive and abductive reasoning in the context of grounded theory was used to support the selected qualitative research
approach and research methodology. The starting point of inductive reasoning is observation of empirical realities, and the findings are used to develop or inform the development of theory, (Bryman & Bell 2007). Abductive reasoning on the other hand precedes induction and deduction and is a prelude to theory building, (Gold, Walton, Creton & Anderson, 2011). Abduction provides “hypothesis on probation that is not yet truth but tentative presentation of a possible truth, a new idea that carries the suspicion that it might work as an explanation, a what if possibility,”(Gold et al 2010, p. 234). The concept of a hypothesis or theory on probation will be used to provide an understanding of the women’s identity maintenance.

2.3 Research strategy

The research strategy was grounded theory, since the study aimed to explore the identity play and identity work processes of trailing spouses. Grounded theory provides a method of data collection and analysis that ultimately leads to higher-order abstraction of findings, grounded in the data. These abstractions allow the emergence of themes, which develop into theory.

2.3.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a systematic and inductive research approach to empirical enquiry, aimed at developing theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, flexible processes of qualitative methods, aimed at mid-level and probationary theory building (Charmaz, 2004). Simmons (2010) stated that grounded theory is a general, inductive methodology that enables logical generation of theory through the systematic analysis of data. The goal of grounded theory is to develop theoretical accounts of phenomena, using systematic techniques and procedures that allow close, inductive engagement with primary data (Locke, 2008).

Grounded theory holds that prior knowledge of the literature should be based on the general problem area, and that prior reading should be aimed at alerting or sensitising the researcher to the possibilities of learning about the subject area (Glaser, 1978), rather than guide the research process. Glaser (1998) stated that the discovery of theory can be hampered when relevant literature is read and its impact disrupts the true path of the emerging theory. Therefore, in the present study, literature was consulted in order to help formulate the research questions and define the parameters of the research problems. Literature was again consulted once the analysis process had been completed.
2.3.1.1 Grounded theory approaches and applications

Glaser and Strauss are the original creators of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Over the years, there has been much debate over a ‘new’ form of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998), proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This has led to grounded theory having two paradigms; however, these paradigms of grounded theory are more similar than they are different (Morse, 2009). Stern (1995) identified the two paradigms as Glaserian and Straussian grounded theory. Both forms of grounded theory propose open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding (Stern, 1995). The constant comparison method is used. Using the constant comparative method is an analytic process that moves through four interpretative stages of working with data namely, generating data, gaining insight into the data by reading and re-reading it, categorizing the data, then reassembling the data in meaningful ways and lastly constructing a theoretical framework (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Developing concepts, typologies or theoretical constructs are aimed at answering the research question(s) posed by the researcher. Open coding is performed when the researcher codes all possibilities in the data (Kelle, 2005). Selective coding is when the researcher codes only data that are relevant to the research question (Kelle, 2005). Theoretical coding integrates the emerging theory by exploring relationships that exist between categories (Kelle 2005).

Glaser proposed a classic and perhaps static grounded theory that incorporates open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding (Glaser, 1978). Glaserian grounded theory is said to be static in the sense that this version of grounded theory is not very different from the original grounded theory proposed by Glaser in 1967 (Glaser, 2006). Classical grounded theory is less prescriptive, and allows the researcher to develop his or her own structures for analysing the data, within the limits of the evolving theory.

The Straussian grounded theory is more popular, because of the prominence of Strauss’s writings (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Strauss’s grounded theory is more dynamic, and has changed over the years to include elements of verification and constant revision, as well as additions to a “tool chest of analytical devises” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 585). To this tool chest, Straussian grounded theory added axial coding. Axial coding is a process of disaggregating or reassembling data in a way that makes connections, and draws attention to the relationships between and within emerging categories.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) advocated theory construction through disaggregation of the data, rather than the classical method of theory emergence of Glaser and Strauss (1967). In this regard, Heath and Cowley (2004, p. 143) stated that “grounded theory both discovers and
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relates concepts, and a theory cannot be simultaneously emergent and built on concepts selected from literature.”

With insight from the discussion above, and that, “in grounded theory the analyst humbly allows the data to control him as much as possible, by writing a theory of only what emerges through his skilled induction” and that the generated hypotheses and concepts “are not proven; they are theory” (Glaser 1992, p. 87), the present study followed classic grounded theory, as proposed by Glaser (1992).

2.4 The research setting

All of the participants were living in Johannesburg North, SA. The women had been employed before coming to SA, and they would have liked to work in SA. However, they had experienced difficulties in finding work, and had been forced to become stay-at-home mothers. As a result, they found themselves confined to their homes, with few or no career prospects. A combination of restrictive, often-misunderstood immigration laws, coupled with expectations of employment and easy integration, resulted in these trailing spouses finding it difficult to settle in and make sense of their new experiences and status.

2.4.1 Entree

The primary participants Tina and Jane are my friends and therefore are from my personal social circles. Over the years, I have met many trailing spouses, and we have had discussions during social gatherings of the issues that affected us. I realised we had very similar problems, and I thought that a study of our experiences are trailing spouses would help all of us understand our situations and circumstances. I approached my two friends Tina and Jane, and, through snowball sampling guided by Glaserian theoretical sampling, I was able to secure ten participants for my study. Sampling stopped at the point of theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation occurs when no new themes emerge from new data. All the interviews were conducted in the participants’ homes. The women were therefore relaxed and comfortable, as their homes provided them with familiarity and privacy. Rapport was quickly developed because I was a trailing spouse the women identified with me, I was in a similar predicament with them. The interviews therefore became informative, friendly conversations. I was amazed and humbled by the willingness of the participants to engage in the research.

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6 Pseudonyms were given to all the participants.
process and provide intimate details of their experiences, their pain, their hopes, and their fears.

2.4.2 Role of the researcher

Lofland and Lofland (2006) noted that research problems often emerge out of researchers’ personal biographies. I did not directly contribute my own experiences as data to the study. However, I did reflect on the issues that the participants highlighted, using journaling, memoing, and discussions with my study leaders. I am a trailing spouse, and my experiences and the need to understand my reality were instrumental in my motivation for this study. I took the role of the insider researcher, and I gave myself a voice within the context of this study when I reported on my reflexive journey during the research process in Chapter 5.

My memos and journal entries changed my perceptions and behaviours, and this became my journey, which, through reflexivity, shaped my identity work. Being an ‘insider,’ a fellow Zimbabwean trailing spouse, I, through reflexivity, complemented the process of digging deeper into the research problem.

Schutz (1962) suggested that we can know other people better than we know ourselves, for we can watch other people’s subjective experiences as they actually occur where as we have to wait for our own to elapse in order to peer at them as they recede into the past. No man can see himself in action any more than he can know the ‘style’ of his own personality (p. 25-26).

The reflexive process, however, allowed me to peer into my own subjectivity as I was experiencing it, and it also allowed me to relate to my own subjectivity and that of the trailing spouses in real time.

In the section below, I discuss the methodology I used, the sampling technique, the data collection, and data analysis methods. I also discuss the execution of the research processes with the help of ATLAS.ti, and how data were recorded and how it will be presented.

2.5. Participant sampling

Principles of Glaserian theoretical sampling were taken into consideration, whereby participants are “chosen as they are needed, rather than before the research begins” (Glaser, 1998, p. 102). Access to a large sample was not possible. I approached the South African Department of Home Affairs and Stats SA for help with tracking a random sample. The
Department of Home Affairs was unable to help, because the information is not in the public domain, and releasing the information would most likely raise privacy and data protection issues. It was also evident that the Department of Home Affairs does not hold such a specific data set, and therefore would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to compile a sample set from which a random sample could be selected.

I had originally decided to use convenient sampling. After two interviews, I realised that my sample was going to be too homogenous, and possibly be limited to my friends, whose concerns are similar to my own. Within the guidelines of grounded theory, I decided to use snowball sampling on my original convenience sample. Ten trailing spouses took part in the study. Each individual trailing spouse was a unit of analysis.

2.5.1 Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling is a non-probability referral respondent-driven sampling method whereby participants who fit the sample frame are selected through referrals made by other participants (Biernacki & Waldof, 1981). Snowball sampling allows researchers access to ‘hidden’ populations and their social networks (Browne, 2005). There are three main types of snowball sampling: linear snowball sampling, exponential non-discriminative sampling, and exponential discriminative sampling. For the present study, I used an exponential discriminatory snowball sample. Two primary subjects were selected; they offered three possible referrals, and the ones who were available and eager to take part in the study were selected from the three possible participants. Subsequently selected individuals were also asked to provide three referrals, not one as would be the case in linear snowball sampling. One participant, though, was only able to give two referrals, as shown in Figure 2.1.
Figure 2.1. Sampling referral tree: Participants chosen using Glaserian theoretical sampling.

The main disadvantage of snowball sampling is that it is a respondent-driven process over which the researcher has little control. However, the fact that the researcher does not have control over the selection of participants also helps to randomise participant selection.

Only the named referrals in Figure 2.1 became participants in the study. All the referred individuals met the selection criteria; however, most of them were not willing to take part in the study, or said they were not available for interviews.

2.5.2 Criteria for participant selection

All participants had to be Zimbabwean, female trailing spouses who had temporary or permanent residency in SA. The women had to want to work, but be unable to find meaningful employment, and therefore were unemployed or in part-time employment, but not in full-time employment. All participants had to have been employed at some point before coming to SA. The participants’ demographic details are presented in Table 2.1.
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse

Table 2.1. Demographic Data of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Last permanent job</th>
<th>First exit from Zimbabwe as a trailing spouse</th>
<th>Trailing experiences</th>
<th>Entry into SA</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Current employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fadzi</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Consulting dietician</td>
<td>1993; to Kenya</td>
<td>Kenya, USA, and SA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Diploma in Nursing (UK); BSc Nutrition and Food Sciences; and MSc Public Health (Dietetics and Nutrition) (University of New York)</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Programme Officer (Zimbabwe Association for Community Theatres)</td>
<td>1995; to Botswana</td>
<td>Botswana, Sweden, and SA</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>BA from the University of Zimbabwe (UZ); and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (UZ)</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>2000; to SA</td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>BA (UZ); Postgraduate Certificate in Education (UZ); and Postgraduate Diploma in Management PDM (HR) (Wits)</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Customs Officer (Zimbabwe)</td>
<td>2001; to Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden and SA</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Master’s in Real Estate Management (KTH Stockholm)</td>
<td>Part-time lecturer at Wits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Customer Assistant (UK)</td>
<td>2001; to the UK</td>
<td>UK, Ethiopia, and SA</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>BSc Politics and Administration (UZ); and MSc African Studies (University of Edinburgh)</td>
<td>Not employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Last permanent job</th>
<th>First exit from Zimbabwe as a trailing spouse</th>
<th>Trailing experiences</th>
<th>Entry into SA</th>
<th>Qualifications held</th>
<th>Current employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant (World Vision Zimbabwe)</td>
<td>2008; to SA</td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BCom Business Administration; and BCom Honours in Logistics (UNISA)</td>
<td>Not employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marian</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Personal assistant</td>
<td>2008; to SA</td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Diploma in Secretarial Studies (Harare Polytechnic)</td>
<td>Part-time nursery teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>2008; to SA</td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BA (UZ)</td>
<td>Kumon tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thembi</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>2008; to SA</td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BA (UZ); Postgraduate Diploma in Education (UZ); Master’s in Sociology of Education (UZ); Honours in Inclusive Education (UNISA)</td>
<td>Temporary teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debby</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Provincial nutritionist (Midlands Province, Zimbabwe)</td>
<td>2010; to SA</td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>BSC Nutrition (UZ)</td>
<td>Tutoring, through an agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pseudonyms were used
Average age of participants: 40.4 years
Average number of years as a trailing spouse: 8.9 years
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse

2.6 Data collection

The data were collected from the participants through interviews. Two separate interviews were conducted with each participant. The interviews were conducted, on average, one month apart. The iterative nature of grounded theory allowed for informal discussion with the participants, which I memoed onto ATLAS.ti. I also kept a journal, where I recorded critical moments after each interview where I felt emotionally drained….; this was done throughout the research process.

2.6.1 Interviews

Interviews provide “the opportunity for the researcher to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of problems and secure valid accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience” (Burgess, 2002, p. 107). Easterby-Smith (2002, p. 24) quoted Jones (1985) as saying that the main reason for conducting interviews is to “understand how individuals construct the reality of their situations formed from the complex personal frameworks of their beliefs.” This provided the rationale for using interviews to collect data from the participants.

2.6.2 Journal and memos

After each interview, I sat a short distance from the participants’ homes, in my car, and wrote in my journal what I felt and what I thought about the interviews and the interactions I had had with the each participant. I wanted to capture my feelings before contaminating them with other issues, events, and activities of the day. Human memory is frail (Bryson & Bell, 2007), and is easily contaminated. My journal entries helped me to capture, almost in situ, the emotions the experiences I had had. As I did the transcriptions and coded the data, I also made notes in my journal about what I was thinking and feeling regarding the research questions and the issues the women had raised.

2.6.3 Additional memos to the data set

The data collection process was iterative and therefore through out the research process I went back to the participants and asked them to elaborate on their views on a variety of issues and to clarify any issues that were not clearly articulated or easy to understand. The new information gathered through this iterative process was added on to the data set as ATLAS.ti memos. ATLAS.ti processes are presented and discussed in sections 2.7 and 2.8 below.

2.7 Data-collection process

A day or two prior to the interviews, I met with the participants individually, usually at a coffee shop in their vicinity. I introduced myself, and also introduced the topic to the prospective
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses participants. I gave them an introductory note⁷, and also gave them a consent form⁸. During this preliminary meeting, I finalised the times and dates for the interviews to follow. All the interviews were electronically recorded. The participants spoke in both Shona and English; Shona is one of Zimbabwe’s official languages.

The research process followed the simultaneous iterative processes of data collection and data analysis. Bryson and Bell (2007) stated that grounded theory is concerned with developing theory out of data, and, as an approach, grounded theory is iterative or recursive, meaning that it allows data collection and data analysis to proceed in tandem, referring back and forth to each other. The iterative processes involved coding in ATLAS.ti, and intensive discussions and debates with and questions from my study leaders. I memoed the discussions, and coded the emerging themes in ATLAS.ti. The coding process is discussed in section 2.7.2 below. I also went back to the participants to clarify the emerging issues. I memoed their inputs, and also coded them into Atlas. The back-and-forth processes of data collection and data analysis with the participants and the interactions with my study leaders helped to sift out extraneous themes, such as my personal views about the South African immigration systems and South African policies on immigration, raising the levels of analysis beyond emotions, and therefore focusing on the emergent theory. Iterative data collection and data analysis took place throughout the research process.

At each stage of the iterative process, new ideas, new questions, deeper and purer refinement of earlier concepts, formulations, and theorisation emerged. Iteration also allowed my study leaders and me to establish intimate familiarity with the data and the research topic, which promoted insight into the theoretical realities that were emerging. Locke (2008, p. 45) maintains that in ground theory joint coding and data analysis offer logic for conceptual insights “through close reading, comparison and attendant conceptualisation of the data.” Through out the research process joint coding and data analysis provided a platform for the conceptualisation of the emerging themes.

I also did an iterative data collection and reflexive analysis of my journal and memo entries, using critical moments reflection methodology (CMRM). Reflexivity is the circular relationship between the pronoun ‘I’ and the subject ‘self.’ Reflexivity is therefore a circular dialogue. CMRM is discussed later in this chapter. Chapter 5 also serves as part of the internal audit to ensure quality of the research.
2.7.1 The research process

The first set of interviews was unstructured, and were conducted over a period of two months, between 15 August and 10 October 2013. The second set of interviews was semi-structured, and were conducted between 24 November and 10 December 2013. The original audio recordings were stored electronically. Soft and hard copies of the transcripts of each interview were stored, with a notes stating where and when the interviews were conducted. After every interview, I wrote my personal reflections in my journal, and, at critical points throughout the research process, I also wrote down my thoughts and experiences in a journal.

In the first set of interviews, the participants directed the course of the interviews, and told the story of their experiences as trailing spouses. These first interviews were directed by the open-ended question: “Can you tell me about your experiences as a trailing spouse in South Africa?” Analysis was done throughout the data collection process; therefore, any new themes that previous participants had raised, and subsequent participants had not, were pointed out to the other participants by the researcher. In the second set of interviews, there were identity themes and issues that needed to be explored; therefore, the interviews were more structured. The questions that guided these interviews are provided in Appendix 3.

2.7.2 Data preparation

The interviews were electronically recorded and then transcribed. Each interview was then exported to ATLAS.ti in rich text format as primary documents, and data analysis immediately began, using coding. The coding process involved assigning descriptive names to the codes. Each code has a name and two numbers, representing code grounding and code density respectively. I gave the codes names that described emerging themes. The code names did not always present grammatically correct descriptions however the code names described as closely as possible the emerging themes. As codes are assigned throughout the primary documents code grounding and code density begin to emerge. Code grounding represented the number of times a code appeared in all the primary documents. Code density represented the number of other codes linked to a code. For example the code below is named Fellow Zimbabweans do not help. It has a grounding of 15, and a code density of 4. The grounding and the density are shown in curly brackets.

Fellow Zimbabweans do not help
{15-4}
2.8 Data analysis

Analysis of the data from the interviews was done in ATLAS.ti, using the grounded theory technique of coding. I prepared one hermeneutic unit, onto which the data were coded. The data analysis processes are illustrated in Figure 2.2.
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse

20 Transcribed interviews imported into ATLAS.ti as primary documents in a hermeneutic unit (HU) named **Trailing Spouses**

Descriptive codes relevant to the research questions assigned to segments of the primary documents using **grounded theory open coding**. These selected coded segments are called **Quotations**, and are presented in Chapters 3 and 4, in quotation marks. Quotations ground the codes in the data.

Quotations linked to codes: **Open coding**

Relationships between codes created through weak link networks these are called **code relations**.

Quotations grouped to make strong link networks that have **generic codes, key codes and code families**. In the findings, chapter; generic codes are shown in white, key codes are shown in green; and code families are shown in blue. Generic codes can also be key codes, and vice versa.

These code families become nodes of new constructs that are emerging from the data

Nodes become the building blocks grounding the emerging theory

**Figure 2.2.** Data preparation and analysis, using ATLAS.ti.
2.8.1 Coding and code hierarchies in ATLAS.ti

The codes in the ATLAS.ti code manager are organised in a flat structure. Therefore, the codes are grouped together at the same conceptual level. I organised the codes into a three-tier hierarchy, of generic codes, key codes and code families. I organised the codes hierarchically, and the code develop into themes and then into conceptual frameworks, which became the building blocks of the emerging theories. I created code hierarchies based on grounding and density. The higher key codes had high grounding and density, such as *Insecurity in both marriage and immigration status*, which had a final grounding of 20 and a density of 23. Grounding and density change as code links are created and ATLAS.ti networks emerge.

Lower codes had lower grounding and density, such as *Look like I am going to work*, with the grounding of 1 and a density of 2. Some of the codes have suffixes such as *IP*, *CF*, and *IW*. Code suffixes were used to help me group codes with similar themes. Code suffix descriptions are provided Appendix 4.

Code families, on the other hand, were not grounded in the data; therefore, they have zero grounding and density, depending on associated codes. Code families have a *CF* suffix.

Through constant iteration, I could revisit whatever structures I had created, and adjust them according to the emerging constructs. Therefore, the extrapolated codes, above, could appear in code networks from ATLAS.ti with different grounding and density. The ATLAS.ti code networks are discussed below.

2.8.2 Atlas.ti networks

I created networks presenting pertinent code to codes weak links which were emerging from the data. These code-to-code weak links were developed into weak link networks. Weak link networks do not have named directional arrow and therefore to not describe relationships between codes. Figure 3.2 is an example of a weak link network. From the weak link networks
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse

I developed strong links or first class code-to-codes links by naming the relationships between codes and drawing directional arrows that show the flow of their relationships. Figure 3.1 and all the other networks presented are example of strong link networks. My strong link networks had a three-tier code hierarchy, which I developed in order to create ranks based on the grounding and the density of the code. The top hierarchy codes I named key codes; the second-level codes I named generic codes, as explained in Figure 2.2, above. I then developed code families, which were not grounded in the data, but represented emerging themes. ATLAS.ti networks are presented in Chapters 3 and 4. The networks’ key codes are presented in green, generic codes are white, and code families are presented in blue.

2.8.3 Reflexivity using critical moments reflection methodology (CMRM)

After every interview, I reflected on my interactions with each participant. The data from my journal entries and the my memo entries followed the theoretical framework of CMRM. CMRM provides the scope to develop constructs that emerge from perspectives learnt from experience, and gives privilege and value to knowledge derived from practice and experience over abstract reasoning (McDowell, Nagel, Williams, & Canepa, 2005). Although CMRM is aimed at community group reflections, I adopted it to be an introspective reflexivity, which examines the experiences of the participants; the perspectives the participants have about their experiences and my own experiences as a trailing spouse. Through the reflexive process, I could step back from the participants’ and my own experiences, review my own understanding of these experiences, and draw lessons that I could use to develop my future actions, experiences, and identity work. The goal of the CMRM analysis was twofold:

- to empower me to uncover and create knowledge from our experiences as trailing spouses, in order to understand my experiences and explore my identity and,
- to serve as an internal audit of the quality of the study.

2.9 Ethical considerations

My research was done with informed consent by the participants, and provided total confidentiality to the participants and all persons concerned. I endeavoured to ensure that the highest ethical standards were adhered to throughout the research process. All participants were asked to sign a form that stated that all ethical considerations had been taken into account. The following rights, as stated in Mouton (2001), were fully extended to all the participants:

- the right to privacy including the right to refuse to participate in research
- the right to anonymity and confidentiality
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• the right to full disclosure about the research (informed consent)
• the right not to be harmed in any manner (physically, psychologically or emotionally. (p.243).

The research processes and research outcomes exhibited utmost respect and confidentiality for participants and their families, and ensured that the findings would benefit all participants, rather than bring harm.

The participants literally poured their hearts out to me. Some of them existed in a cycle of uncertainty and disorientation. I went back to the participants and shared my findings regarding 'reflexivity as identity work,' and shared the identity work model presented in (Figure 6.6) as a starting point for identity repair.

2.10. Conclusion

This purpose of this chapter was to present the research design and the research methodology chosen for the study. I also discussed the sampling method used, the data-collection methods, and the iterative data analysis processes using grounded theory and aided by ATLAS.ti. I also discussed CMRM, which I used in my own reflexive process. Finally, I presented the ethical considerations that I took into account.
Chapter 3: Findings — The trailing spouses' personal experiences

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the findings pertaining to the trailing spouses' personal experiences. These personal experiences provide background to understanding of the participants’ lived experiences as trailing spouses. The findings are presented with the aid of code networks developed from primary data, using ATLAS.ti.

Code networks were developed by building associations between codes. Each network represents pertinent links between codes, which emerged from the data. The networks have a three-tier code hierarchy, as discussed in Chapter 2. The highest-order codes are code families, shown on the networks in blue followed by key codes shown in green. The lowest order codes are generic codes; these are shown in white on the networks.

The networks are supported by direct quotations from the primary documents. The direct quotations are presented in direct quotation marks and in italics. The location of the quotation is in brackets, e.g., (P3:023). (P3:023) means the quotation came from the 23rd paragraph of primary document number 3.

When discussing the networks, information is provided in story format, instead of discussing codes individually. Following a narrative format to present the findings allowed the fullness of the women’s stories to emerge, their experiences to be explored, and their realities to be uncovered. Networks are provided so that the reader can refer to the code, the code structures, and their relationships. In order to ensure rigour, I have included footnotes in the narrative. In the narrative the footnotes direct the reader to the relevant codes on the networks, illustrating that the narrative is grounded in the data. The footnotes’ code names, code grounding, and code density are shown as in the example below:

- Discussion and decision to move often unilateral {1:5}

This technique is also used in Chapter 5.

Two different sets of networks will be presented in this chapter. The first set has only one network — the background issues that influenced the decision to emigrate. This network is called Discussion and decision to trail. The second set of networks presents the life experiences of the trailing spouses and their expectations of life in SA. The life experiences and expectation networks are:

- Honeymoon phase;
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

- Social isolation;
- Trailing spouses’ immigration situations and associated problems;
- Evaluation of academic and professional qualifications;
- Seeking employment;
- Fadzi's coping with unemployment: Fadzi left SA;
- Coping and living with unemployment: the remaining nine participants stayed in SA; and
- Studying.

Each network is individually discussed.

3.2. Background to the Discussion and decision to trail network

Of the ten participants, four emigrated more than a year after their husbands had relocated to SA. These four women said that they had been coerced and forced to relocate because of family reasons. It was also evident from the interviews with the other six participants that the decision to emigrate was unilaterally made by the husbands. Of the ten participants, nine stated that their husbands had self-initiated their expatriation. The remaining participant said that her husband had voluntarily taken on an assignment in SA.

3.2.1 Overview of the network

The Discussion and decision to trail network had 27 codes. 17 were generic codes, eight were key codes, and two were code families. The network had 98 associated quotations.

- Decision on job and moves often unilateral {1:5};
- His career first {11:4};
- Lived separately for more than one year {4:16};
- Marital complications {7:6};
- Difficulties with bachelor lifestyle {7:2};
- Cannot set roots to follow husband’s plans {8:5};
- Decided to trail {2:4}; and
- Forced/coerced emigration {7:5}.

The code families were:

- Reason for relocating {0:19}; and
- Reason for refusal to relocate {0:12}.

The Discussion and decision to trail network diagram and findings are presented below.
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouse

Figure 3.1. Discussion and decision to trail network.
3.2.3 Findings regarding the Discussion and decision to trail network

According to the participants, from Zimbabwe emigration had been primarily due to considerations related to their families’ security and finances, initiated and motivated by the difficult economic conditions in Zimbabwe. For the couples emigrating from countries other than Zimbabwe, the move was to secure better career prospects for the husbands. For the couples from Zimbabwe, the political, economic, and security situation in Zimbabwe was a push factor, while, for the couples from other countries, greater career prospects for the husbands were a pull factor for emigration to SA. According to the trailing spouses who had trailed in more than one emigration, SA is the biggest and most diverse economy on the African continent, and living standards in SA are second only to those of Western Europe and the USA. The families wanted to raise their children in Africa and therefore SA presented a westernised life style within an African context, which was a pull factor.

All the trailing spouses had expected that the move to SA would be financially beneficial for their families; however, some had personal reservations about relocating to SA. The women who were not keen to emigrate to SA had feared career stagnation. They were concerned with the terms and conditions of their visas, and they were also concerned about the prospects of their future careers, marital security and general insecurities and uncertainties of their livelihoods and living situations in the future. Some of the women had known that they would struggle to find employment. However, for the sake of their families, and the expectation of improving their families’ standards of living and financial situations, the women decided to take on the trailing spouse role and emigrate.

Before coming to SA Fadzi and Laura had held dependent accompanying spouse visas in the USA and the UK respectively. These permits allowed the women to work. Fadzi had held a G4 visa, while Laura had also held a dependent accompanying spouse visa, linked to her husband’s work permit. Therefore, when Laura’s husband decided to leave the UK, she, too,
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

had to leave the country. Fadzi also had no choice regarding trailing her husband to SA, because her G4 American immigration status depended on her husband working in the USA.\textsuperscript{20} G-4 visas are non-immigrant visas issued to employees of international organisations such as the United Nations. Immediate family members and staff of the principal G-4 visa holder are also entitled to G-4 visas, which allow them to work in the USA. However, if the principal G4 visa holder leaves his or her post in the USA, all the dependent G4 visas are revoked.

Therefore, after more than 15 years in the USA and a promising career on the horizon, Fadzi was forced to trail to SA, to start all over again.\textsuperscript{21}

Laura was also forced to trail to SA. Fadzi and Laura could not legally stay in the US or in the UK because their husbands had decided to relocate. Both women also found that it would be very difficult for them to get independent visas that would enable them to legally stay in these respective countries. Therefore the women had had no choice but to trail their husbands to SA.

Tina had been forced to leave Zimbabwe because her husband was a human rights activist and lawyer who often had trouble with the Zimbabwean government and security forces. Tina’s family, on a number of occasions, received death threats from security forces.\textsuperscript{22} For security reasons, Tina and her family first emigrated to Botswana, then Sweden, and then to SA.

Rose emigrated to SA from Sweden, where her husband had completed a doctorate, and she a Master’s degree. Laura had emigrated from the UK, where her husband had completed a doctorate, and she a Master’s degree. Both Laura and Rose had expected to launch their careers in SA.

For the other six participants, the reason for relocating was the prospect of a better life in SA,\textsuperscript{23} with reference to public safety and access to basic services, which had become lacking in Zimbabwe. The trailing spouses had been directly and or indirectly affected by violent political instability and Zimbabwe’s financial meltdown.

Generally, the trailing spouses accepted that their husbands’ careers were important for the well-being of their families, and that that the husbands’ careers would have to take precedence over their own.\textsuperscript{24} Despite acknowledging that their husbands’ careers came first, the women

\textsuperscript{20} Cannot set roots follow husbands plans {8:5}
\textsuperscript{21} Cannot have personal stability {1:1}
\textsuperscript{22} Forced political move {1:1}
\textsuperscript{23} Prospects of better life {1:1}
\textsuperscript{24} His career{11:4}
felt that there was not enough consultation on the move, and that the decision to move was
made unilaterally by their husbands.\footnote{Decision on jobs and moves often unilateral (1:5)}

Once the decision to trail had been made, Laura, Rose, Tina, and Fadzi emigrated at the same
time as their husbands. Mary, Jane, and Marian trailed to SA within six months of their
husbands relocating. Yvonne, Debby, Thembi, and Jane delayed following their husbands for
up to four years, and the reason they cited was that they had known that they would find it
difficult to find employment in SA, and they had not been ready to become unemployed.\footnote{Lived separately for more than 4 years (4:1)}

Yvonne, Debby, and Thembi had also been concerned about not being able to financially
contribute towards their own and their extended families’ financial needs.\footnote{Perception of being a zero contributor (5:9)}

These three women were also afraid that they would lose control of their own careers and life plans.
Therefore, the reasons for them refusing to relocate included financial responsibilities to
extended families,\footnote{Extended family responsibilities (2:4)} fear of giving up good jobs and promising career prospects in
Zimbabwe,\footnote{Giving up job in order to trail (5:4)} uncertainty of their future career and financial prospects.\footnote{Uncertainty of the future (2:8)}

After living separately for more than one year,\footnote{Difficulties with bachelor life style (7:2)} Yvonne and Marian said they had become
comfortable with the commuter partnership, and this reinforced and indirectly supported the
two women’s refusal to relocate to SA.\footnote{Mother alone with children (6:2)}

Debby said that she had not been willing to leave her job, because she knew she would
struggle to get similar employment in SA: “I was working in Zimbabwe, and I was comfortable,
the bread winner. So I was not in a hurry to come. I didn’t want to come, actually. So, but
then something happened — personal issues that cropped up that now forced me to say, ‘I
have to choose.’ Now, like, do I want this marriage to work or do I want a divorce — that is,
am I done with my husband?”\footnote{Marital complications (7:6)} (P7:011).

Yvonne said that she had been very happy in her job and had enjoyed her work, but, after four
years of being apart from her husband, there had experienced family problems,\footnote{Difficulties associated with separating the family (4:2)}
and she had to join her husband in order to save their marriage.\footnote{Marital problems became exaggerated (2:2)}

Yvonne said, “I came to South Africa — that was 2008 — when my husband came 2004. So, 2008, I had to say, ‘No, four years is
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enough, you know.’ I had been staying there, he was staying this side. I had been visiting now and again, but it’s not healthy, you know” (P1:003).

As the research progressed, it became apparent that ‘family reasons or problems’ were a euphemism for marital issues associated with the husbands and wives living apart. The longer the husband and wife lived apart, the more trailing spouses cited family reasons as the motivation for joining their husbands.

The other family reasons that the women mentioned included difficulties the husbands had with the bachelor lifestyle, the difficulties the women had in raising their children alone, and marital infidelity. For one couple, infidelity resulted in illnesses with permanent life-altering consequences.

Ultimately, all the women trailed to SA. It was found that only four trailing spouses, Marian, Thembi, Mary, and Jane, who had emigrated directly from Zimbabwe, had been content and willing to trail to SA, possibly because of the push- and pull factors mentioned earlier. The two women trailing from Europe, Rose and Laura, had been hopeful that they would launch their careers in SA after studying abroad. However, almost all the women had been unsure about their career prospects upon emigration.

Willingly or unwillingly, the women had trailed to SA, and had become unemployed trailing spouses. For those from Zimbabwe, leaving Zimbabwe had brought about expectations of a better life, and a sense of being on holiday and having a break from the socio-economic hardships they had experienced. For these women, emigration had been a welcome move, and they had enjoyed a ‘honeymoon period,’ characterised by great expectations, new comforts, and luxury.

3.3 The Honeymoon phase network

Upon relocating, the first few months were a honeymoon period for the four trailing spouses who had emigrated from Zimbabwe. For these women, emigration had been a way of escaping the difficult socio-economic conditions in Zimbabwe. For Mary, emigration had been a way of escaping her employment at the time. Mary said, “I have been a teacher for twelve years, and I needed to change my career. I wanted to get into human resources, and I thought

36 Difficulties with bachelor life styles {7:2}
37 Mothers alone with children {6:2}
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moving to South Africa would give me opportunities to study and perhaps change to HR” (P3:010).

For the spouses who were trailing for a second, third, or fourth time, the first few months had not been a honeymoon period, but rather a stressful and lonely time, when they felt they had, once again, withdrawn from the labour market, lost their social networks, lost their lifestyles and their identities, and become confined to their homes to carry out household chores and keep the family together.

3.3.1 Overview of the Honeymoon phase network

The Honeymoon phase network had ten codes. There were seven generic codes, two key codes: Had hope of finding work in SA {11:9} and IW: Self-improvement {14:1}, and one code family: Honeymoon phase. The network had 21 associated quotations.

Figure 3.2. Honeymoon phase network.

3.3.2 Findings regarding the Honeymoon phase network

Only the four trailing spouses who had emigrated from Zimbabwe had experienced a honeymoon period. The honeymoon phase was characterised by a break from the past, new beginnings, and expectations of a better lifestyle.
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Marian said “when I came here, I would enjoy being at home, taking the kids to school and back, and I enjoying it” (P2:023).

Debby had delayed looking for work. Debby said, “I said to myself … ‘I’m not going to look for work until my children settle into school’” (P7:021).

Marian had expected to settle in easily; she said, “I was thinking things would be easy. I was looking forward to a new life” (P2: 21).

All the trailing spouses had hoped to find employment in SA, and had had expectations of better socioeconomic circumstances for their families. Mary had felt that emigration was associated with affluence. In Zimbabwe, Mary had rented the home she had lived in, and had not owned a car; however, once she had immigrated to SA, her life changed. Mary said, “I think we are better off here, because back home we could not even afford to buy a house. Here we managed to buy a house, and we have managed to buy our own cars” (P3:045).

Once the honeymoon period was over, a shared reality became apparent for all ten participants: the women had no support from their husbands’ employers in settling in, and there was no help from fellow Zimbabweans, which caused the trailing spouses to feel isolated.

Below is a discussion of five networks that represent the realities that the trailing spouses had begun to experience after six months to one year of unemployment. The networks are:

- Social isolation;
- The trailing spouses’ immigration situations and associated problems;
- Evaluation of academic qualifications and professional registrations;
- Seeking employment;
- Fadzi’s coping with unemployment: Fadzi immigrated back to Zimbabwe; Coping and living with unemployment: nine participants stayed in SA; and Studying.

3.4 The Social isolation network

The Social isolation network presents what the women began to experience after having been unemployed for a lengthy period. They began to feel lonely and isolated from society, because

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38 Enjoyed being at home {4:2}
39 Delayed looking for work {4:2}
40 Expected easy settling in {1:1}
41 Had hope of finding employment in SA {11:9}
42 IW: Emigration associated with affluence {1:1}
they found themselves spending a lot of time alone in the home, with very little interaction with adults outside of their homes.

3.4.1 Overview of the Social isolation network

After spending some time at home helping the family to settle in, they began to feel that they needed to interact with people outside of their homes. They found it difficult to interact with South Africans. They also found it difficult to interact with fellow Zimbabweans. The women were wholly dependent on their husbands for financial support, and this brought about insecurities in the women. The financial degradation of these women was presented and discussed in Wekwete, De Braine and Bosch (2014). These insecurities and other related issues are presented in the network, and discussed further below.

The Social isolation network had 29 codes: 22 generic codes, five key codes, and one code family. The network also had 52 associated quotations. The key codes for the social isolation network were:

- Loss of personal interaction outside the home {2:6};
- Socially isolated {4:7};
- Interactions with South Africans {10:4};
- Domesticated and lonely {12:7}; and
- Insecurity in both marriage and immigration status {3:9}.

The only code family that emerged from this network was Grass widow {0:1}. The Social isolation network is presented below.
Figure 3.3. Social isolation network.
3.4.2 Findings regarding the Social isolation network

The trailing spouses found themselves confined to their homes, in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The women did not go out to work; they were unemployed. They found it difficult to find other adults for social interaction. Most could not afford to study, and they could not even afford to go out and do volunteer work. The women had also lost the social support from their friends and family in Zimbabwe, which led to hardships associated with long-distance relationships, such as the inability to interact and communicate with friends and family at will, because of distance and financial limitations. Jane said, “You suffer double alienation because one you are so far away from the support — family support structures; you need money in order to talk to your family, which you don’t have. You can’t even make a phone call to somebody to say, ‘This is how I am,’ and you are in a strange world, and I think I stayed in the house for a whole year. I wasn’t going anywhere” (P11:029). The loss of family support also led to a lack of help with “child care,” (P9:024), “people to share life experiences”, (P11:002), and “a shoulder to cry on” (P10:006). Two of the participants had also lost financial support from their siblings.

The trailing spouses also found it difficult to interact with South Africans. The participants said that they did not get any social support from fellow Zimbabweans already living in SA. Not interacting with South Africans meant the women found it difficult to learn the local languages. Marian’s description below sums up the difficulties these women faced when interacting with South Africans.

Marian said, “being a foreigner is actually an issue. I remember, one day, I was buying in a mall, so I bought a lot of things for resale in Zimbabwe. When I was buying, the lady there — I had a guy friend, and he understood Zulu, he speaks Ndebele, and they started complaining that these foreigners, they just come here, and they make the prices go up: ‘Look at what they are buying; they are buying too many things!’ And, you know, the other shop assistants, if you approach them and you speak English, they are not willing to help you; they develop an
attitude. Even if the assistant comes to help you, he will help because he doesn’t have a choice. He develops an attitude, and you wonder: What is this?” (P2:113).

Debby related similar experiences. She said, “we interact with South Africans everywhere in the shops, on the taxis, in the complex, yeah, everywhere... Yes, they can pick up that you are a foreigner, and sometimes they can speak in a language that you understand, not knowing that you can understand it. Ahhh, you know, saying negative things about you: that you are taking their jobs, you need to go back home, and sometimes they continue speaking in their language, which you sometimes do not understand, you won’t be able to understand” (P3:057 & 059).

The women found themselves socially isolated. With little interaction with adults outside of their homes, the women were limited to doing domestic chores; they were lonely and confined to their homes behind high walls in security complexes or gated communities. The women mainly stayed at home, doing housework and household chores. They felt like unpaid, glorified maids.

Tina said, “You are a housemaid who isn’t waged. You are a taxi driver who doesn’t get paid. You do everything in the home, but you do not have an off day, no day of” (P8:210).

Some of the participants said they stayed in and watched television. Jane said, “I remember there was a time when I … just watched TV until I watched the repeats and the repeats of the repeats” (P1:029).

The women also spent a lot of time on their computers, on the internet, applying for jobs and ensuring that they kept their computer skills current. Keeping their computer skills current was not always possible, because, sometimes, real-life or workplace scenarios are necessary in order to maintain and develop computer skills.

Yvonne said, “Opening Word and Excel, clicking around, and looking around doesn’t [sic] develop any computer skills. I have forgotten how to use the computer. Honestly, I will struggle in the workplace (P1: 114).

53 Domesticated and lonely (12:7)
54 Do own house hold chores (2:1) and Do menial work (1:6)
55 Become like a servant (1:6)
56 Watched TV (3:1)
57 Keep busy on the computer (1:1)
Because the trailing spouses’ social circles and social interactions had been drastically reduced, these women’s husbands had become their main source of adult interaction. The relationships between husbands and wives had become intense, because the wives could not share life issues and problems with friends and family outside of their homes. Rose maintained “We have learnt to cope on our own, and this has made the nucleus family closer, but it has also made [sic] some marital problems look bigger than they actually are, because we are too confined to our own devices and subjective views when it comes to our problems” (P10:083). As a result, some of the trailing spouses felt insecure in their marriages, which led to insecurities regarding their immigration statuses. The trailing spouses’ immigration statuses are discussed below.

3.5 Trailing spouses’ immigration status and associated problems network

All the trailing spouses came into SA on accompanying spouses’ temporary resident visas, as stipulated in Section 11 of the South African Immigration Act (Act No. 13 of 2002). In Section 2 of the Act, it is stated “the holder of a visitor’s permit may not conduct work.” All the trailing spouses in this study were not in full-time employment when the data collection was conducted; however, Jane, had done some contract work in the recent past, Thembi had worked as a nursery nurse while doing her honours degree, Marian and Mary did Kumon tutoring, and Rose had been a contract lecturer. Laura had held a six-month work contract two years earlier, Debby and Yvonne had taken on odd jobs whenever they could, and Tina and Fadzi had not engaged in any paid employment since coming to SA.

The trailing spouses’ immigration status and the associated problems that arose are shown in Network 4.4, Trailing spouses’ immigration status and associated problems.

3.5.1 Background to the Trailing spouses’ immigration status and associated problems network

The conditions of the accompanying spouse visas meant that the women were not legally allowed to seek employment and work in SA. In Zimbabwe, the women were regarded as non-domicile Zimbabweans, and were therefore also not permitted to work in Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwean Immigration Act, Chapter 4:02, states that a person shall “lose his domicile in Zimbabwe if he voluntarily departed from and resides outside Zimbabwe with the intention

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58 Insecure in both marriage and immigration status (3:9)
59 See appendix 3: Jane’s passport stamps at a port of entry into Zimbabwe stating that she is not allowed to work in Zimbabwe.
of making his home outside Zimbabwe." Therefore, these trailing spouses could not legally work in either SA or Zimbabwe.

Some of the women had problems with their husband refusing to renew or apply for visas and permits. As a result, some of the women had applied for their own, independent work permits, so that they would be eligible for employment in SA. Three participants had permanent residency (PR) status at the time of data collection. Despite having PR and or work permits, the women still could not secure employment.

3.5.2 Overview of the Trailing spouses’ immigration status and associated problems network

Network 3.4 had 17 codes: ten generic codes, six key codes, and one code family. The network also had 53 associated quotations. The six key codes were:

- Conditions on permit {8:14};
- Insecurity in both marriage and immigration status {3:19};
- Husband refuses to renew permit/ apply for permanent residency {1:5}
- Employers do not know what permits are out there {3:4}
- Lived separately for more than one year {4:16}, and
- Uncertainty of the future {2:8}.

The code family was Reason for refusal to relocate {0:10}. The network Trailing spouses’ immigration status and associated problems is presented below.
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Figure 3.4. Trailing spouses’ immigration status and associated problems network.
3.5.3 Findings regarding the Trailing spouses’ immigration status and associated problems network

The trailing spouses maintained that the conditions of their accompanying spouses’ permits took away some basic civil rights. The women could not open transactional bank accounts, and they had found it difficult to apply for driver’s licences. The women felt that trailing had taken away much of the independence they had previously enjoyed.

Trailing spouses are, by law, not allowed to hold transactional bank accounts, because they do not have an independent source of income. Their spouses’ income is not recognised as a source of income. Under Sections 10 and 18 of the Immigration Act, No. 13 of 2002, trailing spouses are not permitted to conduct any paid services; hence, they cannot have independent sources of income, and therefore the law maintains that they may not hold transactional bank accounts. It is therefore inferred by the law that, because trailing spouses do not have independent incomes, they do not or perhaps should not have need to carry out day-to-day financial transactions in their personal capacities. Trailing spouses are only allowed to hold non-resident bank accounts, which do not have bankcards, and therefore cannot be used for day-to-day transactions.

Rose said, “I managed to open a bank account when I started working part-time. I had a payslip, so I went to open one. Before that, I couldn’t. Standard Bank had the other kind of subsidiary kind of account, linked to my husband. But I wanted another bank which is different, but I couldn’t open one on my own” (P12: 137).

Ironically, the children of the trailing spouse may hold transactional bank accounts. The only way a trailing spouse can have access to transactional banking services is by being added as a secondary card holder or as a signatory to her husband’s account, or to be a joint account holder of her husband’s bank account.

Unfortunately, Zimbabwean couples do not have a culture of having joint bank accounts. In fact, none of the trailing spouses in this study had ever had a joint bank account with her husband. Five of the participants had accounts that they had managed to open, often through deceptive means. Two participants used their husbands’ secondary accounts. One participant was not named on her husband’s account, but was a secondary cardholder, and

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60 Some basic civil rights denied banking and driving licence (4:4)
61 ID: Independent to dependent (8:11)
two participants transacted using cash or bankcards on their husbands’ accounts with their husbands’ names embossed.

All the participants had held personal bank accounts prior to coming to SA. Not being able to manage their finances through their own personal bank accounts deprived these women of basic financial independence. The inability of the participants to hold transactional bank accounts after having had personal bank accounts for many years was a concern; the participants stated that this had affected their self-worth. For the first time in their adult lives — some were fifty years of age — these trailing spouses could not be involved in any financial transactions in their personal capacity.

### 3.5.4 Difficulties in applying for driver’s licences

Five of the trailing spouses came to SA without having had a driver’s licence. It is not clear why the women found it near impossible to apply for learner’s licences and, subsequently, driver’s licences in SA. There is no legislation that restricts trailing spouses from applying for driver’s licences. However, three of the women said they had been to at least two test centres in and around Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Ekurhuleni, where they were turned away and told they could not apply for entry into the traffic register or a driver’s licence, because of their accompanying spouse immigration status.

A Traffic Register number (TRN) is a number issued to foreign nationals in order to register them in the National Transport Information System (eNaTIS). All prospective drivers and car owners in South Africa have to be registered on eNaTIS. Foreigners are registered on eNaTIS from the traffic register, while citizens and permanent residents are registered using their identity document numbers.

Mary found it difficult to obtain a driver’s licence, but after nearly a year of going back and forth, submitting her papers at relevant departments, she was able to apply for a learner’s licence, and took a driving test at a test centre in Johannesburg. Debby and Laura went back to Zimbabwe to get a driver’s licence. Zimbabwean driver’s licences are valid in SA. Yvonne and Jane still did not have a driver’s licence, and had to rely on public transport, or be driven by their husbands.

Yvonne, at one point, had a student visa and an accompanying spouse visa running concurrently. After her studies, the student visa expired, and she reverted to the accompanying spouse permit. Yvonne had experienced difficulties renewing her

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62 ID: Independent to dependant (8:11)
accompanying spouse visa, possibly because she, in the past, had changed her immigration status from accompanying spouse to student. As a student, though, she was allowed to apply for a learner’s licence. The learner’s licence had since expired, and, as an accompanying spouse, Yvonne had not been able to obtain another learner’s licence.

Yvonne said, “my driver’s licence, my learner’s expired in March, right, now I can’t even renew it. I don’t have a permit. As it is now I can’t even drive. At least I could drive when I had my learners I could drive with someone, maybe but now I can’t even be in a driver’s seat... I am just a passenger. Just imagine, March! so that means if I get my permit I will be as good as someone who doesn’t know how to drive, because I have to start afresh,” (P1:110 & 112).

3.5.5 From independent to dependent

The trailing spouses also felt that the conditions on their permits had made them dependants — even like children. Rose said, “You are reduced to a baby; I am just like a child — no, a baby” (P12: 159). Rose felt that she had no control over issues that affected her livelihood. For some of the participants, being dependent on their husbands had opened them up to abuse. Their husbands had become abusive, and the abuse had brought about insecurities in both their marriage and immigration status. Debby said, “I have two siblings that I sent to school (paid for their education), that I used to stay with. I paid for their university education at Midlands [State University]. Then, I left them when I came here. One of them, she is the one who is now giving me money just to buy myself some clothes — ARGH” (P7: 116).

3.5.6 Visa renewal problems

Marital problems had, in some instances, resulted in the husbands refusing to renew the wives’ accompanying spouse permits. In one case, the husband had not included his wife and children on his permanent residency application. There are no provisions in the Immigration Act enabling trailing spouses to independently apply for permanent residency, which is further complicated by the fact that the trailing spouse is unemployed. The concerned participant had tried to get a quota permit or a special skills permit, but, despite having a Master’s degree, her skills and qualifications were not on the special skills list or on the quota permit list. Therefore, it seemed that the affected trailing spouse would be on a temporary visitor’s visa until such a

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63 Abuse from husband (2:5)
64 Insecurity in both marriage and immigration status (3:18)
65 Marital problems that may lead to permits not being renewed (6:5)
66 Husband refuses to renew permits/ apply for permanent residence (1:4)
time as her husband decided to help her to apply for permanent residency, or until she found employment and was able to obtain her own, independent work permit. It therefore became evident that visas renewals were used by some of the husbands to ensure submission\textsuperscript{67}, and to instil uncertainty and fear in the trailing spouses\textsuperscript{68}. Visa renewal became a power struggle and a way to control the trailing spouses and their circumstances.

Rose had applied for a special skills permit. Thembi had a DZP\textsuperscript{69}. Although the DZPs were meant for undocumented, unskilled Zimbabweans, Thembi had applied for the DZP permit because her husband had threatened to not renew her accompanying spouse permit. At the time, Thembi worked as a nursery school nurse, and did not declare her Master’s degree to her employers, who had applied for the DZP.

Fadzi had a work visa under the South African government and United Nations compliance of treaty conditions\textsuperscript{70}.

Therefore, Rose, Thembi, and Fadzi could work in SA. However, according to all three women, employers did not understand their permits, and employers were unwilling to accept or verify their work permits, and these women thus remained unemployed\textsuperscript{71}.

Three of the trailing spouses had permanent residency in SA, and held non-citizen identity books\textsuperscript{72}. They were allowed to work, but remained unemployed. They believed that black economic empowerment (BEE), affirmative action (AA), and employment equity (EE) disqualified them from the labour market, thereby cementing their unemployment and uncertainty about their futures\textsuperscript{72} and their careers. Uncertainty had played a major role in some of the women initially refusing to trail. Unfortunately, for all the trailing spouses, the uncertainty had become a reality. Another problem the women faced was the evaluation of their academic qualifications and professional registration, specifically by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

Below is a discussion of the problems the women faced regarding the evaluation of their qualifications and professional registrations.

\textsuperscript{67} Martial control issues \{1:4\}
\textsuperscript{68} Uncertainty of the future \{2:8\}
\textsuperscript{69} Applied for permit independently \{4:11\}
\textsuperscript{70} Permit did not help \{1:4\}
\textsuperscript{71} Employers do not know what permits are out there \{3:4\}
\textsuperscript{72} PR did not help \{2:3\}
\textsuperscript{72} BEE an AA \{3:5\}
3.6 The Evaluation of academic qualifications and professional registration network

Most of the participants had faced difficulties with professional registration and evaluation by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which, among other functions, is mandated to evaluate and compare foreign qualifications with South African qualifications.

3.6.1 Background to the Evaluation of academic qualifications and professional registration network

The women had found the evaluation of their non-South African qualifications problematic. A number of the women said that their qualifications had been under-valued, and these women had to supplement their qualifications with further studies. Even after supplementing their qualifications and receiving accreditation for professional registration, these women remained unemployed.

3.6.2 Overview of the network Evaluation of academic qualifications and professional registration network

The network had 19 codes: 13 generic codes, five core codes, and one code family. The network also had 104 associated quotations.

The five key codes were:

- Studies since coming to South Africa {13:7};
- Studying as a way of escaping {18:10};
- Previous qualifications not accepted {7:5};
- Problems with SAQA evaluation and other registrations — studied for a lower SA degree {12:9}; and
- Studies before coming to SA {5:5}.

The code family was Personal and professional development through studies {0:11}. The network is presented in Figure 3.5.
Figure 3.5. Evaluation of academic qualifications and professional registration network.
3.6.3 Findings regarding the Evaluation of academic and professional registration network

The women felt that their Zimbabwean qualifications had been under-valued when compared to equivalent South African qualifications. As a result, the women had decided to study, in order to supplement their qualifications. The reasons for studying further were mainly because SAQA evaluated three-year honours degrees as bachelor’s degrees.

In Zimbabwe, the top one per cent of first-year bachelor’s degree students is offered specialist three-year honours degrees. These three-year honours programmes are called part three honours degrees. Students who do not qualify for part three honours degrees do a three-year bachelor degree, and graduate with a bachelor’s degree. If these students who have bachelor’s degrees have qualifying pass marks, they can be admitted into a fourth year of studies, after which they graduate with an honours degree. These four-year honours degrees are called part four honours degrees. SAQA does not recognise part three honours degrees, and yet these carry more academic weighting than part four honours degrees. The part three honours degrees are evaluated as bachelor’s degrees, disadvantaging the more gifted individuals.

Debby could not register as a nutritionist. Debby had a part three honours degree from the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). Debby needed to supplement her honours degree in nutrition sciences with honours-level courses for non-degree purposes through the University of South Africa (UNISA) before she could be considered for registration as a nutritionist with the board of Dietetics and Nutrition.

Debby felt that her qualifications were deliberately under-evaluated. She said, “Maybe my qualification was under evaluated as a way of protecting jobs here in South Africa. The differences between what I did at UZ and what is being offered at UP was [sic] small. They just make things difficult for us Zimbabweans. Anyway, I did the extra courses with UNISA and passed with distinctions” (P7:024).

Thembi also had a part three honours degree, in English, and a postgraduate diploma in education, both from the UZ. After her honours degree, Thembi studied for a Master’s degree in the sociology of education. For her honours degree, Thembi took Shona, one of

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73 Previous qualifications not accepted (7:5)
74 Studies since coming to South Africa (13:7)
75 Previous qualifications not accepted (7:5)
76 Problems with SAQA and other professional registrations studied for a lower SA degree (12:9)
Zimbabwe's official languages, as a minor subject. SAQA evaluated her honours degree as a bachelor’s degree, and also deemed Thembi to not have qualified for a Master’s degree; therefore, her Master’s degree was invalid. When Thembi took her SAQA evaluation to the Department of Basic Education’s Educator Qualification and Programmes section for teacher evaluation, she was informed that she could only be registered on Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education (REQV) Level 12/13 as a temporary teacher, because Shona was not accepted for teacher evaluation, and, therefore, her degree was only partially approved for employment in education. REQV levels are assigned to qualifications that are recognised for employment in education. These values range from REQV Level 11 to Level 17.

Because her degree was only partially recognised, Thembi decided not to register as an educator with the South African Council of Education (SACE). SACE is a body mandated to register and keep a roll of professional educators in SA, for the purpose of regulating teacher qualifications, ensuring and maintaining teaching standards, and enforcing and ensuring professional discipline and conduct of teachers.

Thembi decided to study for an honours degree in inclusive education through UNISA, while working as a nursery school teacher. Upon completing the honours degree, Thembi requested a re-evaluation of her qualifications by the Department of Basic Education. Her honours degree with UNISA was accepted for teaching in SA. Her Master’s degree from the UZ was also accepted and recognised for employment in education. Thembi was then awarded an REQV level 17, and was able to register with SACE as a qualified teacher able to teach at higher education institutions. At the time of data collection, Thembi was seeking employment as a high school teacher or a junior lecturer.

Tina had been a high school teacher in Zimbabwe. Tina’s major subject for her bachelor’s degree was also Shona. When Tina had her qualifications evaluated, she was told that Shona would not be recognised as a qualifying subject at degree level, and that her degree would therefore not be recognised as a full qualification in SA. Tina nevertheless submitted her qualifications for evaluation, but got no response, and after several follow-ups gave up on SAQA evaluation. Tina said, “It’s a long process — SAQA the certificates; years and years at the SAQA offices. I think they lost my papers. I gave up” (P8:088). Tina never found out whether or not her degree was accepted as a full qualification or as a partial qualification.

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77 Previous qualifications not accepted (7:5)
78 See appendix 3
Fadzi was a practising dietician in the USA, and, upon immigrating to SA, she wanted to register as a dietician. Fadzi was told that registration as a dietician in SA would take longer than a year. Fadzi also said that there were inter-governmental restrictions on the registration of medical workers among Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries that made it difficult for her to be registered as a dietician in SA. Fadzi said: “I have tried to register. I found a young lady who does dietetics, and she said, as long as you are registered, we can try and work together. I have to take my papers to the Foreign Workman’s Management Forum, arguing why I want to practise here. I did that, I still have to have a letter from the Ministry of Health in Zimbabwe saying they do not object to me working here. Because they said I cannot work here in SA if I don’t have that letter, because SADC has an agreement which says if there are scarce skills professions like mine, the governments must agree to release the person. I talked to the lady in the ministry [in Zimbabwe] and she agreed to give me the letter. So, I was delaying, because I thought he will be retiring soon. I need to register, as well, with the Health Professions [Council] of South Africa, which is a different thing. They give me the dietetic number, then I have to get a practice number, so that I can be allowed to practise. Then I have to get authorisation to find a job. So, it is going to be a process that will take two years or so, because the first one has already taken more than six months just to be cleared and have my qualifications assessed so that I can register. So here I am. I have looked for a job at the UZ, and my husband has said, if I get the job, we will go” (P10:099).

Rose struggled with the evaluation of her qualifications, and ended up studying for an honours degree at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Rose had a part three honours degree in economics. Her honours degree was evaluated as a bachelor’s degree. Rose studied for an honours degree at UCT, although she had obtained a Master’s degree in Sweden.

Mary, Jane, and Tina were high school teachers. They all found SAQA evaluation processes, the Department of Education’s ratings, and SACE registration daunting, and did not follow through with evaluations for employment in education. Laura and Marian had not attempted to have their qualifications evaluated. Yvonne had South African degrees, and therefore did not need to have her qualifications evaluated.

The problems these women faced regarding the evaluations of their qualifications made them assume that studying would be a way of aligning their previous qualifications with South

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79 Intergovernmental restrictions on employment {1:2}
80 Problems with SAQA and other registrations studied for a lower SA degree {12:9}
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African academic and professional requirements, and that studying would improve their employability. They also studied as a way of escaping social isolation\textsuperscript{81}. As students, they could go out and interact with people outside of their homes.

Mary and Marian, though, had not been able to study\textsuperscript{82} at a university, because of financial constraints\textsuperscript{83}. Debby, Laura, and Yvonne had studied in SA, but they said they had found it very difficult to fund their studies at mainstream universities; therefore, they chose to study through UNISA, a distance-learning higher education institution, because they could afford the tuition in instalments. Section 13 1b (ii) and (iii) of the Immigration Act of 2002 requires that institutions of higher education have assurance that foreign students can fully fund a full year of studies and:

- certify that the institutions have received guarantees to their satisfaction that the foreign student’s tuition fees will be paid; and
- that the institutions have received full guarantees that the foreign student will have sufficient means to support himself or herself while in South Africa.

Universities interpreted the above to mean that foreign students should pay the full tuition, as well as accommodation, if applicable, upon registration. All temporary resident foreign students on student permits have to pay a full year’s tuition fees upfront. Permission for temporary residents to pay their full tuition fees in smaller instalments is usually given at the university’s discretion. However, most universities require that a minimum of 75% of the total tuition fee is paid at registration, and the remainder within three months of registration.

All the participants said they could not afford tuition fees upfront, and therefore could not register as students at conventional universities. Therefore, except for the women whose husbands worked at universities — Jane’s, who worked at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), and Rose’s, who worked at UCT — the participants who could afford to, studied through UNISA.

\textsuperscript{81} Studying as a way of escape (18:10)  
\textsuperscript{82} Lost opportunities to study (1:1)  
\textsuperscript{83} Cannot afford studying (6:5)
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It was also interesting to note that the trailing spouses who had trailed to more than one country had also studied in those countries\(^{84}\). Laura had studied in the UK\(^{85}\), Fadzi had studied in the UK, Kenya\(^{86}\), and the USA\(^{87}\), and Rose had studied in Sweden\(^{88}\).

Most of the participants said that the studies they had undertaken outside of SA were mainly to further their education with the aim of building a career. However, these studies had not ensured meaningful employment or better employment prospects\(^{89}\) in those countries or in SA. Their studies in SA had been undertaken mainly to supplement and align their qualifications with SAQA requirements.

### 3.7 The **Seeking employment** network

The limitations of the participants' accompanying spouse visas and permits meant that securing employment was difficult. Even after improving their qualifications through further studies, employment remained elusive. The fact that these women could not find employment was the core of their experiences as trailing spouses in SA; they had been forced into unemployment in a foreign land.

#### 3.7.1 Background to the **Seeking employment** network

The women realised that the accompanying spouse permit was a stumbling block in their career aspirations; therefore, some of the women applied for independent work permits. All the women wanted to participate in graduate programmes. However, not all of them could afford such studies. Despite having work permits, PR, and having studied in SA, employment remained elusive, and the women began to feel a sense of hopelessness. They felt they were losing basic skills, such as computer skills, that are useful in the workplace\(^{90}\).

#### 3.7.2 Overview of the **Seeking employment** network

The network shows the experiences the trailing spouses had as job seekers. The network had 45 codes and 167 assigned quotations. There were 36 generic codes, seven key codes, and two code families. The key codes were:

- Was keen to work in SA 10:5;
- Studies before coming to SA 5:5;
- Studied in the UK 2:2;
- Studied in Kenya 1:2;
- Studied in the US 1:2;
- Studied in Sweden 1:2;
- Studies did not help 5:4;
- Losing basic skills 5:1;

\(^{84}\) Studies before coming to SA 5:5
\(^{85}\) Studied in the UK 2:2
\(^{86}\) Studied in Kenya 1:2
\(^{87}\) Studied in the US 1:2
\(^{88}\) Studied in Sweden 1:2
\(^{89}\) Studies did not help 5:4
\(^{90}\) Losing basic skills 5:1
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- Applying for jobs got no response (5:8);
- Job prospects did not materialise (8:12);
- Employers do not know what permits are out there (3:4);
- Employment agencies overlook immigration papers (6:3);
- Took menial work (12:4) and
- Lost job opportunities in SA (9:5).

The code families were:

- Personal and professional development through studies (0:10); and □ Lost hope (0:10).

The network is presented in Figure 3.6.
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Figure 3.6. The *Seeking employment* network.
3.7.3 Findings regarding the Seeking employment network

All the trailing spouses were keen to work, and had had expectations of finding employment in SA\(^91\). The women had known that securing employment would be difficult, but they did not expect to be unemployed for an extended period\(^92\). Jane had lived in SA since 2000, and had therefore been out of full-time employment for nearly 14 years. On average, the participants had been out of employment for just over eight years.

Yvonne said, “I can say that I like doing things on my own right I don’t like, maybe, to be saying, please may I have money for tomatoes? No! May I have money for bread every day?’ No! So, I knew I had to get a job when I got to South Africa” (P1:005).

Marian had a more measured perception. Marian said, “I remembered that there was an auntie who came here a long time ago. She told me that, ohh, getting a job? Forget about it. You will not get a job, especially in administration, because those are the jobs that South Africans are good at, and it is flooded. That’s what South Africans are good at. Another issue is you do not have a work permit. You only have accompanying spouse permit. So, that was one of the issues” (P2:023).

Mary started looking for work a few months after arriving in SA. Mary said, “I had no intentions of staying at home, but, when we came, I could not find any jobs. There were no jobs, because I was on an accompanying spouse permit. And everywhere I went, I was told that I needed a real work permit” (P3:003).

Debby initially stayed in Zimbabwe and was looking for work in SA while she continued to work in Zimbabwe\(^93\). However, the pressures of having separated the family forced her to emigrate before securing employment in SA. Debby said, “Firstly, for me to come here, for me, it took me three years to come here. My husband came here in 2007, and we agreed that I should look for a job while he is here and I in Zim, so that I just come prepared and after getting a job” (P7:007).

When Jane and her family applied for their visas, Jane said she, too, had to submit her education certificates. Jane therefore expected to be offered a job seeker’s permit. However, she was shocked to learn that she was on an accompanying spouse permit. Jane said, “what was surprising about it is, when you are filling in the forms for immigration and everything else,

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\(^{91}\) Was keen to work in SA \(\{10:5\}\)
\(^{92}\) Job prospects did not materialise \(\{8:12\}\)
\(^{93}\) Looked for job while abroad \(\{1:2\}\)
they just ask: ‘What does your spouse do ah? What qualifications do you have and you include all the certificates of the qualifications that you have. But when you come here to South Africa, things are different. You will be expecting to say, 'It will be easy for me to get a job. I would get a job-seeker’s permit’ ” (P11:002). The job seeker’s permit never materialised.

Rose and her husband decided to apply for exceptional skills permanent residency, while she took a year out to study. Exceptional skills permanent residency is considered and granted in terms of Section 27 (Residency on other grounds) of the Immigration Act, read with Regulation 23 of the Immigration Regulations of June 2005. Regulation 23 of June 2005 allows immigrants who are deemed to be making meaningful contributions to the broadening of the South African economy to apply for permanent residency one year after arriving and living in South Africa.

Rose said, “Because it was written ‘Not allowed to work,’ I had to do something. I started a B Comm honours in finance. It was just a one-year thing, because I thought I would get some experience about [sic] investments in emerging markets while I waited for the PR,” (P12:005 & 007). The special skills permanent residency took more than three years to be approved, and, during that time, Rose became depressed and suicidal.

All ten participants had applied for jobs, and often got no response. Only a few of the participants said they got feedback from prospective employers. Despite not finding employment, some of the participants still had hope of finding work. Thembi was considering a career change, Fadzi had decided to move back to Zimbabwe, and Rose and Laura were not actively looking for work at the time, but hoped that, through networking, they would find employment.

On the whole, the trailing spouses had little hope of finding meaningful work in SA, but persisted. Even with independent work permits and permanent residency, they had failed to secure employment.

Yvonne, Debby, Rose, Thembi, and Jane were, on a number of occasions, successful in selection processes and interviews; however, none of them had managed to secure

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94 PR did not help (2:3)
95 Applied for jobs got no responses back (5:8)
96 Still have hope of finding work (1:2)
97 Career change (2:3)
98 Decides to move back to Zim (3:2)
99 Stopped applying for work (2:3)
100 Networks for SA employment (7:3)
101 Not come to terms with not working (2:2)
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permanent employment\(^{100}\). Rose said that, on two occasions, she was offered employment, which was later withdrawn because of complications associated with her permit\(^{101}\). The employers did not give any explanations regarding the complications associated with her valid work permit.

Jane worked as an independent contractor for a medical aid company. Jane had been told that she could not be offered a full-time employment contract, because of BEE, AA, and EE\(^{104}\). Employment of foreign nationals does not contribute towards BEE points or EE numbers, as they are not considered previously disadvantaged, and therefore do not qualify as AA candidates. Jane was employed as an independent contractor under the general principles of the Preferential Procurement Code of Good Practice, Code 500 of the BEE Scorecard. As an independent contractor, Jane had Level 4 BEE compliance as an exempt micro-enterprise. Level 4 contributors have 100% Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) recognition. Therefore, Jane’s employers could claim BEE points based on her employment as an independent contractor. The BEE Scorecard is explained in Appendix 4.

Jane expressed her feelings about BEE by saying, “My PR came out. So, now, I had an ID. And I was thinking: ‘You know what? This is the way to go.’ Still having that ID, those last three digits just give it away, because, if it ends with 1-8—something, then it means you are a foreigner then, and the difficulty that you get from getting jobs is that we don’t count towards their BEE numbers, so companies are reluctant to employ you. I have the qualifications, but I can’t do anything with it. I just have to sit and still continue looking, looking for a job, and not lose hope at the same time” (P8: 10-11).

Despite changing their immigration status by obtaining work permits or PR, the trailing spouses still failed to secure employment. They found themselves socially isolated, housebound, and unable to accumulate any relevant work experience\(^{102}\). Some continued to apply for jobs, especially with small, foreign companies\(^{103}\); however, employment remained elusive, and the women had to learn to cope with unemployment.

3.8 The Coping with unemployment networks

All the trailing spouses had difficulties in coping with unemployment. I developed two independent networks relating to how the women coped with unemployment. One network

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\(^{100}\) Offered a job in SA but no permit (2:5)

\(^{101}\) Employers do not know what permits are out there (3:4) \(^{104}\)

\(^{102}\) No relevant job experience accumulated (4:2)

\(^{103}\) Looked for work in small organisations (2:2)
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses represents how Fadzi coped with unemployment\textsuperscript{104} — by deciding to leave SA, and the second network represents how the women who were still in SA were coping with unemployment.

3.8.1 The Fadzi’s coping with unemployment: Leaving SA: Fadzi taking control of her future network

This network had 13 codes and 38 quotations. There were 38 quotations; however, not all of these quotations were contributed by Fadzi. Although I am focusing on Fadzi’s experiences in this network, her experiences were not isolated from the Trailing spouses’ hermeneutic unit; the quotations of other trailing spouses were also included in this network’s code density and grounding. The quotations, code density, and grounding not directly attributed to Fadzi are therefore extraneous inclusions. Including these extraneous quotations in the network showed that, despite Fadzi being the only participant who had decided to leave SA, other participants had also thought about going back to Zimbabwe, or intended to go back to Zimbabwe.

3.8.1.1 Overview of the Fadzi’s coping with unemployment: Leaving SA: Fadzi taking control of her future network

Fadzi has trailed in four countries: the UK, Kenya, the USA, and SA\textsuperscript{107}. Fadzi turned 60 in 2014, and believed that it was time for her to take control of her own destiny\textsuperscript{105}. Her husband had had a long career as an international civil servant, and had done a lot of international travelling over the years. Fadzi had lived through a commuter partnership, and had also been a trailing spouse.

Of the 38 quotations in this network, only 16 were directly ascribed to Fadzi. The network had nine generic codes, three key codes, and one code family. The key codes were:

- Giving up good job in Zim \{5:3\}
- Lived separately for more than one year \{4:16\}, and
- Cannot set career roots follow husband’s career plan \{8:5\}.

The code family was named Grass widow \{0:2\}.

The network is presented in Figure 3.7.

\textsuperscript{104} Trailed in more than one country \{4:4\}
\textsuperscript{105} Age and its effects \{3:2\}
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Figure 3.7 Fadzi’s coping with unemployment: Leaving SA: Fadzi taking control of her future
3.8.1.2 Findings regarding the Fadzi’s coping with unemployment: Leaving SA: Fadzi taking control of her future network

Fadzi had difficulties registering as a dietician in SA, and, as a result, decided to maintain her American registration as a dietician. She has since relocated to Zimbabwe, where she secured employment at one of the local universities as a contract lecturer\(^ {106} \). Fadzi said that, when she first decided to trail, in Kenya in 1993, she had to give up her job in Zimbabwe\(^ {107} \).

Fadzi said, “I stayed until November 1993, then, when the boys closed schools in December, they went to Nairobi, because they were supposed to start school in January. So, they went first, he came and took them then. I stayed behind with the baby, winding down my issues at work. I had to finish off serving my notice and all that. So, because I had stayed at the Dairy Board for a long time, other people that I had worked with, the managers and all, said: ‘You are a very good employee, and you really do your work well, so we would really not want to lose you,’ so, I said: ‘that’s fine. What can you give me?’ They said: ‘How long do you think you will stay in Nairobi?’ So, I said: ‘I am not very sure.’ They said: ‘Talk to your husband and work out roughly how long it might be.’ So, we talked, and he said: ‘Two years, perhaps. That’s how long we will stay in Nairobi.’ So, I went back and said: ‘Two years,’ and they said, ‘Ah, that’s ok, you know, how we can justify two years — we will just say you will be studying management in Kenya, in Nairobi, while your husband is at work there’ (P10:027).

Fadzi went to Kenya, but was unhappy as a trailing spouse. Two years later, Fadzi went back to her job at the Dairy Board. At that point, Fadzi decided on a commuter partnership\(^ {108} \). However, in 1995, her husband got a job in New York, and Fadzi trailed to the USA. After 15 years in the USA, Fadzi’s husband took a voluntary relocation to SA, and Fadzi had to follow. Fadzi was therefore a seasoned trailing spouse. She had not been able to set any career roots. At 59, Fadzi decided to claim back her independence\(^ {109} \).

Fadzi said, “I woke up yesterday. I said, ‘God, I need your inspiration on this issue. I do not want to throw something out that might be worthwhile.’ Today I just said, ‘Do you know I am 59 years old? Who is going to hire a 59-year-old for a permanent job?’ In companies people retire at 60 or 65. So, I am going to get a job where? Unless I am a consultant, which is not guaranteed right now! The University of Zimbabwe said: ‘Give us your birth certificate’ last week; they didn’t say: ‘You are too old.’ They said: ‘Come and teach. It’s a temp job, until January. If you work towards you PhD, we will renew your contract. We will renew your

\(^{106}\) Decides to move back to Zim (3:4)
\(^{107}\) Giving up good job in Zim (5:4)
\(^{108}\) Lived separately for more than one year (4:16)
\(^{109}\) Claiming independence (2:3)
contract, then you can decide on your thesis three or four years down the line. After your viva, you can come here for an interview.’ After three years teaching, surely I can defend my thesis. I can do it, because I know the system. Yes, they say: ‘Retire at 65,’ but I have three years to do my PhD. Then I can work the few years left’ (P10: 127).

Fadzi’s husband was not keen to move to Zimbabwe with her\textsuperscript{110}. However, Fadzi returned to Zimbabwe\textsuperscript{111}, and took up the contract lecturer post; the couple once again had a commuter partnership.

After a few months apart, Fadzi’s husband decided to take early retirement, and moved back to Zimbabwe. He was offered a top post at a university in Zimbabwe, in a different city from where Fadzi was. Once again, Fadzi decided to ‘micro trail’ within Zimbabwe, and relocated, in order to be with her husband.

3.8.2 The Coping with unemployment: Staying in SA: Keeping the marriage network

The other nine participants were still in SA. All had struggled with finding employment, and were not in full-time employment. Some had taken on menial work, while others had begun to accept that they may never be employed in SA.

3.8.2.1 Overview of the Coping with unemployment: Staying in SA: Keeping the marriage network

The network had 53 codes and 221 linked quotations. In this network, Fadzi’s quotations and their subsequent additions to the code density and grounding were extraneous factors. There were 49 generic codes, 12 key codes, and two code families.

The key codes were:

- Socially isolated \(\{4:14\}\);
- Depressed \(\{2:8\}\);
- Perception of being a zero contributor \(\{5:9\}\);
- Insecurity in both marriage and immigration status \(\{3:19\}\);
- Frustration with single income \(\{6:9\}\);
- Pressure to get employment \(\{6:8\}\);
- Pension worries \(\{5:5\}\);
- Took menial work \(\{12:5\}\);

\textsuperscript{110} Husband refusing to trail \(\{3:1\}\)
\textsuperscript{111} Moved back to Zimbabwe \(\{1:1\}\)
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- Claiming independence (3:11);
- Another move expected (9:2);
- ID: Provider/ carer identity (10:1) and
- Studying as a way of escape (18:8).

The two code families in this network were Debt (0:8) and Lost hope (0:18). The network
Coping with unemployment: Staying in SA: Keeping the marriage is presented in Figure 3.8.
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

Figure 3.8. Coping with unemployment: Staying in SA: Keeping the marriage network
3.8.2.2 Findings regarding the Coping with unemployment: Staying in SA network

The women generally felt separated from adult communities\(^{112}\), and felt that, because they did not work, they were perceived to be zero financial contributors in their homes\(^{113}\). The women felt that, despite not financially contributing towards their families’ finances, they supported their husbands by running their households and ensuring that their husbands had a stable work–life balance. The wives did household chores, such as shopping and collecting their children from school. These chores are often shared duties among working couples. Household chores do not have clear monetary values\(^{114}\). The trailing spouses therefore felt that their support was perceived to be of no value, because their contributions were perceived to have no monetary value.

Yvonne said that her husband’s family wanted her to live in Zimbabwe and look after their rural home, instead of living in Johannesburg, where she was doing nothing and contributing nothing and therefore there was no need for her to go and live with her husband in Johannesburg but rather she had to stay in rural Zimbabwe to look after her husband’s family’s rural home.

Yvonne said, “I could see that they are saying: ‘She is not working. What’s the hurry for going back to South Africa? …She should come back and stay at the rural home’ ” (P1: 184).

Yvonne also said that her brother-in-law said to her, “you are not working, so this is my brother’s house; everything that is here is my brother’s” (P1: 146).

Mary also had problems with her in-laws perceiving her as a non-financial contributor in the home. Mary said her in-laws would “directly ask for financial assistance from my husband without including me, because … according to them, I am not supposed to have a say in what he does with his money, because I am not working” (P3: 109).

Mary also said that her in-laws complained about the car she drove. Mary said, “We have had problems with the cars … because people were questioning why I was driving the big car when their relative was driving the small car when I had not contributed towards buying the cars” (P3: 111).

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\(^{112}\) Stay at home (8:10) and Loss of adult conversations (4:5)

\(^{113}\) Perception of zero contributor (5:9)

\(^{114}\) Do own house work (2:2)
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In these instances, the trailing spouses were perceived to be non-contributors by their extended families, rather than by their husbands. The pressures of being non-contributors made these women insecure in their marriages. Jane, also, suffered verbal and emotional abuse by her husband.

Marian said, “If you were once employed before, and you know you are educated, and you can do something, and then, now, because you do not have a permit and you are an accompanying spouse, and it gives more power to the man, because it’s like he is in control of you. He controls what happens to you. So, if you argue like there is a problem, the husband can say, ‘I will go to Home Affairs, and I will tell them you are no longer my spouse’” (P2:064).

Jane said, “My marriage is very difficult; my husband drinks too much, and can be abusive. To be honest, he is probably an alcoholic. I am unable to look after my children on my own; I need his support financially. Things are not too good in the marriage, and it is affecting the children. But, at the moment, there is very little that I can do. Maybe if I get a more permanent job and the children are grown up a bit, then, maybe I can become more secure in my life and prepare for my life after retirement” (P21:015).

Rose said that she was under pressure to get employment. Rose said that her husband was, on a monthly basis, decreasing the allowance he gave her. Rose’s husband said, “I will give you money for food, but in a decreasing way. Next month, I will give you R5 000; the next month, I will give you R4 500, the next, R4 000, and the next, R3 000, until you get a job,’ because he actually thinks that I don’t like to work’” (P12:077). Rose said that she had no way of bridging the deficit, and had no idea how she would meet the shortfall. The expectation was that Rose had to find employment and help with the household expenses, but the reality was that Rose might have had to borrow in order to meet this deficit. Rose also said that, given her current financial problems, she wondered how she would look after herself in her old age. As a result Rose felt she was facing a financial dilemma in the near future and indeed in the long term.

Some of the other women, especially those who had trailed for more than ten years, also talked about their concerns regarding their pension. All the women maintained that their

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115 Insecurity in both marriage and immigration status (3:19)
116 Abuse from husband (2:5)
117 Insecurity in both marriage and immigration status (3:19)
118 Pressure to get employment (6:8)
119 CF: Debt (0:8)
120 Pension worries (5:5)
husbands’ pensions were insufficient, and, because of current financial limitations, the couples were not able to make additional pension or provident fund contributions, in order to cover two people’s retirement.

Rose explained: “I have been thinking about it. There is no pension other than his pension, and his pension, it really doesn’t cover two people. It covers one person. So, in the long run, not only are we disempowered when we are able to work, we are even further disempowered as pensioners. So, there is going to be another problem where we are going to be a burden on our children; who knows? And our children also are not like us. They will just leave us. They are not the way we are. They will just say: ‘Ah, you didn’t save for your pension. Poor you — sorry for yourself.’ I don’t know if they have the same Ubuntu like we have” (P12:106).

Rose also said, “When we bought this house, we thought, I thought of that other space down there (points at part of the house). If we get money, if we have money, we can build that and rent it out. Just a small cosy place, a two-bedroomed place, where [sic] we can rent out to students, and that would be my pension. Because I actually wanted to jump out of my skin when I realised I am turning 40 and I am only left with about 20 years to work and contribute to my pension. This idea will be my pension, otherwise it’s scary” (P: 12:103).

Laura was also investing in property. Laura and her husband had two properties in Zimbabwe that they rented out. Laura and her husband used some of the rental income to supplement their income in SA. Laura hoped to grow their property portfolio and live off of the rental income of their properties during retirement.

The trailing spouses maintained that work is associated with personal independence, and some of the trailing spouses had decided that, in order to maintain a sense of independence, they would take on any employment, even work that they thought to be menial. Tina and Fadzi, however, said they would not take jobs for which they felt they were over-qualified, because this would disempower them even more than being unemployed did. Tina said, “I can’t look for work. If I am to look for work, I will be looking for menial jobs where I get paid very little and I am made to feel like nothing, at times it’s not worth it “ (P8:058).

Fadzi said: “I refuse to do odd jobs. No. I can’t do entry-level jobs at my age” (P10:087).

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121 Work associated with independence [5:8]
122 CF: Took menial work [12:5]
123 Will not take menial work [2:5]
Yvonne, Marian, Thembi, Mary, and Debby had taken on work for which they were overqualified\textsuperscript{124}. Yvonne worked as a packer and cleaner in a warehouse, Marian worked as an assistant teacher at a nursery school, Thembi worked as a nursery school teacher, (even though she had a masters degree in Education and qualified to work as a junior lecturer) and Debby had worked as a shop assistant. Some of these trailing spouses had also worked illegally\textsuperscript{125}. Laura had held short-term employment illegally. Marian also worked illegally, as a receptionist with an employment agency. Yvonne’s working in the warehouse was also illegal, as she did not hold a work permit at the time.

Marian, Laura, and Jane said employment agencies often disregard the need for a work permit, and place candidates on temporary assignments in large organisations, fully aware that the candidates are not eligible to work in SA\textsuperscript{126}. The organisations where the candidates are placed often assume that employment agencies thoroughly vet candidates, and that only eligible individuals are placed.

Because of loneliness and the need to find something to do, Rose had had a third child\textsuperscript{127}. Rose had three children, a 13-year-old, a 9-year–old, and a 2-year-old. On having a third child, the 2-year-old (at the time of data collection), Rose said, “...I just didn’t know what else to do with myself. I like having a baby. In a way, it’s kind of shooting yourself in the foot, because now you don’t have the pension, you don’t have the money, and you don’t have a job. You don’t have anything, but, yeah, in a way, you have someone to care for. Just something to do as a human being” (P12: 111). Marian had had a fourth child because she just had nothing else to do.

3.8.2.3 Claiming independence: Avatar, entrepreneurs, and Christians

On realising that finding employment was not going to be easy, the women started claiming their social and financial independence in rather unusual ways. Yvonne pretended to be a South African\textsuperscript{128}. Yvonne lived in the inner city, and she spoke Ndebele. Yvonne said she pretended to be South African, especially in social situations. Yvonne had learnt to speak Zulu, Swati, Sotho, and Xhosa fluently. Yvonne said she even talked about Zimbabweans as if she were not one. Yvonne said, “So, they will be talking as my friends, not knowing that I am also a grigamba. If, maybe, I am speaking to a Zulu person, then I play along” (P1: 138).

\textsuperscript{124} Took menial work {12:4}  
\textsuperscript{125} Worked without permit {3:5}  
\textsuperscript{126} Employment agencies overlook permits {6:4}  
\textsuperscript{127} Having children as a way to keep one busy {4:1}  
\textsuperscript{128} Pretend to be South African {2:4}
Yvonne’s pretence helped her to gauge the attitude of South Africans towards Zimbabweans. It also opened up a new world of friends. These friends helped her to deal with social isolation, and provided adult interaction that she would otherwise not have had. Yvonne had been keeping up this pretence for a long time, and, as far as she was aware, she had not yet been caught out. Yvonne had therefore created a second life — a ‘social avatar’ — not virtual, but a distinct, self-separated identity, which she integrated into her true-life situations.

Marian, Yvonne, and Debby were buying and selling small goods\textsuperscript{129}. Their profit margins were very small; but they felt that, at least, they had a little bit of their own money, which they could use as they desired.

Rose had tried to start a small business. Rose said, “I tried to start my own business — a taxi company — with my own car, so, being the driver by myself”\textsuperscript{130} (P12:069). Rose was “driving people from here (near her home) to O R Tambo, driving people around, trying to do this and that. I come from there, I buy my fuel, and buy some bread for my kids and I come home,” (P12:071). Her husband had not supported this business. His main concerns had been that Rose did not have the correct insurance, and that the vehicle was registered at a private vehicle, not a taxi. Rose had had to abandon the taxi business.

Most of the women also felt that they had lost their identities\textsuperscript{131}. They then began to reclaim their independence by recreating their identities. All the women had turned to religion to help them cope with their life experiences\textsuperscript{132}. Tina became a devoted Christian, and spent a lot of her time devoted to missionary work. Summing up her greatest fear and why she had turned to religion, Tina said, “Regret is my greatest fear but I am not too sure what I will be regretting. That’s why I look to my religion and hope to help others through missionary work. I’ve, however, learnt to enjoy my own company, and to realise that I am important too. I could have done a lot more with my life, but, well, I never got the chance. I am not sure what my full potential was going to be. I cannot even begin to imagine it. I have been out of work for more than 20 years; I don’t think I could go to work now. And do what? I can hardly type! I just do emails on my phone — nothing much, hey. I will need reorientation lessons to go back to work. I don’t think I can even teach like I used to. I can’t do much. I really can’t” (P18:026).

\textsuperscript{129}ID: Trader (5:1)
\textsuperscript{130}ID: Entrepreneur (1:1)
\textsuperscript{131}Lost identity (2:1)
\textsuperscript{132}ID: Devoted Christian (10:1)
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The women also said that their husbands were internationally mobile, and that career progression for these men was not confined to SA. They believed that their husbands wanted to move further abroad. Nine of the ten participants expected another relocation within the next five years\textsuperscript{133}.

\textsuperscript{133} Another move expected (9:4)
3.9 The *Studying* network

As mentioned earlier, all the trailing spouses had studied in SA and abroad. The women had used studying as a way of coping with unemployment. Below is a depiction of the *Studying* network and a discussion on how these women used studying as a way of coping with unemployment. After completion of their studies, the women’s employment prospect did not improve. All of them were still not in full-time employment.

3.9.1 Overview of the *Studying* network

The *Studying* network had 21 codes and 115 quotations. Of the 21 codes, 13 codes were generic, seven were key codes, and one was a code family. The key codes were:

- Conditions on permit {8:14};
- Problems with SAQA and other registrations; studied for lower SA degrees {12:9};
- Studies since coming to SA {13:7};
- Studies might not help {5:4};
- Studying as a way of escaping {18:10};
- Studies before coming to SA {5:5}; and
- Applying for jobs and got no response {13:21}.

The only code family was *Personal and professional development through studies* {0:10}. The *Studying* network is presented and discussed below.
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Figure 3.9. The Studying network.
3.9.2 Findings regarding the Studying network

All the participants knew that, as accompanying spouses on accompanying spouse permits, they were not permitted to work\textsuperscript{134}; however, they had applied for jobs, and generally did not get any response\textsuperscript{135}. The women had also realised that their qualifications were not accepted by employers, and that this may have been the reason why they had been rejected\textsuperscript{136}. SAQA evaluations were also problematic, and, as mentioned earlier, Thembi, Rose, and Debby had studied for lower degrees, with the hope of registering with relevant professional bodies\textsuperscript{137}.

The trailing spouses also used studying as a way of counteracting boredom and escaping social isolation\textsuperscript{138}. The women maintained that going to university mimicked going to work, and, therefore, student life somewhat mimicked working life; the women did not have to stay at home and feel isolated. They could go out and interact with others, even though they felt they were mature students interacting with very young people.

All the participants wanted to study, but, as mentioned in earlier discussions, some could not financially afford to do so\textsuperscript{139}. Rose and Thembi had Master’s degrees. Rose had a Master’s that she had obtained at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden, and Thembi, a Master’s from Zimbabwe. Both Thembi and Rose had studied for honours degrees through South African universities, with the hope that South African qualifications would help them in finding employment. Rose had an honours degree in economics from the UZ and a Master’s degree in real estate management from KTH, Stockholm. After struggling to get employment, Rose studied for an honours degree in economics and finance at UCT. Her husband was a lecturer at UCT, so she did not have to pay full tuition fees. Rose tried to get into a doctorate programme, but the department she wanted to study in could not make a decision on whether or not to accept her previous qualifications. Rose gave up on her doctoral studies, and, instead, registered for an honours degree.

Thembi has an honours degree in English, a postgraduate diploma in education, and a Master’s degree in sociology of education, all from the UZ. Thembi also wanted to further her studies by completing a doctorate at the University of Johannesburg; however, the university did not accept her Master’s degree dissertation, which disqualified her from doctoral studies.

\textsuperscript{134} Conditions on permit held [8:14]  
\textsuperscript{135} Applying for jobs got no responses back [13:21]  
\textsuperscript{136} Previous qualifications not accepted [7:5]  
\textsuperscript{137} Problems with SAQA and other registrations: studied for lower SA degrees [12:9]  
\textsuperscript{138} Studying as a way of escape [18:10]  
\textsuperscript{139} Cannot afford studying [6:5]
It is interesting to note that many of the trailing spouses had also studied in the other countries to which they had trailed\textsuperscript{140}. Rose had studied in Sweden, Fadzi in Kenya and the USA, and Laura in Scotland. Their studies had been in pursuit of furthering their education, as opposed to Thembi, Debby, and Rose, who had studied because they said that their highest qualifications were not fully accepted and therefore under evaluated by SAQA.

Fadzi and Debby were unable to register with the HPCSA, because of an intergovernmental agreement. As mentioned earlier, Debby’s Zimbabwean qualifications was deemed inadequate for registration as a nutritionist; therefore, Debby had studied through UNISA to supplement her qualification, with the hope of registering as a nutritionist in the near future.

All the trailing spouses, at some point, tried to study. Debby, Yvonne, and Thembi had studied through UNISA, and Mary had studied at Wits because her husband was a lecturer there. Rose studied at UCT because her husband was a lecturer there. Marian did a short course in early childhood development with a local college. Mary and Fadzi had not been able to study in SA, because of financial constraints, and Tina was studying part-time towards a degree in theology.

Despite successfully completing their studies in SA, the women were not been able to secure employment. Their studies had not helped any of the trailing spouses to realise their expectations regarding a career and employment.

By becoming students, the women were able open student bank accounts\textsuperscript{141}. Yvonne had also managed to get a provisional driver’s licence when she was a student. Yvonne was no longer a student, and her provisional driver’s licence had expired. Yvonne found it difficult to get another provisional driver’s licence\textsuperscript{142} using her trailing spouse permit; in fact, Yvonne was having difficulties renewing her trailing spouse permit. Yvonne said, “My driver’s licence, my learner’s, expired in March. Right now, I can’t even renew it. I don’t have a permit. As it is now, I can’t even drive. At least I could drive when I had my learner’s. I could drive with someone, maybe but now I can’t even be in a driver’s seat,” (P1:110).

Studying, therefore, became an avenue for personal and professional development outside the workplace\textsuperscript{143}. Studying, for these women, was a way of maintaining professional proficiency in the absence of work-based experiences. Since the women could not practise

\textsuperscript{140} Studies before coming to South Africa (5:5)
\textsuperscript{141} Way around banking system (1:2)
\textsuperscript{142} Basic civil right denied banking and driving licence (4:5)
\textsuperscript{143} CF: Personal and professional development through studies (0:11)
\textsuperscript{144} Feelings of defeat (14:2)
\textsuperscript{144} Feelings of failure (1:4)
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their professions or advance their careers in the workplace, they were trying to maintain continuous professional development through studies. However, the women also realised that they needed work experience for holistic continuous professional development.

3.9.3 Losing hope

On the whole, the women were losing hope of ever being in gainful, meaningful, full-time employment. The women believed that their best prospects of being in full-time employment were in Zimbabwe. However, they also realised that the economic environment in Zimbabwe would make this very difficult. Judging by Fadzi’s fortune in Zimbabwe, going back to Zimbabwe may be their only hope of enjoying full–time, meaningful work. The women said they could not help but envy and wish for the rich social lives of their husbands, the intellectually stimulating challenges that the workplace provided, the financial independence they had, and the prestige and respect that comes with being employed. The women said that looking after children and running the home were not their sole purpose in life. They felt that the role of a carer does not provide the richness required to have a fulfilling life.

It also became apparent that the women’s day-to-day existence was within a context of ambiguous loss and disenfranchised loss, characterised by feelings of defeat and failure, which, in some situations, triggered suicidal thoughts and a perception of object identities which became these women’s status quo.

Losing hope was also characterised by the women feeling vulnerable in their marriages characterised by ambiguous loss, and financial problems because of their zero contributions to their families’ finances and their inabilities to have access to and have some say over how their husbands’ single incomes could be used.

3.10 Dealing with the status quo

Except for Laura, Rose, Tina, and Fadzi, all the participants were first-time emigrants looking for a better life in SA, and had expected to secure employment.

Fadzi had lived in the UK, Kenya, and the USA before coming to SA. Fadzi had been forced to leave the USA, where she had lived for over 15 years on G-4 diplomatic spousal visa. G4 diplomatic visas are discussed in Section 3.2.3. Even though she had wanted to stay in the USA, Fadzi had no choice but to emigrate to SA with her husband. At the age of 59 years, and with no dependent children, Fadzi had decided on a commuter partnership. She had

144 Feeling like an object {6:3}
moved back to Zimbabwe, taken up a lecturer post, and was also running her own consultancy business.

Tina had been a trailing spouse in Botswana, Sweden, and SA. Tina had known that there was no possibility of getting work, and had resigned herself to being the unpaid helper in the home. Tina expressed her situation as a serial trailing spouse as follows: “You stop thriving, because I used to fight, hoping to achieve this and that: ‘I need pocket money, because the children get pocket money.’ But you are a house maid who isn’t waged. You are a taxi driver who doesn’t get paid. You do everything in the home, but you do not have an off day, no day off” (P8:210).

Rose had emigrated from Sweden after her husband had completed his doctoral studies and she had completed her Master’s. Laura had lived in Scotland, England, and Ethiopia before coming to SA. Rose and Laura had expected to launch their careers in SA, but both remained unemployed, with no expectation of finding employment. Rose’s husband had found employment in and emigrated to Kenya, but Rose had stayed in SA, after deciding on a commuter partnership, because she felt that she needed to maintain the networks she had managed to develop, and was uneasy about starting over in Kenya. Rose had permanent residency in SA, and was therefore able to legally stay in SA.

Laura was a stay-at-home mother. She said her husband travelled a lot on business, and she was often left alone at home to run the household and keep the family together. Laura had resigned herself to her role. Laura lamented the fact that, over the years, she had not been able to accumulate relevant work experience, and feared that she may never accumulate any meaningful work experience and find fulfilling work.

Laura stated: “It’s like you are stuck, because you can’t look for a job, and you can’t get a job, and, also, because of the lots of movements, like ever since the time I finished at the University of Zimbabwe until now, we have been moving. So, obviously, even up to this time, I do not even have relevant work experience that I can use, say I have on the CV. It’s tricky. The CV is tricky, because I don’t have experience. And, also, you are not getting younger, you are getting older” (P9:071). Laura also said, “I feel my dreams I, feel they are a right off, because you are just stuck,” (P9:073).

The other six participants had all emigrated from Zimbabwe. They had all thought it would be easy to find employment in SA Africa, because SA to them is culturally close to Zimbabwe and they expected to be accepted as if they were home. They had expected to settle in and get
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses on with life, just as if they were in Zimbabwe. However, their expectations had not materialised.

Almost all the participants had gone through the same emotional experiences of:

- depression, — “My husband was saying: ‘You are getting depressed., You no longer have life in you,” (P7:085);
- disorientation regarding life goals — “People [employers] were interested in me; … they needed me for this and that, but then, five minutes later, they would set up an interview, then five minutes later they would phone and say: ‘Do you have a work permit?’ I don't, and then: ‘Sorry, we can’t do anything.’ You just go to the bedroom and you cry your heart out. Because nothing was really, really working for me, and I could see my future — there is nothing. There is nothing there” (P11:005); and
- a sense of helplessness — “You feel unwanted, you know. Sometimes, you think you are better off, even if, economically, things are better here, sometimes, as a person, you wish you were back home, where there is no discrimination. You feel discriminated against, you know. Your self-esteem, you know, it goes down, you know. So, it’s not a good feeling” (P3:073).
- a sense of financial dire straits - I had been reduced to a state of asking for money from my husband all the time. And you know sometimes, he could not give me the money so I just needed my own money so I could develop myself, you know, I could, so that I could, study, I could buy whatever I wanted. Look after my relatives back home you know. My husband handled his money the way he wanted. That’s why I felt the need to get my own money.

Because he could not give me everything that I wanted although the money was adequate. It was OK. It was adequate. But it was not mine (P3:015).

Tina summed up her experiences as a trailing spouse as all of it being in the bigger scheme of God’s plan, and she was sure her reward would be in Heaven.

### 3.11 Other pertinent issues that affected the trailing spouses

The data also showed that there was a link between what the participants felt and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. It was apparent that the physiological and safety needs were well catered for. However, their higher needs of love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation were not being satisfied.

All the participants stated that they had lost their self-esteem, evident from the following:
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- “You know, your self-esteem, really, as a career woman and as a house wife is different. You have high self-esteem when you can say: ‘I can stand on my own. I can do something by myself. Maybe I can chip in and help him when he is stuck financially.’ Your value, you feel like you have value, compared to being at home and ask for every rand,” (P2:064);

- “It [not having a bank account] really had a negative impact on me, you know, on my ego, you know. As a person, it affects my self-esteem, because I feel worthless. Even people with low-paying jobs — they have got bank accounts. But, you know, it really affected my self-esteem, because even basic things were not guaranteed for me, because of my accompanying spouse permit” (P3:031).

- “My self-esteem goes down. That’s when spirituality helps. Like, from the time I began going to church and I became born again — hearing the Word of God helps a lot. That has been bringing me peace. There are times when I cry and ask: ‘Why am I sitting here doing nothing? What am I doing with my life?’” (P8:058).

The women had very little confidence in themselves, and were concerned that, even if they found employment, they would perform poorly.

- Marian said that, even in interviews, she could not perform, because she had lost confidence in herself. “Your confidence almost always stays down in your mind. You tell yourself: ‘I don’t have the job, so, obviously, even if I go for an interview — it’s worse — you go for an interview, and then you don’t get the job” (P2:052).

- Tina said, “I used to teach, but now, if I am given an opportunity to teach, I think I will feel like I am starting all over again, because I have been idle, and I would probably not know where to start” (P8:082).

The women also said they had no sense of achievement. Marian said it felt like “you have reached the end of the road, but your journey is not yet over, and you know that the bridge required to continue with the journey is this thing, the work permit” (P2:072).

Rose felt that there was no point in her getting an education. She said, “I even wanted to burn them (referring to her educational certificates); to kind of burn them. I didn’t want to hear anyone who said: ‘I am studying’ ” (P12:049). Rose felt that her educational qualifications were worthless.

Yvonne lamented that she could not even drive her children to school. Yvonne did not have a driver’s licence when she came to SA. She said that it was close to impossible to get a
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South African driver’s licence as an accompanying spouse on a temporary resident visa. Yvonne and Jane also did not have South African driver’s licences.

Most of the participants also felt that, because they were unemployed, their husbands were embarrassed to introduce them to their work colleagues. The participants said they often did not dress up, and could not always afford to groom themselves. They went on to say that they often did not look the part of an executive’s wife, which was why their husbands were uncomfortable to introduce them to their colleagues. They felt that their husbands showed signs of social and intellectual superiority, which further damaged the women’s self-esteem.

Some participants expressed that they had been depressed, and had been on antidepressants; one admitted that she had been suicidal. Tina said she had given her problems to God, and felt that everything happened for a reason. She said, “If this life is God’s wish, then who am I to fight it? In a way, I have fought a good fight. I like to think of it like that.” (P18:021).

3.12 Conclusion

The findings in this chapter show that the immigration status of the trailing spouses was central to the difficulties these women were experiencing. The participants felt that, by becoming trailing spouses, they had been disempowered financially, socially, and in nearly all other aspects of their lives, including their marriages. They had lost their financial independence, which made them subordinate, weaker partners in their marriages, and secondary, needy members of their families.

The participants also stated that their financial needs were often ignored, and that it was assumed that, because they made zero financial input, they had no right to financial resources. Most of them stated that they did not receive an allowance. The household grocery allowance was considered to include their personal allowance.

The trailing spouses also felt that their inability to integrate into South African social and cultural structures, and the fact that they were not allowed to work, had resulted in them being excluded from making contributions to society and to their own personal development, education, careers, and their lives in general.

The participants also felt that they were a forgotten group of people whose interests and needs were of no concern to anyone. They felt like lower class, insignificant others, marginalised by policy and legislation, ignored by society, and somewhat stigmatised by their circumstances.
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They had lost their life plans, their career plans, their personal visions of their futures, and their dreams.

The participants found themselves in situations where they were unemployed trailing spouses, whereas, in the past, work had been central to their lives. Gini (1998, 708) stated that “work is one of the primary means by which adults find their identities.” The trailing spouses in the present study had work removed from their lives, as a result of emigration. Their existing life structures had been disrupted. The stability of each of these women’s self-concept had been disturbed as a result of trailing and unemployment. This resulted in identity liminality, and the transitions of the trailing spouses’ identities began. The women had to consciously and unconsciously engage with identity work. This chapter presents the findings regarding their identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance.

The experiences discussed in this chapter have a direct bearing on the perceptions that the trailing spouses had of themselves and their self-worth. The women felt a deep-seated loss of what they believed to be a fundamental notion of self and identity. In the next chapter, I will present the findings relating to the identities the trailing spouses assumed and the identity work they did. I will also present the identity maintenance processes these women used. Finally, I will extrapolate the possible primary identities that these trailing spouses had adopted.
Chapter 4: Findings: Identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance

4.1 Introduction

In the next chapter, I will present the findings relating to the identities the trailing spouses assumed and the identity work they did. I will also present the identity maintenance processes these women used. Finally, I will extrapolate the possible primary identities that these trailing spouses had adopted. As in Chapter 3 with the help of ATLAS.ti, I developed networks to aid the analysis of the data.

4.2 The Identity work through talk network

All the participants had been unemployed for more than three years; therefore, they had had at least three years of personal identity dilemmas associated with being unemployed. Talk was one of the means by which the trailing spouses expressed their experiences and their identity work. The data-collection interviews were an opportunity for the trailing spouses to tell the story of who they had been, who they had become, and who they hoped to be. Identity work became evident through discourse and storytelling. The women also discussed their life stories with other trailing spouses. The sample for this study was an exponential, non-discriminative snowball sample. It was evident from the referral chain that the participants discussed their experiences and their problems with each other and other trailing spouses. A referring participant, for instance, Marian, would mention issues that affected her friend, Jane, but would not say which friend she was talking about. On interviewing Jane, she would talk about the very same issues mentioned by Marian, and expand on them as part of her personal narrative. Therefore, Jane corroborated Marian’s information.

4.2.1 Overview of the Identity work through talk network

The Identity work through talk network had 37 codes and 192 associated quotations. Of these codes, 30 were generic, five were key codes, and there were two code families. The key codes were:

- Current narrative (8:11);
- Historical narrative in SA (4:9);
- Historical narrative before SA (5:4);
- Life narrative (10:4); and Future narrative (6:4).
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The code families were Career woman/Dual career couple {0:7} and Defeat and hopelessness/loss of career prospects {0:12}. The network *Identity work through talk* network is presented in Figure 4.1.
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Figure 4.1. The Identity work through talk network.
4.2.2 Findings regarding the Identity work through talk network

The interviews were a vehicle through which the trailing spouses expressed, announced, and, in a way, relived who they had been and who they had become. Through their stories, the women expressed their experiences as trailing spouse\textsuperscript{145}, and how the experiences had changed their identities. The participants told an internalised, developing narrative of a collection of probably carefully selected vignettes of their past\textsuperscript{146}, present\textsuperscript{147} and future\textsuperscript{148}. These narratives were very expressive. Through storytelling, the trailing spouses constructed images of their identities, which were a dichotomy of the ideal self (what the trailing spouses wanted to be known as) and the limited self (how other people perceived the trailing spouses).

4.2.2.1 Historical narrative

The women provided a historical narrative of their lives before coming to SA\textsuperscript{149}. Nine of the participants had had careers in Zimbabwe\textsuperscript{150}, except for Laura, whose trailing experiences had begun soon after she had completed her first degree, after which she got married and became a trailing spouse\textsuperscript{151}. Laura had not had the opportunity to work in Zimbabwe. The other nine trailing spouses had worked in Zimbabwe, and said they had been independent, gainfully employed women\textsuperscript{152} who were role models\textsuperscript{153} to their younger siblings and people in their immediate communities.

Regarding independence, Fadzi said, “I was independent. I did my own things and stuff. I could run the household on my own” (P10:029). Mary said, “I wanted to work for me, to be able to look after myself. I had been doing that for 12 years, but I have been reduced to a state of asking for money from my husband all the time” (P3:015). Debby also said that she never questioned whether or not she would work, and that work was not just about independence, but also about achieving something, self–actualisation, and being a role model. Debby said, “I left my job thinking that I will come here and work. And when I was studying, I was sure that I would work. I wanted to work, have my children, then do one, two, three, four, five things. And now, for me, seeing that I can’t do what I used to or what I want to do, and my children are grown up, and they even say: ‘When you worked in Zimbabwe, we used to...”

\textsuperscript{145} Life narrative \{10:4\}
\textsuperscript{146} Historical narrative before SA \{3:4\} and Historical narrative in SA \{4:9\}
\textsuperscript{147} Current narrative \{8:11\}
\textsuperscript{148} Future narrative \{8:4\}
\textsuperscript{149} Historical narrative before SA \{5:4\}
\textsuperscript{150} Career progression in Zimbabwe \{6:6\}
\textsuperscript{151} Did not have opportunity to work in Zimbabwe \{1:1\}
\textsuperscript{152} Was independent \{4:4\}
\textsuperscript{153} Role models \{3:5\}
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have this and that, ’you know. It’s painful. So, for me, it’s more of self-actualisation, that: ‘This is me! This is what I have achieved and this is what I can do.’ And, also, I have a daughter. I want to be that role model to her. I want her to know that, when I say: ‘Study!’ I mean ‘Study, so that you can become an independent person.’ Isn’t that right?” (P7: 187). Debby’s assertion ended with a question, which highlighted a possible need for affirmation of the statements she had made. Debby questioned her own wisdom that had guided her thinking. Debby expressed that it was not just hard work, good education, and good work ethics that made meaningful careers. Rather, in her case, as a trailing spouse, contextual, attitudinal, and even legal structures had played very important roles in her restricted career development.

4.2.2.2 General narrative

All the women had believed that they would be part of a dual-career couple154. They had all expected some measure of career progression in SA, and their current trailing existence had never been part of their life plans. At the time of data collection, the women had, on average, lived in SA for six years. They therefore also had a recent historical narrative as trailing spouses in SA. The years they had spent in SA had been characterised by loss of work, which had once been central in their lives. The women had become housebound and isolated from society155. The women had expected career progression332 in SA, but their visas did not allow them to seek employment. This though did not stop some of these women from seeking employment156 by changing their immigration status157, and trying to change their identities from being trailing spouses to gainfully employed women. There was agency in these women’s decisions and actions to change their current identities, imposed on them by the immigration laws of SA. Agency therefore led to identity work. However, the employment laws superseded the women’s agency, and the women remained unemployed or in part-time employment158. Being unemployed meant the women lost their work-based identities, and they could no longer use the workplace as a social context for identity work and identity negotiations. They now had to recreate themselves without work being central to their identities, and without the workplace as a social context. In the process of recreating new identities, the women faced feelings of helplessness159. Marian said, “You know, you have done something with the hope that, ‘No, I will be able to do this,’ then it looks like it has all

154 Career women/ Dual career couples {0:8}
155 Domesticated and isolated {12:9} 332
Career progression in SA {2:3}
156 Worked without permit {3:5}
157 Applied for permit independently {4:4}
158 Am unemployed / in part time employment {10:4}
159 Feelings of helplessness {9:3}
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abruptly ended. Immediately, you cannot do anything” (P2:070). Tina said, “I cry, and ask, ‘Why am I sitting here doing nothing? What am I doing with my life? What am I doing? Nothing, and I can’t look for work. If I am to look for work, I will be looking for menial jobs where I get paid very little, and, at times, it’s not worth it” (P8:058). Laura said, “It’s like you are stuck, because you can’t look for a job, and you can’t get a job, and also because of the lots of movements. Like, ever since the time I finished at the University of Zimbabwe until now, we have been moving. So, obviously, even up to this time, I do not even have relevant work experience” (P9:071). Rose said, “Life is not fair. I’ve tried studying — three degrees, sleepless nights, no work. No one wanted to try [employ] me.” Thembi said, “During the course of this awaiting for the DZP permit, I think, I got a job at one of the nursery school there. I said, ‘Now I have to reduce myself to a nursery school teacher” (P13:058).

The trailing spouses also said they felt inferior to other women\textsuperscript{160}, especially Zimbabwean women who were employed. They also felt that the fact that their qualifications had been evaluated as inferior to South African qualifications made them feel like lesser people because they were Zimbabwean and had Zimbabwean qualifications. These Zimbabwean trailing spouses felt they had a ‘spoiled’ identity within SA.

Mary tutored English as a first language at a Kumon centre. Kumon is a supplementary education provider, offering after-school tuition in English and Mathematics to primary school and high school learners. In describing her experiences as a Kumon tutor, Mary said, “You feel unwanted, you know. Sometimes, you think you are better off, even if economically things are better here; sometimes, as a person, you wish you were back home, where there is no discrimination. You feel discriminated against, you know. Your self-esteem, you know, it goes down, you know. So it’s not a good feeling” (P3:073). Mary went on to say, “And in the workplace, at Kumon, I have found many challenges being a foreign national. Yeah, at Kumon, I work with children who are doing higher-level English. And, sometimes, you work with a child for a long time, let’s say for a year, and then all of a sudden, the child goes to a new person, to a new teacher. Sometimes I don’t understand if it’s because the owner doesn’t trust that I will do a good job. Maybe they don’t trust me since I am a foreigner, and I am black; they don’t know if I am going to, if I was doing a good job with the child. Sometimes you don’t know if it’s the child who has complained” (P3:074, 075, and 077). Mary articulated a spoilt identity maintaining that being Zimbabwean attracted a spoilt identity.

\textsuperscript{160} Feel inferior to others (6:2)
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The women said they were made to feel that their identities, their social status, and their immigration status were not suitable for employment, or even social interaction, resulting in multiple levels of social degradation. These women said they were not perceived in the same way as trailing spouses from Western countries in Europe and from the USA. They believed they were perceived as economic migrants, as “grigambas — they come here taking our jobs” (P1: 150). The women felt discriminated against. The trailing spouses wanted to work and make meaningful contributions to their families finances, but they felt discriminated against, and not able to “live in a free place with no stigma or label, and be able to access things just like everybody else” (P17:034).

The women also felt that other Zimbabwean trailing spouses who had been in SA before did not help new trailing spouses with ideas on how to cope with the difficulties of trailing. The participants said that fellow Zimbabweans were unwilling to share information, even basic information, about schools for children and social networks that may help new trailing spouses cope with their new realities.

It also became apparent that the women’s identity work was also done within a context of ambiguous loss and disenfranchised loss, as stated in Chapter 3. Ambiguous loss and disenfranchised loss, in their case, were characterised by feelings of defeat and failure, which, in some situations, triggered suicidal thoughts and a perception of object identities.

Below is a discussion of the findings regarding object identities that these women experienced.

4.2.2.2.1 Object identities

The trailing spouses referred to themselves as objects. They felt objectified by their trailing spouse status and experiences in SA. The fact that these women could not work and found themselves socially excluded meant that they found it difficult to cultivate meaningful social networks. This exclusion, as the trailing spouses put it, “dehumanised” (P11:029) and “disempowered” them (P12:06).

Marian maintained that, “An accompanying spouse is like an animal. Not a person. It’s like I don’t know, what can I say … an accompanying spouse is like not a human being” (P2:080).

Mary said, “You are like a caged animal, like a caged animal, like something without any value because you are cornered into a space where there is very little room. You feel worthless,

\textsuperscript{161} Feelings of defeat \{14:2\} \textsuperscript{339}
Feelings of failure \{1:4\}
\textsuperscript{162} Feeling like an object \{6:3\}
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*because, if you are not making a contribution, then what are you?*” (P3:156 and 157). Mary went on to say, “The name says its ‘accompanying,’ which means you are just accompanying somebody, you are not a person. You are not anything by yourself, but you are here because of this person [the husband]” (P3:168).

Tina said, “There is a loss of identity, really, as a person, what are you worth. Your identity gets lost, because like you can’t make plans for yourself for the future, because you are tied to somebody. You are just like a handbag. As an individual, you can’t make decisions” (P8:068).

Marian said, “The permit, the accompanying spouse permit, makes me feel like a controlled someone. It gives more power to the man, because it’s like he is in control of you. He controls what happens to you. So, if you argue, like, there is a problem, the husband can say: ‘I will go to Home Affairs, and I will tell them you are no longer my spouse” (P2:064).

This objectification affected the trailing spouses’ self-esteem and personal worth, which led to feelings of defeat, helplessness, and hopelessness about their existence. Some of the women only found meaning in their current existence in the hope that there would be a better life in the hereafter, and that their current experiences were a preparation for Heaven.

Tina said, “I am not looking at the world as the world looks at [the] world, like the possessions, positions, and all that. My position is in Christ. That’s what’s giving me peace” (P8:208). Marian said, “Life is pointless” (P2:035), and Laura said, “My rights and values are really worthless” (P19:032).

The women also felt that, as a result of objectification, they were no longer equal partners in their marriages, but rather servant wives. “I will clean, I will wash, I will do the ironing. If someone says to me: ‘Maybe he will wear this shirt,’ then he will say: ‘Haa, I don’t want this.’ He just throws it on top of the bed. I have to re-iron it again. He will say: ‘No, what is it that you are complaining about? You will pick it up. You spend the whole day just eating and sleeping here. You will pick it up.’ You know, yeah, yeah, it just pulls me down. Sometimes, I just wish I could go back home” (P1:150). Tina said, “You become the taxi driver. Taxi driver taking the children to school and back, dropping them off, and picking them up.” She added, “You stop thriving, because I used to fight, hoping to achieve this and that: ‘I need pocket money, because the children get pocket money,’ but you are a house maid who isn’t waged.

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163 Become like a servant (2:7)
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You are a taxi driver who doesn’t get paid. You do everything in the home, but you do not have an off day, no day off” (P8:037 and 210).

4.2.2.3 Current narrative

All the participants told a story with their past careers\(^{164}\) as central to who they had been. They identified themselves with the professional titles or professional descriptions of their careers, such as:

“I was an office administrator, a secretary” (P2:023).

Yvonne said, “I was working at World Vision as an administrative assistant. I basically ran the office, and was in charge of all the logistics in that office” (P1:015).

Debby said, “I was working in Gweru Ministry of Health as a provincial nutritionist” (P7:015).

Laura said, “I worked as a customer assistant” (P9:18). In one of her previous jobs Laura had worked in a supermarket at the checkout tills.

Rose said, “I was a customs officer” (P12:003).

Jane said she was a “graduate teacher” (P11:015).

Tina said she was a “programme officer in an organisation called ZAAT” (P8:003).

Thembi and Mary both mentioned that they were high school teachers. Fadzi had an interesting career path, in which she started off as a psychiatric nurse, then did evening studies in food technology, worked as a manager in the dairy industry in Zimbabwe, and became a dietician after further studies in the USA.

Each participant provided a retrospective autobiography of her career, portraying a hardworking professional who had had a bright future ahead of her. It was clear that they linked their identities to their professions. Through autobiographical retrospection, the trailing spouses linked their current selves to their past professional identities, locating their current identities within their past.

The trailing spouses described how their careers had been disrupted by their husbands’ decision to emigrate, the economic situation in Zimbabwe, or family circumstances that had

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\(^{164}\) Career progression in Zimbabwe promising (6:6)
forced the women to move to SA. None of the participants seemed to take ownership of their own career disruptions and subsequent career stagnation.

Tina said her husband had been politically active in Zimbabwe, and the decision to move was because “we were always on the edge, because the ZANU PF youths wanted to come and demonstrate at our home” (P8:005).

Marian said, “What happened is, when the economy deteriorated, that’s when we decided on the move” (P2:013).

Debby said, “I was working in Zimbabwe, and I was comfortable where I was. So, I was not in a hurry to come. I didn’t want to come, actually. So, but then, something happened. Personal issues that cropped up that now forced me to say: ‘I have to choose. Now, like, do I want this marriage to work or do I want a divorce?’” (P7:011).

The trailing spouses seem to have claimed victim identities; they felt that they had become victims of situations that were beyond their control.

Yvonne said, “You know, I am an independent woman. In fact, I can say that I like doing things on my own, right? I don’t like, maybe, to be saying: ‘Please may I have money for tomatoes?’ No. ‘May I have money for bread every day?’ No. If there are no tomatoes, get up, go to the market, buy your tomatoes. Buy everything. But now, I have to say: ‘There are no tomatoes, there is no mealie-meal, there is nothing.’ You understand what I mean” (P1:005).

Debby said, “It was his career or mine. We could not have both. For the sake of peace, we chose his” (P7:011).

Rose said, “No one will ever know what I have given up. I just hope he will not dump me” (P12:017).

These women therefore claimed to be victims of their current circumstances, and therefore adopted victim identities.

Although some of the identities these trailing spouses had adopted were as a result of trailing, the women had also adopted other, carefully constructed identities. The identity work they did to achieve these identities will be presented later on in this chapter.
4.2.2.4 Future narrative

Although some of these women may have been going through periods of an identity crisis, they had hope for the future. They presented a future narrative in which they described themselves as independent women, not necessarily as trailing spouses, but possibly as career women in Zimbabwe or as lead spouses further abroad. In order to achieve these goals, the women took to identity work through studying. All the women wanted to study in SA. Some had already studied in SA, others were busy studying, and those who were not studying hoped to do so in the near future. Studying was therefore one way in which they actioned identity work. Studying also presented opportunities for identity play, creating what I call academic-based transitional identities that could facilitate future career identities, career options, and career changes. Studying, for these women, created avenues of possibilities to take back lost power and dignity. Studying as identity work is discussed below.

4.3 The Identity work through studying network

All the trailing spouses in this study had, at some point since becoming trailing spouses, registered as full-time or part-time students. All of the participants expressed that studying gave them a reason to get out of the house and interact with people outside of their homes. Studying, therefore, was not just a way for these women to cope with their experiences as trailing spouses; it became part of their identity work and identity play.

4.3.1 Overview of the Identity work through studying network

The network had 20 codes and 100 associated quotations. Of the 20 codes, nine were generic, eight were key codes, and three were code families. The key codes were:

- Conditions on permit held {8:14};
- Basic civil rights denied banking and driving {4:4};
- Feelings of isolation {7:10};
- Applying for jobs got no responses back {13:20};
- Previous qualifications not accepted {7:5};
- Studies before coming to South Africa {5:8};
- Future narrative {6:4}
- Claiming independence {3:12}
- Another move expected {9:4}
- Career change {2

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165 Future narrative {6:4}
166 Claiming independence {3:12}
167 Another move expected {9:4}
168 Career change {2
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- Studying as a way of escape (18:11); and [ ] Studying since coming to SA (13:9).

The code families were:

- Cultural isolation (0:4);
- Personal and professional development through studies (0:14) and
- Short lived identity work (0:3)

The identity work through studying network is presented in Figure 4.2.
Figure 4.2. The Identity work through studying network.
4.3.2 Findings regarding the Identity work through studying network

Studying was a way for these women to keep in touch with the latest developments in their professions, keeping abreast of technological advancements in their field of expertise, and stimulating and improving their own knowledge base. Marian said, “People continue studying so that they to keep in touch with the business world. Just to know what is happening. When you are studying, at least you have got something you feel better about. It's something to make you feel better” (P2:060).

When practising one's profession, personal development and skills upgrades often naturally occur in the workplace. Because the women were no longer employed, workplace skills development was no longer available to them\(^\text{169}\). The women had tried to apply for work\(^\text{170}\), but they either got no response, or were rejected\(^\text{171}\). Some of the women had had their Zimbabwean qualifications evaluated as inferior to similar South African qualifications; therefore, their previous qualifications were not accepted by prospective employers\(^\text{172}\). Through studying at colleges and universities in SA, the women had found replacement environments for the workplace, where they could interact socially, thereby reducing feelings of social isolation\(^\text{173}\), and having a reason to leave their homes\(^\text{174}\). In this regard, Marian said, “You will be leaving the house, going to the library. You will be going out, at least. You will be doing something, you know. You have got something going on, rather than sitting doing nothing” (P2:062).

Studying was also a way for the trailing spouses to network and interact with people outside of their homes. In so doing, the women created identities beyond that of a trailing spouse\(^\text{175}\) and a housewife. They became students, albeit mature students, interacting and networking with intellectuals and likeminded people.

Studying, for these women, had also become a way to indirectly 'practise' their careers in lecture rooms, rather than in the workplace.

Mary, however, had not been able to register for any formal studies, because of financial constraints\(^\text{176}\). Mary said, “You know, when you get an education, you need to advance. So,
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there was no progress. There is no progress in my life. I was just a housewife, and each time I went to the washing line to hang my clothes, the other helpers would ask me which person I was working for, and it really affected me psychologically” (P3:011). For Mary, further education represented progress through personal advancement and progressive identities. The fact that she could not study made her feel that she had become a housewife, a servant wife, even a glorified domestic helper.

As trailing spouses in other countries further abroad, the women had also studied. However, these studies were mainly to improve their qualifications in their chosen areas of expertise, with the hope of securing better employment upon returning home. Except for Fadzi, who temporarily returned to work in Zimbabwe, the other three women who had trailed in other countries had not yet returned to Zimbabwe. Instead, they had become trailing spouses in SA. Although they had not been able to secure any meaningful employment, the women maintained that studying had helped them to cope with being trailing spouses, and to find meaning in their current existences.

It was evident that studying had led to short-term identity work, typically lasting a year or two. As students, the women claimed what I term pseudo-professional identities. The women had acquired pseudo-professional identities anchored in their status as students and their professional and academic career progression. These pseudo-professional identities therefore provided opportunities for identity play in relation to potential future professional and work identities. Studying provided the women with structured environments within which they could discover and experiment with possible professional identities. However, once they had completed their studies, the women could only claim the qualification, not the provisional or actual identities associated with their qualifications. Therefore, identity work through studying had been short-lived, and identity liminality was triggered once more.

Debby said, “I wanted to do MPH (Master’s in Public Health). Something to go along with nutrition and health, something to further my career, so that, whenever I get the job, at least I will have furthered my academics (sic). I was not stagnant” (P7: 169). The women acknowledged that studying was only a partial requirement of the professional identities they wanted to adopt. Debby went on to say, “I am now, like, doing something parallel to health. There is someone who gave me some books on human capital management consultancy. These Zimbabwean women who were also in my situation took the course. It’s a part-time

177 Studies in Kenya {1:2}, Studies in the UK {2:2}, Studies in Sweden {1:2} and studies in the US {1:2}
178 CF: Personal and professional development through studies {0:11} 357
CF: Short lived identity work {0:3}
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course, so they said since it’s a part time thing, you can study for two months, then you start working.”

Although this meant a total career change for Debby, she was somewhat able to exercise agency in her identity work. Debby completed the course, but remained unemployed.

Marian, like Debby, has decided on a career change as part of her identity work. Marian was a personal assistant, and had a Diploma in Secretarial Studies. Marian said, “I realised that, in most cases, pre-schools don’t require or ask for work permits, and now, because I was working in an environment with kids at Kumon. I started enjoying the work and then I said maybe this is a possible opportunity for me to change my career,’ because of the work permit issue and the fact that there was no way I could apply for a quota permit in secretarial skills and get one. They don’t give quota permits in secretarial skills. So, I said to myself: ‘Ok, let me try this.’ That’s when I started my studies in early childhood development” (P2:034). For Marian, both agency and a career change had become part of her identity work. Marian wanted to be a nursery school teacher, and took the initiative to ensure that she became a nursery school teacher.

Studying also provided an avenue by which the women could claim back some of the privileges they felt had been taken from them. The women were able to open student bank accounts, and were also able to hold provisional driver’s licences.

I had the following conversation with Yvonne regarding her student bank account:

Yvonne: “…I managed to open a bank account with FNB.”

Varie (Researcher): “How did you manage that?”

Yvonne: “Because I was still studying with UNISA, they used my … student status, but, at the same time, accompanying spouse permit. But now,

my cards have expired, I am no longer a student my; accompanying permit is not yet out.”

Varie: “OK, so your cards expired?”

Yvonne: “They expired on 31 July.”

179 Basic civil rights denied banking and driving licences (4:4)
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Varie: “So, you don't have cards?”

Yvonne: “I don't have cards.”

Varie: “Is the account still open?”

Yvonne: “When I went there with my expired card, they took my passport, and they came back to me and said: 'Please, can you show me where is your permit?' I said: 'This one, this one is expired.' And then I produced this, and they said: 'No, we need the permit fixed on the passport (showing me a letter from the Home Affairs office in Pretoria).”

Varie: “So, that account is no longer working?”

Yvonne: “It is, because I go on Internet banking, just to check, just to keep it active. If, maybe, like, if I do some piece job, like if there are surveys, I go and do surveys. I just tell them, even if it's R500: ‘Just deposit into my account.’ And then, what I do, I've got my brother who is a student, my cousin’s brother, my cousin’s son, yeah, and my young sister; they are students. So, they have got student's permits, so they are allowed to work at the restaurants, so they are renting. I don't stay with them. So, if they want to pay their rent, then I say: 'Fine, how much do I have in my account? R2000. Can you bring your rent money here? I will transfer into your landlord's account.' That's how I get my money.”

Varie: “Because you can't get it out?

Yvonne: “Yeah, I can't. I don't have a card. I can't” (P1:096-108).

As a student, Yvonne was also able to apply for a provisional driver's licence; however, her provisional or learner's licence had expired. Yvonne said, “My driver's licence, my learner’s, expired in March, right, now I can't even renew it. I don't have a permit. As it is now, I can't even drive. At least I could drive when I had my learner's. I could drive with someone, maybe, but now, I can't even be in a driver's seat... I am just a passenger. Just imagine, …so that means, if I get my permit, I will be as good as someone who doesn't know how to drive,
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because I have to start afresh. March, April, May, and now it’s November, how many months down the line. You see, those are the challenges that I have” (P1:110 and 112).

4.4. The Identity work through trading network

Being a trailing spouse had disempowered the trailing spouses financially. Most of the women had undertaken small income-generating ventures such as buying and selling, making and selling craftwork, and baking cakes for sale.

4.4.1 Overview of Identity work through trading network

The network Identity work through trading as identity work had 19 codes and 183 associated quotations. Of the 18 codes, 13 were generic, six were key codes, and one was a code families.

The key codes were:

- Loss of influence in the family {11:1};
- Loss of personal value {14:1};
- Claiming independence {3:18};
- ID: Trader identity {2:8};
- Fellow Zimbabweans do not help {15:4}; and
- Compensation of loss of personal value by buying assets {4:6}.

The only code family for this network, was Debt {0:8}. The Identity work through trading network is presented in Figure 4.3.
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Figure 4.3. The Identity work through trading network.
4.4.2 Findings regarding the identity work through trading network

The women had found that, by not financially contributing towards their families’ well-being, they had lost influence in any meaningful decision-making regarding their families. As a result, the women had feelings of a loss of personal value within themselves and within the family unit. In order to reclaim some of that lost value and some level of financial independence, some of the women had taken to trading. By buying and selling — starting up small businesses — the women wanted to be seen as financially productive people aspiring to become entrepreneurs. They were not just stay-at-home mothers relying on their husbands for financial support.

Jane hand-knitted jerseys to sell. Jane said, “I made a few friends, and I managed to convince those few friends that I could use the talent that I had of knitting jerseys. So I used to knit jerseys for their kids, and then they would give me money. It wasn’t easy, because the wool was also more expensive, and the hand knit-jerseys were also more expensive to buy. The price I would charge you would buy about three jerseys in a shop. So, it was quite something, but, I think, because they were friends, they understood my situation. They would give me, I think, I used to get about R300 [profit] from knitting jerseys — on a monthly basis. And then that’s the money I would keep aside for bread for the kids and everything. Then I would keep aside, as well, a little bit for wool, just in case my friends wanted more jerseys. I think it was a group of three friends, and I think they were just doing it as, well, just to help me, because they could see that, financially, I wasn’t really coping because of life in South Africa” (P11:04-05). Outside of her small group of friends, Jane had found that other Zimbabwean trailing spouses, especially those who had been in SA for some time, were not willing to buy her jerseys or help her with ideas to overcome her financial difficulties.

Rose had started a school and airport shuttle business. She said, “I tried to start my own business — a taxi company, with my own car; so, being the driver by myself” (P12:06). Rose said, “I was driving people from here (Johannesburg) to OR Tambo, driving people around, trying to do this and that. I come from there I buy my fuel, and buy some bread for my kids, and I come home. Money is always not enough, given the burden at home, and the mortgage...”
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*here, the school fees, the bits and bobs that are needed here it all adds up*” (P12:071). Rose had started off as the driver, and, after about six months, she employed a driver, because her husband had concerns about her security, and felt that Rose did not have adequate insurance cover. Rose maintained that the shuttle business had done well until her husband raised his concerns and the Gautrain came into operation.

Rose also ran a bed-and-breakfast business in an extension of her home. She said she had guests from abroad; however, the income was minimal, and seasonal.

Jane had started a training business with another trailing spouse. Their BEE status meant that it was difficult for them to get government- and big business tenders. They relied on their network of friends and former colleagues for jobs. Jane and her business partner were on the lists of preferred suppliers of a number of large companies; however, they got very few jobs.

Tina made craft work to order for European expatriates. Tina said, “I also did a few courses — in embroidery, fabric painting, and other crafty things. I sometimes do craft work for sale in Europe” (P8:035). Tina also baked cakes to sell. She got orders through referrals, since she did not do any formal advertising. Tina baked birthday cakes, and occasionally got orders for wedding cakes.

Yvonne did cross-border trading. Yvonne bought second-hand bales of clothing in SA, and resold these in Zimbabwe. Yvonne also sold cooked food from a caravan kitchen. Yvonne said, “What I am doing, cooking food in a cafe in Pretoria, which is not in line with my profession, but it gives me a little bit of money. I do not have time even to spend with my family, as I am always at work — every day from 7 AM to 9 PM, cooking, serving. It’s not even a restaurant; it’s a caravan kind of place. You know what I mean?” (P14:05).

Debby bought hair extensions, and sent them to her sister in Zimbabwe. Her sister, in turn, sold these and bought groceries for their parents with the proceeds.

Marian had undertaken a number of trading activities. Marian said, “When I was in Zimbabwe, I would just go to work. It was enough; my salary was OK. But, the days things were becoming difficult, then, to get cash, I started selling things. It was because of the economy, or just trying out this and that, but that was because of the economy. But, here, now, you end up doing too

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186 ID Trader {2:7} 366
Trading {1:1}
187 Craft work {1:1}
188 Bake cakes for resale {1:1}
189 Buy clothes for resale in Zimbabwe {1:2}
many things, things you have never done before, things you never thought you would do. As a career woman, for you to develop, to the extent you want, it is very limiting. So, I ended up selling veggies from my garden, doing the garden, and to sustain [sic] the little money I was getting from Kumon. You end up doing a lot of things, you know. You realise that obviously if I got a job, and if I went to work at 8, I wouldn’t be selling vegetables. Usually, you would never think of such, you won’t think of it. you will be thinking that I should progress my career hence forth. You will be just thinking about further studies, saying if I try this maybe if I do this degree programme, maybe the prospects here, it’s like this and that. There is an opportunity that can come through. You will be looking out to see I can move from this post as an administrator, and I will end up running the department. Or maybe I can rise.’ That’s what you will be looking at. You will be looking out to see I can move from this post as an administrator, and I will end up running the department. Or maybe I can rise that’s what you will be looking at,” (P2:107).

Marian had also bought off-lay hens (hens that no longer lay eggs), seasoned them, and sold them to schools and businesses in Zimbabwe. As a result, Marian had spent a lot of time travelling between Zimbabwe and SA, which had caused “family problems”. Marian had then decided to stop travelling to Zimbabwe, and decided to open a fish-and-chips stall in the Johannesburg business centre.

Through the activities mentioned above, the trailing spouses were expressing their ability to find innovative ways to generate an income to supplement their husbands’ salaries. Marian saved money from her business activities, and often bought tangible assets for their home. Most recently, Marian had put down a deposit for a car. Marian said, “I am a hard-working gogetter. I have tried a lot of things, and have been cheated by people, but I never give up. Sometimes, my husband thinks I am all over the place, but I honestly cannot just do nothing. It sometimes causes problems between us. I have things to pay for, so I cannot just sit and wait. I have to pay for my car and a few other things. Being busy makes me tick” (P15:015).

These women often conducted business on a cash basis, and the profit margins were usually very small. Sometimes, the profit margins were not viable, but the trailing spouses continued working as a way of proving that they can do something that can bring money into the home.

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190 Selling vegetables {2:2}
191 Compensation of loss of personal value by buying assets {4:6}
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Their pensions, though, remained a source of worry\textsuperscript{192}, and their debt caused additional pressure to be financially productive.

With their earnings, the trailing spouses bought items that they considered to be of value, to show that they had achieved something tangible and worthwhile through their businesses.

Mary had bought a smart television and a sound system. Thembi had bought a residential plot in Zimbabwe, and was building a family home there on the plot.

Beyond small businesses and trading, the women also performed identity work activities in the home through caring. Identity work through caring is discussed below.

4.5 Identity work through caring network

All the participants in this study were mothers. Two of the participants said they had had a third child, while one had a fourth child because they felt that caring for children was a way of keeping busy; it gave them a purpose in life. Caring for their children had become central to these women’s lives. Their lives mostly revolved around their children and their husbands. The women had therefore adopted dominant carer identities. They had adopted mothering identities, as opposed to mothering roles (Johnson & Swanson, 2006). According to Heiss (1991) roles entail behaviours performed by individuals to fulfil social and personal expectations. Identities, on the other hand, are an expression of self-definition — the answer to the question: Who am I? In this case, the answer would be: I am a mother (Johnston & Swanson, 2006).

4.5.1 Overview of Identity work through caring network

The network had 21 codes and 68 associated quotations. Of the 21 codes, 16 were generic, four were key codes, and there was only one code family. The key codes were:

- Stay at home \{8:13\};
- ID: Provider/carer \{10:10\};
- Mother, alone with children \{6:6\}; and
- Husband travels a lot \{2:13\}.

\textsuperscript{192} Pension worries \{5:6\}
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The code family was *Life revolves around the children* {0:5}. The *Identity work through caring network* is presented in Figure 4.4.
Figure 4.4. The Identity work through caring network.
4.5.2 Findings regarding *Identity work through caring network*

All the women stated that their children were central to their lives\(^{193}\), and that their day-to-day routines revolved around their children’s well-being and activities. The women’s activities were mainly general household chores such as cleaning and doing the laundry, while they minded their children and supported their husbands. The women felt they were carers extraordinaire, and took pride in running and co-ordinating their households. Laura said that she had taken on caring for her children as her main identity because, when they lived in the UK, she could not work, because they "just couldn’t afford childcare"\(^ {194}\) (P9:024). Laura said that, when they came to SA, “I thought SA was an even playing field, so I thought I would launch my career here and start to accumulate relevant work experience. In the UK, I could not work because I had young children, and childcare was expensive, so I just worked part-time in a supermarket when my husband was able to look after the children. Here my children are all in school, but I cannot work. I am on a diplomatic visa. I thought I could apply for a work permit and get it, but I have never been called to any interviews, even though I have sent out hundreds of applications” (P19:032). Laura’s husband travelled a lot\(^ {195}\), and, therefore, she was often alone with the children. Laura’s middle child, a ten-year-old daughter, had many allergies, and ensuring that her child’s allergies did not lead to hospitalisation and caring for her other two children while her husband was away had become central to her identity.

Tina said that caring for children was a calling. Tina had two grown children, but said, “Well, I look after relatives’ children. I am so good with children; I think it’s a calling. In Botswana, I always had lots of children over the weekend. Some even slept in the lounge, and, in church, one time, Danny’s work mate asked: ‘how many children do u have? [My husband] said: ‘Two.’ Then he asked, ‘How come I always see you with lots of children in church? Sometimes your family takes the whole pew.’ Here, it’s the same” (P8: 198).

Marian had three children when she came to SA. Marian had decided on a fourth\(^ {196}\) child. Marian said, “I had another child, who will keep me consoled. Yes, someone to console me, someone to keep me company, and take to crèche. I didn’t want to have many children, but I had nothing to do, and I thought: ‘Why not have a fourth child?’ and Greg came along” (P2: 126).

\(^{193}\) Life revolves around the children (0:5)
\(^{194}\) Child care issues (1:6)
\(^{195}\) Husband travels a lot (2:13)
\(^{196}\) Having children as a way to keep busy (4:4)
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Rose expressed that, “The last one, the two-year-old, I just didn’t know what else to do with myself. I like having a baby. In a way, it’s kind of shooting yourself in the foot, because now you don’t have the pension, you don’t have the money, and you don’t have a job. You don’t have anything, but, yeah, in a way, you have someone to care for. Just something to do as a human being” (P12: 111).

Jane seemed to have experienced a combination of loneliness and fear of the ‘empty nest syndrome.’ Jane said, “Both my boys were independent and in high school. I felt alone, and had a lot of time on my hands. So, we decided to have another baby. That’s when I got pregnant with David. He is a South African. Perhaps his future will be different” (P21:025).

Caring for children seemed an important part of the trailing spouses’ lives. Through caring, the trailing spouses kept themselves busy by fulfilling the needs of their children.

The women also said that, as carers and stay-at-home mothers, they sometimes did not feel the need to dress up. Previously, the clothes they wore played an important role in expressing who they were. Identity work through dress was therefore important to the women, and presented an avenue through which they could become more than just trailing spouses.

4.6 The Identity work through volunteering network

Tina and Debby were often very busy with their volunteer work. Like working people, both Tina and Debby left their homes in the morning, and returned in the evening, tired from having spent many productive hours making a difference in people’s lives.

4.6.1 Overview of Identity work through volunteering

The network had six codes and 33 associated quotations. The network had three generic codes and three key codes. The key codes were:

- Feeling of helplessness {10:6}
- Socially isolated {4:16}
- Feelings of defeat {14:5}

This network did not have code families. The Identity work through volunteering network is presented in Figure 4.5.

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197 Having children as a way to keep busy {4:4}
Figure 4.5. The Identity work through volunteering network.
4.6.2 Findings from the Identity work through volunteering network

Tina had done volunteer work through her church, where she worked in the soup kitchen. Tina said, “I hooked up with a group of sisters (nuns) who were running a soup kitchen for AIDS orphans, so I used to go there. We would prepare lunch for the children, then picking them up from their homes and taking them for their hospital appointments, because there were a lot of AIDS orphans” (P8:031). Tina said she had found the work she did with the orphans rewarding, and she enjoyed caring for and helping the children.

Debby had done volunteer work in a work readiness programme. Debby also said that she had done volunteer work because “at least you have something to write on your CV; there won’t be any gaps. At least, I can say I am doing something. It becomes an expense to me, even the transport I am volunteering, to go to the office” (P7:153). Debby had tried volunteering for a short time; however, she had encountered problems. Debby said, “Some volunteering work came up at MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières) in Jo’burg, in the CBD. So MSF said: ‘Yeah, you can come, but at your own costs, eh. I said no because, because, right now, it means, on those few resources, sometimes we cannot get fuel for the car. If I add on the expenses of going to MSF that would be a strain on our finances” (P7: 157). Debby also said that she wanted to do volunteer work, but not at her own cost, as she could not afford these costs.

Tina and Debby had both enjoyed volunteer work. Tina had volunteered so that she would have something meaningful to do, while Debby had volunteered because she wanted to maintain employment continuity on her curriculum vitae, and because having worked for MSF would have been a good future reference. After short periods of volunteering, both women had stopped doing volunteer work, Debby for financial reasons, and Tina because she no longer found fulfilment in the work she was doing. Both women had once again become socially isolated and lost the volunteer identities they had assumed.

Aside from the identity work, the trailing spouses also practised identity play. People do not always do identity work consciously or intentionally. Often, identity work is subtle, subconscious, and barely visible. Identity play, on the other hand, entails playfully creating
possible other selves through rehearsal of these possible selves in safe environments (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010).

4.7 Identity play

During the interviews, it became apparent that the trailing spouses engaged with internal, reflexive self-narratives, which they used to explore and reflect on their identities. In doing so, the women experimented with possible identities, and identity play became a rehearsal of the identities that they were exploring.

By; by studying, they played at being experts; by speaking the local languages, Yvonne played at being a South African. For these women, identity play was not just a zone “at the threshold of current and possible selves” (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010, p. 13), but rather a zone that mitigated and stabilised identity liminality. It was a space for developing identity traits for possible future identities.

4.7.1 Studying as identity play

Studying was a way by which the women played at possible future professional identities. By studying dietetics, Fadzi’s possible future was to become a dietician. Fadzi said, “I did dietetics. It’s a professional qualification. So I could write my own letter saying: ’I am a practising dietician’” (P10:077).

Rose had studied for a Master’s degree in real estate management, and was busy with a doctorate in real estate financing. Rose said she “dreams to be a Minister of Housing in Zimbabwe one day” (P23:020).

By studying theology, Tina hoped to, someday, do “some missionary work” (P18:013).

Thembi told the story of her possible future.

Varie: “If you were in Zim, where do you think you would be career-wise?”

Thembi “Maybe a lecturer at a university. I wanted to do my PhD, but I’ve had to go back a bit, because I was told my first degree, BA honours in English, was not acceptable for teaching. I have a Master’s in sociology of education. I had to do an honours degree through UNISA in inclusive education to get SACE registration. I don’t know how they do it, but instead of a PhD, I have had to do another honours degree, really taking me backwards.”
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Varie: “What occupation is on your passport?”

Thembi: “Teacher.”

Varie: “What do you think should be the career on your passport?”

Thembi: “University lecturer.”

Varie: “Can you describe yourself? Who is Thembi? What is important to her, and what makes her tick?”

Thembi: “I am a hard-working person. I will do anything to make sure that I am an independent person. I have told myself that I can prevail in anything that I do, because God is on my side. So, with God’s grace, I can do anything, really. Oh, I am very health-conscious, and like to watch the food I eat.”

Varie: “Where are you going with life, and where do you expect to be in ten years?”

Thembi: “In ten years, I want to have set myself financially. I am building houses in Zim for rental, so I want to make sure I am financially independent” (P22:008-017).

Through her studies and her buying and selling, Thembi was hoping to become financially independent and a university lecturer.

Yvonne and Marian were also involved in buying and selling locally and cross-border trading. Both women were hoping to develop business enterprises, and therefore played at being entrepreneurs.

4.7.2 Entrepreneurship as identity play

Yvonne and Marian were traders. Rose had tried running a taxi business, and rented out a cottage on her residential property. The women aspired to run their own businesses.

Rose said, “I tried to start my own business — a taxi company — with my own car, so, being the driver by myself” (P12:069). Rose also hoped to develop properties and be active in real estate. Rose said, “We bought this house. We thought I thought of that other space down there (points at part of the house). If we get money, if we have money, we can build that and rent it out. Just a small, cosy place — a two-bedroomed place where [sic] we can rent it out to students, and that would be my pension. Because I actually wanted to jump out of my skin when I realised I am
turning 40, and I am only left with about 20 years to work and contribute to my pension. This idea will be my pension, otherwise it’s scary” (P12:103).

Not only was Rose playing at becoming the Minister of housing, she was also hoping to become a property magnate.

Yvonne studied logistics, and her vision was that, “In ten years’ time, I expect to be a very successful business woman, owning a very big logistics company” (P14:013). At the time, Yvonne was selling food from a caravan kitchen, and doing seasonal cross-border trading, buying in SA and selling in Zimbabwe. Yvonne also sold catalogue beauty products in SA and in Zimbabwe.

Marian believed in working for herself, and Marian said her future “would be in business. I don’t think I would be working for someone. I think the way forward is to work for yourself. So, I would be a businesswoman” (P15:007). Marian also said, “I am a hard-working go-getter. I have tried a lot of things, and have been cheated by people, but I never give up. Sometimes, my husband thinks I am all over the place, but, I honestly cannot just do nothing. It sometimes causes problems between us. I have things to pay for, so I cannot just sit and wait. I have to pay for my car and a few other things. Being busy makes me tick, and my religion also keeps me going” (P15:015).

The women said that their current businesses were a step towards becoming successful businesswomen. The women said that, with appropriate funding and a level playing field, they could become entrepreneurs with large businesses. Therefore, the women played with the possibility of being entrepreneurs. The women also experimented with deceptive identities and career identities. These are discussed below.

4.7.3 Professional identities as identity play

All the participants in this study referred to themselves in terms of their past work identities. Debby had been a Provincial Nutritionist, Tina a Programme Officer, and Fadzi a dietician. Yvonne and Marian had been personal assistants, Thembi, Mary, and Jane had been teachers, Rose had been a customs officer, and Laura had been a Customer Service Representative.

Their professions were central to who these women were, because these professions represented their career achievements, although there seemed to be some level of embellishment regarding their careers, as discussed earlier. Their professions were identity play, because none of these women was actually practising her profession, but they continued
to claim these professions. By claiming these professional identities, the women were claiming their past professional identities, and, at the same time, claiming possible future identities, based on past professions.

The product of identity work and identity play requires maintenance in order to enhance and preserve claimed identities. However, the women in the present study found identity maintenance problematic. Below is a discussion of the findings regarding these trailing spouses’ identity maintenance experiences.

4.8 Identity maintenance

Identity work and identity play do not always produce the desired non-liminality, and the resultant identity is therefore maintained. Identity maintenance manifests when the holder of a claimed identity consistently shows signs and behaviours of the claimed identity (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). Identity maintenance for the trailing spouses in the present study was problematic. It was evident that the identities that the trailing spouses had temporarily taken on were shallow or fluid identities, such as that of a trader. It became apparent that the new identities that they had claimed had limitations in fulfilling their belonging-, esteem-, and self-actualization needs, as outlined in Marlow’s hierarchy of needs. The temporary nature of the women’s identities therefore did not support sustained non-liminality.

4.8.1 Temporary identities

A student identity lasts for the length of a course. The trader identity was valid only for the periods that they had stock. Their trading was also mainly on a cash basis, and, sometimes, capital for the business was diverted to meet family needs. The trader identity was therefore suspended until new capital became available.

Because these identities were temporary, the women could not consistently keep the student- or trader identity narrative going; therefore, their non-liminality was temporary.

For these women their carer identities peaked when their children were dependent. Tina and Fadzi had grown children. Both expressed that, because their children had left home, they needed to find other ways to keep busy. Fadzi had left SA to take up a part-time lecturer post in Zimbabwe, while Tina was studying theology, and hoped to do missionary work.

Although these temporary identities allowed temporary non-liminality, prolonged liminality occurred once the identities’ tenure expired or was no longer applicable. For instance, Fadzi
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could claim to be a dietician because she had the necessary qualifications; however, a professional identity as a dietician was difficult to maintain, because she was unemployed.

4.8.2 Shallow identities of the trailing spouses

Shallow identities for these women, were identities that were rooted or anchored in expected behaviours or traits that the women portrayed or exhibited with little to no identity activation or identity salience. Some of the trailing spouses referred to themselves as professionals. Indeed, at some point, the women had been professionals — economist, dietician, teacher, and programme officer; however, their daily existences at the time did not support their claimed professional identities.

It therefore seemed that identity liminality was permanently prevalent in the lives of the trailing spouses. The women constantly had identities in transition, which caused instability in their core identities, resulting in an identity crisis.

Marian stated, “I am a Jack of all trades, but a master of none. I've tried everything just to survive” (P2:015). Although Marian was talking about the many things she did in order to earn money, it was apparent that this also applied to her identity.

Rose said, “I bet you, if I were to meet me on the streets, I would not be able to recognise myself” (P23:16).

Tina said, “I do not know this person I have become. This (gesturing towards herself) was never part of the plan” (P8:068).

Fadzi said, “I go with the flow, I have been an expatriate in three countries, but at my age I need to take control of my life,” (P20:015). When asked what she thought the career title on her passport should be, Fadzi replied, “Public health nutritionist, dietician, food technologist, registered psychiatric nurse, mother par excellence. I guess everything that I have done in the past 20 or so years” (P20:013). Fadzi moved to Zimbabwe while the present study was being conducted, and decided on a commuter partnership.

For these women, identity maintenance was problematic. I cannot categorically state from the findings that there was substantial identity maintenance. Resilience, though, seemed to be a characteristic of these women’s identity maintenance. However, it was evident that the women suffered prolonged identity liminality, even though they actively performed identity work. It was evident that the women struggled to establish congruence between the ideal selves and their actual selves. From the findings, it seemed that the trailing spouses took on identities
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based on creative coping mechanisms and embellishment. This made the identities irregular, and made identity maintenance problematic.

Despite problematic identity maintenance, the women did adopt a number of primary identities, which may have helped them to cope with their experiences as unemployed trailing spouses.

4.9 The primary identities of the trailing spouses

From the identity work process mentioned above, the trailing spouses seemed to have adopted specific primary identities. These primary identities are presented below.

4.9.1 Student identity

Nine of the ten participants had studied while they were trailing spouses. Student identities are temporary, therefore lasted only as long as the women were studying.

4.9.2 Trader identity

To earn money, some of the trailing spouses had started small businesses, buying and selling goods. Yvonne did seasonal buying and selling of second-hand clothing. She also sold catalogue products in SA and in Zimbabwe. Marian did cross-border trading, and Thembi went to China and bought goods for resale in SA and Zimbabwe. Although the women made little profit from their trading, it kept them busy, and some of the women hoped to grow their businesses into successful enterprises.

4.9.3 Carer identity

The trailing spouses spoke of being the carers of their children and their relatives' children. I found that the trailing spouses were not just parenting their children, they were carers. For these women, caring went beyond parenting. As carers the women willingly provided extraordinary care, often outside the bounds of what is usual in family relationships, at the expense of fulfilling their own personal needs in the attempt of finding purpose in their lives. The lives of the trailing spouses who had strong carer identities revolved around their children and the children's needs.

Four of the trailing spouses had had a third child after coming to SA, and Marian had had a fourth child after coming to SA. All five women had had another child even though they had agreed with their husbands that their families were complete. The participants said they decided to have another child because they had time on their hands and needed something to keep them busy. Looking after a baby gave the trailing spouses a new role.
Laura said, “I found that being a new mother again made me feel different. I adapted a new role. I had someone who was totally dependent on me, someone who needed me one hundred percent” (P19:015).

The problem with the carer identity is that, sometimes, in carrying out the carer role, being a carer becomes that person’s raison d’être. When Fadzi’s children left home, she felt lost, because her life had revolved around making sure her children were cared for. All of a sudden, she had nothing to do and no one to care for, which caused her to question her life choices and rethink her life strategy because her raison d’être was no longer available. Fadzi is one of the trailing spouses who has since decided on a commuter partnership.

4.9.4 Educator/tutor identity

Seven of the ten trailing spouses had been tutors or educators since coming to SA. Debby tutored through an employment agency, Rose was a contract lecturer at Wits, Tina tutored part-time at a theological college, and Jane was a part-time learnership trainer, moderator, and assessor.

4.10 Insights from the chapter

In this chapter, I discussed the identity work processes that the trailing spouses used, and the identities they had assumed. Identity work and identity play processes for these women became conscious attempts at rebuilding identities that had become lost or confused as a result of becoming trailing spouses. Through identity work and identity play, the trailing spouses attempted to create coherence between the new primary selves they had created and their current situation. Identity work had become a struggle for identity. In the struggle for substantive identities, identity maintenance became problematic. For these women, the process of identity maintenance and the associated processes were not clear. I also found that, although the trailing spouses tried to act and look the part of their claimed identities, they often felt that they fell short of their claimed identities; however, they remained resilient and persistent in their identity work.

Identity work for these women also became coping mechanisms mitigating some of their negative experiences as trailing spouses. Identity work was for some of the women a way to keep them busy. By continuously practicing identity work, the trailing spouses were constantly managing and negotiating their identities, thereby perpetuating liminality and possibly obstructing identity maintenance.
Chapter 5: My reflexive journey

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present my journey as a researcher who is also a trailing spouse. I present the thoughts, opinions, and feelings I experienced throughout the research process. The chapter is a subjective interpretation of the research process as I experienced it. This chapter represents my research story which was crucial for insight into the reasons for particular decisions when unanticipated incidents occurred during the research process. My research story became part of the internal audit, which in turn, I used to assess the research process including data analysis and theory development. The chapter also presents primary data that I recorded in my journal. While doing the interviews, I was able to reflect on my own journey as a trailing spouse through the experiences of the ten participants. I did not combine my own data with the data from the participants. Therefore my own learning processes, identity work and life experiences are not part of the findings and the resultant theoretical outcomes. However, I realised that my experiences provided a context for reflexivity that I could use to debrief myself regarding my own experiences. I was able to explore my own identity work through reflexivity.

I could identify with most of the experiences of the participants. Their experiences were like a reflection of my own experiences and my journey as a trailing spouse. The data I collected from the participants made visible and concrete my own journey as a trailing spouse in SA, my experiences, my identity struggles, and my identity work, which were probably apparent to others, but a total mystery to me, and a source of personal hardship and emotional distress.

I was angry about my circumstances as a trailing spouse in SA, and I blamed South African policies and legislation for my unemployment. I felt that the inflexibility of the immigration- and employment laws were inhumane, and that these policies had to change. It became my mission to change them. The activist in me wanted to do a quasi-legal research project challenging the fit between South African immigration, employment laws, and economic empowerment laws against the South African Constitution, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, and the African Banjul Charter on Human and People's Rights of 1981. I also questioned the concepts and initiatives of the UN's Girl Education Initiative (UNGEI). The UNGEI advocates the education of girls in their home countries, but does not follow through with initiatives that empower girls who are expatriates. In one of my initial research proposals, I presented my mission as an activist, and also asked the question: What is the point of educating a girl when a
trip across her country’s borders as an expatriate can render that education unusable in terms of employment? However, with some persuasion and guidance by my study leaders, the topic of my study changed to an exploration of the experiences of trailing spouses.

Reflexivity served as a bridge between the experiences of the participants and my own. I was able to evaluate, synthesise, and theorise on my trailing experiences and the participants’ experiences. This reflexivity has been part of my own identity work. I have gone through the process of finding myself, my identity, understanding who I am, who I have become, and what identities I have adopted since becoming a trailing spouse. The reflexive process also allowed my identity work to transcend the cognitive dissonance associated with my identity struggles. I was therefore able to reflect and theorise on what was happening in my life, and how I could transcend to a state of mind that allowed effective identity work and identity maintenance.

5.2 Structure of the chapter

I will present a brief background to my own journey as a serial trailing spouse. I will then describe the critical moments that became central to my reflexivity. I will also present the shared moments I had with the participants. I derived the information contained in this chapter from the journal entries I had made and the memos I had written after the interviews with the participants. I identified critical moments by selecting journal entries that represented critical shifts in perceptions, as well as insights into my own experiences and those of the participants. First, I will present the background to my own journey, followed by the critical moments that I chose, and the reflexivity that these entailed.

5.3 Background to my own journey

I am a trailing spouse. I have trailed in three countries: the USA, the UK, and SA. Each country that I lived in presented its own difficulties and challenges. However, the mix of challenges and experiences that I have faced in SA have been much more complex and intense than what I experienced elsewhere. In the USA and the UK, I was able to work and volunteer, and I was involved in a number of social responsibility projects. There were support systems and support groups that helped minorities and immigrants with social integration, and these support groups helped me to settle in and find employment.

In SA, I have experienced problems at nearly every level of interaction. I have had language problems and social integration problems, and I have failed to gain access to meaningful employment opportunities. People often assume I speak the local languages, and refuse to address
me in English. When I respond in English, their demeanour and attitude border on abuse and aggression. I have been made to feel like I am enjoying resources and privileges that are meant for black South Africans, and that I am not entitled to the lifestyle I have. The general South African population does not like foreign nationals (Crush et al., 2008). Foreigners, especially those from other African countries, are viewed by some South Africans as invaders and criminals, diseased people taking South Africans’ jobs and threatening the social and economic well-being of SA, (Crush et al., 2008). Incidentally, when I lived in the UK, similar sentiments were expressed by locals and anti-immigration pressure groups. Many expressed that foreigners were living off their social services, and enjoying the good life at taxpayers’ expense (Slack, 2014). The general sentiment was that immigrants were a drain on society. However, we were taxpayers. We contributed towards National Insurance, which we never drew. National Insurance contributions in the UK provide means-tested, basic pensions, maternity allowances, jobseeker allowances, and bereavement allowances (UK Government, 2014). The USA, on the other hand has many immigrants, and, in my experience, Americans are more tolerant of African immigrants. However, there is a widening rift between African-Americans and African immigrants in the USA (Conteh, 2013).

My experiences in SA began when my husband came to SA from the UK with our children, our 11-year-old daughter and our 18-month-old son, in 2005. I was not happy with my South African trailing spouse immigration status, and we decided on a commuter partnership. I had permanent residency in the UK, and was therefore able to legally stay and work. We had a middle-class home in a reasonably affluent location. I could afford to pay the mortgage and the bills; therefore, I chose to live on my own in our family home. I commuted to SA once every three months for a week or two at a time, and I called the children almost daily. The children struggled with the commuter arrangement. My husband also struggled with the children, but, at the time, he chose not to let me know about this. After a year of a commuter partnership, we agreed that our relationship was strained, and I realised that the children were struggling without me at home. I then decided to permanently emigrate to SA.

Given that SA is close to home, Zimbabwe, both physically and culturally, I, like the participants in the study, assumed that I would find it easy to settle in and integrate. The difficulties I experienced with social integration were completely unexpected, and hugely disheartening and disappointing. Over and above the language and the social integration problems, the immigration laws in SA complicated my employability. Although there are regulatory provisions under which trailing spouses can obtain permission to work, Section 11(2) of the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 clearly prohibits accompanying or trailing spouses seeking
employment and working. Like the participants, I was in a difficult space, and this research became an outlet and an avenue for my personal identity exploration.

5.4 Critical moments

Critical reflexive moments occurred throughout the research process — after meetings with the participants, after interviews with the participants, during transcription and coding, during discussions with my study leaders, after meetings with my study leaders, and during times of personal reflection. I will present these critical moments in this chapter. I selected reflexive moments that represent pertinent issues that affected me, both emotionally and cognitively.

5.5 A presentation of select critical moments

The first entry in my journal was on 17 August 2012. I made the entry after a meeting with my supervisors. The entry reads:

“Today was an awkward day. Had a meeting with Anita [my study leader], and we were discussing the possible questions that I would be asking in my first interviews. As the list of questions grew, I felt like I was the interviewee and Anita was the researcher. Some of the issues we discussed — marriage, finances, husbands — really got to me, and I was really teary. Why did we leave the UK? That is a question that I had avoided, and possibly should have answered a long time ago. Was it the finances? I had my own money. I was independent, and he wanted to be the provider for the family. I guess I became a wife, and he became the husband, the man of the home. Was that a wife or a dependant or a mum? What did I become? Perhaps just a married woman? So, who have I become? Don’t know, really, but it has not all been bad. The holidays are good. Our first holiday after I moved to South Africa was in Mpumalanga. It was good, laid back, and not rushed, for a change. We had time to re-group and bond as a family. Life in the UK was very rushed, always busy and rather stressful. Life in South Africa was much slower, more laid back. I needed to work, though. Work never came by!! I must look up my old diaries; I used to do a count, a count of the number of days I have been out of work. I wonder what the count would be today!! Crazy, but I wonder if the count matters anymore. Why did I start counting anyway? What has changed? I am not sure. Really, I guess, that’s what I need to discover. Is this the sound of a victory? If so, let the journey begin.”
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This entry was the beginning of my journey as a trailing spouse doing research about the Zimbabwean trailing spouses’ experiences of this phenomenon.

Then, on September 17, 2012, I wrote an entry relating to the literature that I was exploring:

“The more I read the literature, the more I realise the centrality of work in an adult’s life. Indeed, it is as important as play to a child. The anger about the way the system constrains me has shifted more to a way of accepting that all this is really a dream deferred. Possibly a life unlived — portions of it, anyway. It is sad but true. A dream deferred — until when though!!!!!!? How can this deferred dream be realised? What needs to happen for a trailing spouse like me to live the life I wish for? Do I need to change my life goal posts, or do I need to reinvent myself using different constructs? What constructs would those be, though? Life without work perhaps!! That’s an option, but then, what replaces work in my life?”

The main issues that these entries raised were what work means to adults, and the role of work in my own self-concept. What happens when work is taken away? I am angry and I am mitigating my anger by making it a deferred dream. I am questioning the meaning of my life, and refusing to relinquish agency in changing my life situation. Below, I present some of the reflexive moments I had after interviews with the participants.

5.5.1 Reflexive moment after interview with Marian

My first interview was with Marian. I cried after the interview; Marian seemed to be purging bottled-up frustrations. I was not surprised when, a week later, she called me and told me she had been ill and in bed for a few days.

My entry read:

“I had a preliminary meeting with Marian. I gave her the introductory pack, and it seemed I had opened up a Pandora’s Box; or is it a can of worms? Every time I talk to people about this trailing spouse experience, I feel teary. I thought this trailing spouse experience was my battle, but now it seems the problem is much bigger than I thought, and it covers more issues than I had imagined. It feels like the trailing spouse question harbours as many issues and problems as those associated with the human condition: the meaning of life, a search for gratification, a sense of curiosity. Why am I here? What is my life worth? What have I achieved, and, if I died today, would my life have been worthwhile?”
Marian said that a trailing spouse is like an animal without any rights. How sad is that? The interview ended with us going shopping, chatting about life in general and how we as trailing spouses were not networking and helping each other; we tend to bring each other down, rather than supporting each other.

I transcribed Marian’s interview, and export it to ATLAS.ti. One statement that stuck with me from Marian’s interview was her reference to buying capital goods for the home. Capital goods in her context meant tangible assets in the home, as opposed to perishable items like food and toiletries. I realised that I had bought absolutely nothing in our current home. I wrote in my journal, “If I could put a picture here (on this page) of something I owned, I would put my car — the Micra, but why would I put a picture of the Micra? I don’t know.” My Micra was the last major tangible capital asset that I had bought myself, in 2003. That was a long time ago. The Micra is no longer my car. It’s probably on a scrap heap now, but, for perhaps nostalgic reasons, I referred to it as my car, as though I still own it. That was my state of mind.

5.5.2 Reflexive moment after interview with Jane

After my interview with Jane, I wrote:

“Are trailing spouses dehumanised, defaced? They are people; or are they perhaps a forgotten people packed away behind closed doors? What? We are not allowed to work in Zimbabwe as well? Oh dear! (Jane showed me stamps in her passport which state that she is not allowed to work in Zimbabwe because she is not resident in Zimbabwe, and therefore she is counted under the labour statistics of South Africa, where she is resident (see Appendix 5). I did not know that we are not allowed to work in Zimbabwe as well. What a dilemma! That leaves me feeling helpless. Can it be that I am not allowed to work as a trailing spouse in South Africa, and, as long as I hold trailing spouse status and live in SA, I cannot work in Zimbabwe as well? How can that be right? Who makes these laws?”

Literature states that a country’s labour force is the total number of people who are eligible to work in that country (ILO, 2013). Because of our trailing spouse immigration status, we are not eligible to work in SA, and therefore are not part of the South African labour force. Furthermore, because we do not permanently reside in Zimbabwe, we also do not constitute part of the Zimbabwean labour force, and are not permitted to work in Zimbabwe. Under the Immigration Act of Zimbabwe, Chapter 4:02, non-resident citizens of Zimbabwe enter Zimbabwe as visitors on temporary residence permits of up to 60 days. If they stay longer
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than 60 days, they are declared to be returning residents. Visitors are not permitted to work in Zimbabwe. Therefore, by becoming trailing spouses, we are excluded from the labour force of both SA and Zimbabwe. We become disenfranchised, especially in Zimbabwe, by legislation.

5.5.3. Researcher’s reflexive moment

Between interviews, I also took time to translate my transcripts, since the interviews we done in a mix of Shona and English. As I was reading and translating Marian’s interview, I started wondering what was causing the financial strains that Marian was talking about.

I wrote in my journal:

“Is it that the financial problems begin because the families live in affluent areas, which they would not otherwise live in if they were in Zimbabwe? Could it be that emigration equals a certain level of affluence, or are they living in these areas because of security needs? On two salaries, they lived in middle-class areas. Yes, the husbands have good jobs, but now, on one salary, wouldn’t we expect to lower the standard of living slightly? Could this be the cause of the financial issues or constraints? Maybe not! It could also be the school fees; it is not easy to get our children into good government schools. Actually, for our children to get student visas, the schools have to write letters to the Home Affairs department, stating that these foreign children are not displacing or disadvantaging South African children. So, our children end up going to private schools, which are not cheap. So, that, too, could cause the financial strains.

Maybe, as families, we are expecting too much from South Africa. We are living in line with our husband’s job titles, rather than the money that we have in hand. I don’t know, it’s just a thought!”

5.5.4. Reflexive moment after interview with Yvonne

The next interview I had was with Yvonne. Yvonne presented a dynamic I had not yet come across with any of the other Zimbabwean trailing spouses. Yvonne had integrated into the South African lifestyle. She can easily pass as a South African. Yvonne speaks a number of the local languages, and is very comfortable passing herself off as a South African. After my interview with Yvonne I wrote:
“Yvonne lives near the inner city, and she speaks quite a number of the local languages, and she pulls off being a South African ‘avatar’ very well. She has a second life. Outside of her home, she is a South African. In her social community, she is not a Zimbabwean trailing spouse. She is a South African, married to a Zimbabwean. Behind closed doors, she is just like the rest of us, struggling with the same issues, experiencing the trailing spouse syndrome. Is it real? Does it exist? Is what we feel in our private spaces, in our private moments behind closed doors, the trailing spouse syndrome?”

Although Yvonne appeared to pull off her double life successfully, her reality was a trailing spouse’s reality. It is no different from my experiences and the experiences of the other participants. Maybe this avatar was just a social coping mechanism.

5.5.5 Reflexive moment after interview with Mary

My next interview was with Mary. Mary felt the burden of being a trailing spouse, and found it difficult to reconcile who she was with who she had become. After my interview with Mary, I felt emotionally burdened by her story. My journal entry read:

“I had an interview with Mary today. I thought I would get home and transcribe straight away and get on with things. I have, however, found that each interview seems to drain me emotionally. When I got home, I just wanted to lie down and sleep. I felt like I was catching a cold. My shoulders felt heavy, and I cannot get myself to do anything. I haven’t eaten as well all day. Maybe I am being emotionally drained, affected by these interviews. What wounds am I opening? What is paining me? Is it a realisation of what other trailing spouses are going through? Mary teaches at Kumon; she earns less than R3 000 per month. She holds that money so dear, she only buys important things in the house — furniture, not food or perishables. Mary has so much hope in the permanent residency, the PR. But I know that, possibly, that hope is misplaced. Is it that I am hearing from these participants what I feel in my private space? Why is it upsetting me so much? All I know is it is all rather draining and almost depressing. But I have to get up and go on. I really connect with the participants. They ask me about my car, the one I drive now. It’s new, it’s OK. Ah, well, it’s not mine, is it? Maybe it is, but why am I saying this? Am I becoming aware of my non-financial contributor status?”
Mary made me aware of my fears of owning nothing since I stopped working. Nothing in this home was bought with any of my money. This reinforced my non-financial contributor status in the home. I wondered whether everything is measured in financial terms; whether my value as a person is only meaningful in financial terms. Surely, my value in my home and to all the important people in my life should be more than the financial contributions I make. I questioned how my value is acknowledged, and how I derive satisfaction and meaning from my life.

5.5.6 Reflexive moment after interview with Laura

My fourth interview was with Laura, and, after the interview, my journal entry was:

I have known Laura for a long time, and she is what I would call a serial trailing spouse. From day one of her marriage, she has been a trailing spouse. Her husband was based in Edinburgh when they got married. So, she came from Zimbabwe to join him in Scotland. Laura has trailed in the United Kingdom, Scotland (Edinburgh), then England (London), then South Africa, Ethiopia, and back to South Africa. Laura’s tale is fascinating, in that, at 34, she has not yet been able to even start on a career path. Laura has always taken on odd jobs. Although she studied for a Master's degree, she has never worked in an environment where she was required to apply her highest qualifications. In the United Kingdom, Laura was a till operator in Tesco, and later became a customer assistant. Here, in South Africa, she has worked as an office assistant.”

Laura had a Master’s degree, but no relevant experience, and had not set a career path. I wondered about the possibility that she will be able to develop a career in the near future, what her future held with dated academic qualifications and no relevant work experience.

5.5.7 Reflexive moment after interview with Debby

My next interview was with Debby. Debby had had a successful career in Zimbabwe, and had not really been willing to come to SA. However, for reasons related to her family, she had decided to leave her employment and join her husband. After interviewing Debby, I wrote: “Debby had a good job in Zimbabwe, and did not want to come to South Africa. She was the breadwinner, and now she is the dependant. What does such a shift in status do to someone? It has broken her. She has become no one with nothing. Why? To save the marriage? Is the marriage worth this new status? What is the role of marriage for a trailing spouse? Are we trailing spouses defined by our marriages? Are our marriages our identity anchors?”
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are we outside or without our marriages? Was it important for both husband and wife to go through this period so that they learn? Learn what, actually? I wonder. Is it that marriages work better when the wife is somewhat subordinate and dependent on her husband? Debby prays for change. What change, though? Is she not just praying for a job? A job that will bring back her status as a bread winner? In the meantime, are we defined by our marriages?”

5.5.8 Reflexive moments after interviews with Tina and Fadzi

Although Tina was one of the participants I interviewed right at the beginning of the study, I decided to put my reflexive moment with Tina together with that of Fadzi, because they were the oldest women in the study, and, combined, they had done nearly 40 years of trailing. My journal entry after the interview read:

“This interview made me wonder who I will be in 10 years. Tina’s children are all grown up. There is no hope on the horizon for Tina to work or find work. Tina is 49 years old. She has been out of formal employment since 1993. As a result of her being a long-term trailing spouse, she has withdrawn from the labour market, and has become totally house-bound. Her home is her world. Tina went to university for what? She worked as a teacher and a programme officer, so she had it in her to contribute in the work place. So, what happened? She trailed, that’s what happened. Tina has become very religious. I don’t want to be her in 10 years’ time — no agency, “I don’t matter, she says: ‘It’s all God’s will.” To have nothing to look forward to — is that God’s will? Is she just another invisible person a sub-class of people? Are trailing spouses a subclass; persons who lack the rights and privileges of a primary class? Is being a child of God enough? We cannot give up. At 49, there is a tomorrow. We have to hope, but is this it? Really, is this it?”

Tina’s situation highlighted the long-term effects of being a trailing spouse. I questioned whether working women want to be house-bound. Although Fadzi had trailed for as long as Tina had, at 59, Fadzi had decided to take control, and decided on a commuter partnership.

After Fadzi’s interview, I wrote:

“That interview was too personal. I will leave out some of the personal issues. Being a trailing spouse is a journey, and, along the journey, we fall, we get up, we lose hope, and we try again. Our marriages fall apart, but Fadzi had to keep the marriage together. That is all she had. One thing that all the trailing spouses in this study have
done is to study. Fadzi’s interviews show that there is life during and after trailing, and the vehicle to that life is studying. At 40, Fadzi decided to do a pre-university course, then undergraduate studies and postgraduate studies, and now she is writing a proposal for her doctorate. What resilience! We should not sit and wait. We should be proactive — take action do something. All of Fadzi’s children have left home now. Maybe the way forward is to reclaiming our lost rights, lost pride, lost careers, redeploy agency and defy constraining structure. Do the unthinkable — pack up and leave. Go home, claim your space, and start afresh.

The following was my reflexive moment after interviewing Rose.

“Rose is also claiming her space by staying in South Africa and studying towards her doctorate. Fadzi is going to Zimbabwe and starting her career as a university lecturer, and also registering for her doctorate. How do I want to claim my space, my life? Another move to a more favourable country, maybe the United States again, or perhaps citizenship here? Could citizenship in South Africa be just as useless as the permanent residence? What do I need the citizenship for anyway? It won’t work for me in the workplace — I won’t count for BEE numbers, and I, certainly, am not a South African. I never will be. I don’t identify with being a South African. I cannot see myself saying that I am a South African. I will always be a Zimbabwean, ugly as it might sound. Who knows? But yes, we have to claim our lost identities, but perhaps I need to redefine my identity. I must accept that my previous identity is lost. I am someone else now, not defined by work, but defined by my choices, my new life, and determined to be me within these new parameters.”

Below, I present a personal reflexive moment:

“It has been nine years since I came to South Africa. For nine years, I have put my own career and some of my personal needs on the backburner, while keeping the family together and supporting my husband. I have begun to feel taken for granted. I am there to support my family, and that is the status quo. But what about my personal needs? I am financially good, as I have access to money. I don’t have to ask for money. I live a very privileged life. I am not saying it’s not a good life. It actually is very comfortable, but it is not the plan I had for my life. Self-fulfilment is missing. I have to find it. I have too much time on my hands, and most of it I use to dwell on my frustrations. My days, weeks, months, and years lack focus, and their structure is around the school run, children’s activities, and
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family meals. Where is the ‘me’ in that life cycle? Being unemployed as a trailing spouse is not like being on vacation. It is an isolated, uneventful, permanent state of limbo, which can be stressful and depressing. At some point, I need to take control and come up with long-term solutions that work for me — or is it for us?"

5.5.9 Reflexive moment after interview with Thembi

Thembi was a trailing spouse who took control from day one. After my interview with her, I wrote:

“This interview took some time to arrange. I actually had decided not to include Thembi in the study. But, I later found that here is a gem, a fighter, a trailing spouse who refuses to trail. She has been fighting to make sure she works. Thembi changed her immigration status, and applied for the DZP permits. Although she had a Master’s degree, she worked as a nursery nurse for two years. She is currently working as a temporary teacher while putting together her documentation for accreditation as a qualified teacher. Where does she get the energy to keep going despite the many hurdles she has come across? How does one fall so low, but rise again? Thembi is on the rise, and I have no doubt that she will make it. Thembi will accomplish what she has set out to achieve. Resilience — how do you develop it? Is it a character trait? I am sure she will be a fully accredited teacher soon, and will be back at work, not a trailing spouse, but back on her career track. It has taken Thembi nearly three years to become a temporary teacher. That cannot be right. But she will be a qualified teacher soon, fingers crossed. Thembi is a fighter. The one thing she has always believed she needed in her life is financial independence. Although she only earned R2 800 as a nursery school teacher, it was her R2 800. She could do as she pleased with it. She was financially independent, be it just. And, by the way, she was doing a bit of buying and selling on the side. She could get as much as R6 000 in a calendar month. So, indeed she had some level of financial independence, and, perhaps, that is what kept her so resilient.

Thembi seemed to have taken control of her career and her financial independence from day one. She was very quiet and reserved, but, at the same time, she was a go–getter, and totally committed to her career aspirations and personal and financial independence. A different kind of trailing spouse! She does not wait around for things to happen. Thembi displayed agency in reaching her goals.
5.5.10 Final reflexive moment: letting my hair down

I spoke to a friend today over the phone, and she asked me how I was doing, how the research was going. Caroline said something that took me by surprise. She said, ‘This research has changed you.’ I thought for a moment, and then asked why she said that. Caroline said, “Well, you have decided to do a couple of things about your situation. You are no longer accepting the status quo. You went to the USA to have a look at what you could do there. You make decisions together with your husband. You don’t just let things happen anymore.” I laughed. “Yes, I have changed. I am not as angry as I was. I realise that my situation is a lot better than what I thought. I have my problems, I have my hopes and fears, but I also have a lot of support from my siblings, my parents, and especially hubby dearest. I have seen what a person without hope looks like and thinks, and how a sense of hopelessness can steal today and a whole life. I have seen people struggling and working hard to no avail. I have also seen people working hard and struggling, and finally getting what they have been aiming for. Of the ten trailing spouses, only one seemed to be succeeding in her plans, but it had taken her nearly four years to get there. The rest are struggling to make sense of their situations, and probably going around in a vicious cycle.

What lessons have I generated from these reflexive moments? I asked myself at the beginning: Is this the sound of a victory? It is not a victory; however, it is a starting point. We are recognising the problems that we have as trailing spouses. We are beginning to appreciate that the difficulties we face are not associated with isolated personality issues, but rather that there are external circumstances affecting us, and there is a whole community of trailing spouses that is going through similar difficulties. Realising that the emotional difficulties associated with being a trailing spouse are separate and distinctly set apart from my personality made me feel that I am not alone on this journey. My experiences as a trailing spouse are not just products of my personality, but rather a result of many other factors. I know my personality has a part to play. The circumstances that I find myself in also play an important part. Indeed, my personality and my identities have been affected by my trailing experiences.

In our private spaces, we ask ourselves: ‘Why is it that I cannot get a job?’ ‘Is there something wrong with me?’ ‘What am I doing wrong?’ We cannot blame ourselves for the nature of the South African employment and immigration laws and the difficulties associated with obtaining work permits. We cannot, therefore, blame ourselves for not being employed. We cannot
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blame ourselves for the attitudes that employers have about employing foreigners, especially trailing spouses. Maybe we made poor career choices. We should have internationally portable careers. But what are portable careers? Should be highly skilled? What is being highly skilled?

The identities that we take on come out of our experiences. We should have portable identities too. What constitutes portable identities, though? Were the new identities that the trailing spouses seemed to be taking on salient identities? Can they stand the test of time and changes in circumstances or are they identities aimed at driving the will to live, and just coping mechanisms for just this moment; an attempt at saying: 'I am someone, I can be productive, and I am much more than I seem to be'? The playing field is not level anyway I am a foreigner and possibly anything I want to do that I will have to fight for ten times harder. Nothing comes on a silver platter, nothing comes easy”

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I expressed my reflexive thoughts. The research started out in search of understanding the experiences of the ten trailing spouses; however, I learnt about, not only their experiences, but the changes in the participants' interpersonal, family, and social relations. I also found that I had been waging the very same battles in my own life.

I used CMRM as the theoretical framework for this chapter. Each reflexive moment presented an opportunity for further reflection and the generation of learning points. These have influenced my personal take on my trailing experience, and have also influenced my identity work. Reflexivity, therefore, has been identity work for me, and it has influenced my take on my own identity work and identity maintenance.
Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a discussion of the theories that emerged from the study, and draw together the empirical findings with existing literature. The chapter will be presented in two sections. The first section focuses on the discussions and the decision to trail, the problems the women encountered as trailing spouses. The women's new realities as trailing spouses required that they engage in identity work, in order to develop identities congruent with their situations and experiences. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the women’s identity work, primary identities, identity maintenance, and identity play. Finally, a conclusion of the discussion will provide insight into the theories that emerged.

I have developed models presenting the theories that emerged from the data. In the models, provided as Figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3, I included the participants’ names to ground the insights and theorisation regarding the women’s experiences. Each of the women’s journeys can be traced within the models; each journey tells an individual story. Figures 6.5, and 6.6, present theoretical insights that are second- and third-order extrapolations, grounded in the emerging theories.

6.2 Discussions and decision to trail

From the data, three distinct processes guiding the couples’ decision to expatriate to SA emerged. The three processes were: (a) immigration was by default, because the women could not choose to stay in the country from which their husbands were emigrating, (b) immigration was a result of push- and pull factors as presented in section 3.2.3, and (c) immigration was because of failed commuter partnerships. These processes are illustrated in Figure 6.1.
Figure 6.1. Processes that led to the women expatriating.
6.2.1 Emigrating from Botswana, Sweden, and Zimbabwe: Tina, Marian, Mary, and Thembi

The decision to come to SA was, for these women, generally not by consensus with their husbands. One of the participants and her family had received death threats, and, for security reasons, left Zimbabwe for Botswana, relayed to Sweden for two-and-a-half years, and then emigrated to SA. Three of the women said the decision to trail had been made for them by their husbands. One family expatriated to SA in 2001, at a time of political instability in Zimbabwe, after the formation of a political party entrenched in the labour movement. Three families expatriated at the height of the political and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe, in 2008. For these three women, poor job prospects in Zimbabwe represented a push factor in emigration. Suutari and Brewster (2000) postulated that poor employment and distancing from problems are push factors for expatriation, especially self-expatriation. SA provided pull factors in the form of political and economic stability. These three women’s husbands had found work in SA, and the push- and pull factors provided compelling reasons for expatriation to SA.

6.2.2 Emigrating from further abroad: Laura, Rose, and Fadzi

The women who had emigrated from further abroad were on spouse dependent visas in the UK, Sweden, and the USA. They could not independently and legally choose to remain in these countries. They were therefore forced to move to SA. The three women had studied abroad, and all three had obtained Master’s degrees. Although the women had had little choice about their emigration, the move to SA presented opportunities for them to launch their careers. Laura, Rose, and Fadzi perceived themselves as career–driven, and had had career expectations similar to those of their husbands. According to literature, self-expatriates are driven by individual agency and the career value of international assignments (Richardson & Mallon, 2005), career capital (Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008), and a desire for adventure, cultural experiences, financial expectations, career building, individual productivity, life changes, and family benefits, (Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011). Although the women were trailing, all of them mentioned their husbands’ career capital, financial expectations, family reasons, their own career expectations, the career value of international assignments, life changes, and new beginnings as reasons for expatriating202.

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202 See Network 3.1 page 39
6.2.3 International commuter partnerships: Debby, Yvonne, and Thembi

Debby, Yvonne, and Thembi had decided on international commuter partnerships, which lasted four years, three-and-a-half years, and one-and-a-half year respectively. Harvey and Buckley (1998) postulated that there are higher refusal rates of international relocations among dual-career families, because of discontinuity in the trailing spouse’s career and problems relating to re-engagement upon returning. Wan et al. (2002) also stated that dual-income families are more likely to refuse international postings, but did not give clear reasons for the refusal. The present study presents the personal reasons why these three women decided on commuter partnerships. All three women had careers on the rise. Two of them had high-paying jobs in non-profit organisations, and one earned a modest income, but held a prestigious post in government. All three women had good careers in Zimbabwe, and decided to stay in Zimbabwe with their children. Although the commuter partnerships had brought these women increased independence and professional and personal autonomy, all maintained that their household arrangements were generally frowned upon by friends and families, because their family units were twin-headed households, instead of the traditional, more socially accepted male-headed home. The Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) in Beijing caused unintended backlashes against women’s issues in Zimbabwe. Butaumacho (2014), a Zimbabwean journalist reflecting on the Beijing Women’s Conference 20 years on in The Herald, a Zimbabwean newspaper, stated that:

“Rather than embrace and celebrate the outcomes of the meeting that sought to address gender inequality issues, there was an outcry and probably an outright rejection by the majority of Zimbabwean men, who felt that the conference would make women more rebellious since it called for ‘equality.’

Far from celebrating the perceived emancipation of women, men felt that the women would negate their roles and square up in every respect.

Although a small percentage of men embraced the outcomes of the Beijing conference, the country witnessed an increase in gender based violence and divorce cases.”

From the extract above the Beijing Women’s conference on the views of women in general 20 years after the Beijing were rather negative. The women in my study who took on commuter partnerships were viewed as rebelling against their husbands rather and not that they were striving for equality and freedom of choice. One of the participants managed to maintain an
international commuter partnership for only just over a year, because her husband maintained that her refusing to trail was breaking the family apart. The other two women had longer commuter partnerships; however, their international commuter partnerships failed, because their husbands complained about the bachelor lifestyle, especially because they had to do their own domestic chores, they did not like living alone, and they missed out on day-to-day activities with their children.

The international commuter partnerships brought about marital problems associated with husband and wife living apart. The loss of proximity attachment, contact romance, contact emotional bonding, and relational security as a result of partner inaccessibility were also contributing factors to the disintegration of these partnerships. Problems also arose regarding general decision-making concerning the family and financial planning. The women also maintained that the main problems they experienced included conjugal expectations, conjugal rights, and infidelity on the part of the men. For one of the participants, her husband’s infidelity resulted in life-changing health problems needing chronic medication.

The women who had had longer commuter partnerships were dual career couples where both partners were in the top income-tax bracket in Zimbabwe, and both had careers on the rise. All the women in this study believed that, as individuals, they were responsible for their life plans and life choices. However, only the women who had decided to stay in Zimbabwe for a while put into action their life plans and life choices by initiating commuter partnerships. Debby, Yvonne, and Thembi had not been willing to give up their jobs and the associated benefits of employment and independence; therefore, they had initially refused to trail, and had decided on international commuter partnerships, where dual international residences become ‘a household.’ For these couples, the commuter partnerships had been interim households, a temporary viable alternative to the families migrating. Because the households were no longer single, shared residences, the nuclear families became two nucleuses held together by marriage and children, and separated by work and residences.

The present study therefore supports the observation that commuter partnerships are associated with dual-career and dual-earning couples (Foster, 2000; van der Klis & Karsten, 2009). The present study also provides reasons why three of the participants had decided on commuter partnerships, the contexts within which the commuter partnerships were forged, and explanations why the commuter partnerships failed. One pertinent reason why the international commuter partnerships fell apart was described by Gillmé (2013) as ‘orphan spousing.’ Orphan spousing is discussed below.
6.2.4 Orphan spousing

Gillmé, (2013a), a blogger, described the concept of an orphan spouse, coined by her friend, Pamela Leach. On her blog, Gillmé (2013a) stated that orphan spousing occurs when:

“You’re in a relationship but live separate lives as a result of work commitments. The family is divided: on the one side, one spouse (generally the mother) with the children, on the other side, hundreds or thousands of kilometres away, is the father.”

Gillmé (2013a) went on to say, “The distance makes it impossible for you to take care of each other in the reality of daily life,” creating a latent emotional and psychological disconnect between husband and wife, which causes orphaning. In the context of the trailing spouses in the present study, orphaning is the physical loss of a partner as a result of a commuter partnership, which results in sadness, bitterness, anger, and the frustration of missing loved ones. Gillmé (2013a) postulated that bitterness and anger cause the disconnect, which results in the orphaning. This physical loss may result in the loss of emotional and physical warmth and support of a ‘uni-centred’ loving relationship. According to Gillmé (2013a), these losses can be termed ambiguous losses. Ambiguous loss is as a result of context changes in one’s world, and not a result of changes in a person’s psyche (Boss, 2009). In describing persons with dementia, Boss (2009) said that ambiguous loss is a loss that occurs without closure or understanding for family members of dementia patients. The loss occurs when the dementia patient is physically absent, but psychologically present in the minds of the family members. The trailing spouses in the present study experienced the physical absence and a ‘quasi-psychological’ presence, and long term physical absence because of the distance between them and their husbands. For these women, there was a loss of presence that was not a final separation of the family, such as through, for instance, divorce. It was therefore an ambiguous loss, without closure. The ambiguous loss left the women with unresolved grief and emotions that put strain on their marriages. The women stated that their relationships had lost spark. They experienced unsettling and undefined losses in their marriages. The women, more or less, lived like a single parents, while their husbands were forced into bachelorhood in emotionally sterile hotel rooms and apartments. The commuter partnerships become an acceptable and necessary way of life for a while, but spousal orphaning, ambiguous loss, and the resultant marital problems were the major reasons for eventual emigration and reuniting of the families.

One participant said that the family had spent extended periods of time apart. Times spent together were characterised by avoiding conflict and creating vacation-like experiences, which
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were fragile, and often disintegrated towards the end of the visit or soon after the commuting partner, the husband, had left. It therefore appeared as if the end of a visit had been the end of a period of trying too hard to return to normal family life. For one participant, the nuclear family had become like bringing attempting to bring polar opposites together. The family had existed better as a bi-polar magnet. However, the marriage, the children’s needs, love, and commitment to the marriage had brought about the need for reunification.

It also became apparent that the decision to trail had been easier for the four women who had had less job security, lower incomes, and only a first degree or a diploma. For these four women, emigration had occurred with little coercion or force. The push- and pull factors mentioned above had also played a pivotal role in simplifying their decision to trail. Although the women who had emigrated from the UK, Sweden, and the USA had not had job security, they felt that they had been coerced and forced to trail. The three women who had held high power jobs initially decided on commuter partnerships; they, too, maintained that they had been forced to trail. Therefore, the women who had had focused and directed careers and the women who had postgraduate degrees maintained that emigration to SA was forced. The career-driven women preferred commuter partnership to emigrating. For the women emigrating from further abroad, a commuter partnership would also have been the preferred option however the women’s visas in the countries further abroad were dependant on the husband’s staying in those countries. Rose had emigrated to SA from Sweden. However, Rose’s husband immigrated to Kenya, and Rose remained in SA. Rose and her husband currently have a commuter partnership. Rose was able to stay in SA because she had obtained permanent residency in SA. Six of the participants had emigrated more than once. Therefore, these families were not settler immigrants.

All the women felt that they had not been sufficiently consulted on the move to SA. The relocation had not really been about the women and their needs, but rather for the sake of their husbands’ careers. The decisions that needed to be made were about their husbands’ careers, and the women’s fate was a consequence of those decisions, rather than a consideration in the decision-making. The women had had few discussions with their husbands regarding possible relocation to SA, and the women had imagined the move to SA to be a distant, unlikely event, and were therefore psychologically distanced from making decisions about the emigration.

Elements of construal-level theory in their decision-making (Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007) were also evident in the discussions and the decision to emigrate. Construal-level
theory holds that psychologically distant events are presented at high levels of abstraction, therefore permitting distancing and low levels of decision-making (Trope et al., 2007). The women who had emigrated at the same time as their husbands had not been proactive in the processes that led to their emigration; therefore, their own emigration had been by default. Beyond construal-level theory in their decision-making processes regarding emigration, there were also hallmarks of communal and patriarchal decision-making. In African families, decisions are made by the male head of the family for the good of all (Gyekye, 1987; Ayisi, 1992; Kwasi, 2004). Previous research does not directly address the role of the trailing spouse in the discussions and decision to emigrate. The present study shows that the women expressed high-level construal, in that the women only took into account the overall idea of immigration in their decision to trail, based on the general information they had about their pending emigration. Therefore, this study provides construal-level theory and psychological distancing as pertinent aspects in the decision-making processes that affected these trailing spouses’ emigration.

6.3 Self-expatriated trailing spouses

Nine of the participants were self-expatriated, and only one expatriated after her husband took self-initiated, voluntary expatriation to SA in preparation for retirement in Zimbabwe.

Trailing spouses are commonly discussed in the literature as a homogenous population of partners of organisation-assigned expatriates (Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008). The present study provides empirical insight into and literature on a different social group, another type of trailing spouse — the self-expatriated trailing spouse. The expatriation of the women in the present study had been driven by their husbands’ career development, and was self-initiated and self-implemented. The employing organisations provided visa paperwork for their employees only. None of the participants in the present study had received any support in visa applications, relocation costs, and settling. The husbands had negotiated employment packages only for themselves, and the employers were not obliged to provide services for the families. According to the trailing spouses, their husbands did not formally request any assistance from their employers. From literature, the careers of organisation-assigned expatriates have high organisational embeddedness (Biemann & Andersen, 2010), and these careers are steered by the organisation’s needs (Andersen, Biemann, & Pattie, 2012). The organisation has ownership of the individual’s career (Inkson et al., 1997; Inkson & Meyers, 2003), and the length of assignments is usually at the organisation’s discretion and often short-term — between three and five years (Flynn, 1999; Martinez, 1999; Solomon, 1999).
Organisation-assigned expatriation is generally internally planned short-term placements of strategic individuals in multinationals. These placements are usually at a high cost to the organisation (Kapopaske & Werner, 2005). The costs include relocation, settling in, housing, and a variety of allowances (Solomon, 1995). The total cost to company is not limited to salaries, and may include annual holidays in the incumbent’s home country (Suutari & Tornikoski, 2001), and, perhaps, a stipend for the trailing spouse (Expatriate Connection, 2013). For the women in the present study, expatriation involved external recruitment, selection, and placement of their husbands from a global recruitment pool. The employing organisations were not all multinational companies. For some of the husbands, employment packages were set on par with the local South Africa local hire recruitment, without any relocation and settling in costs; therefore, the total cost to the companies were limited to salaries and normal employment benefits. The costs of expatriation, therefore, were at the families’ expense, and no extra benefits were offered to the families.

6.3.1 Cost of self-expatriation

At best, the employers were aware that their expatriate employees were married and had families. The employers, however, did not, as mentioned above, get involved in any of the trailing spouses’ and their families’ relocation needs. All visa applications and relocation expenses were paid by the families. Whether an expatriation is self-initiated or initiated by an organisation, the costs can be enormous for both the family and the organisation. Vogel et al. (2008) stated that the estimated cost of a failed expatriate assignment can range from US$250 000 to US$1 million. The costs of relocation per families in the present study were estimated to have been between R200 000 and R500 000. The costs were mainly for visa applications, flights or transportation to SA, accommodation, and home furnishings. Because none of the families received relocation allowances, they did not ship furniture to SA. The trailing spouses maintained that the employers had turned a blind eye to the expatriation needs of their prospective employees’ families. In this regard, Jokinen, Brewster, and Suutari (2008) stated that self-expatriates are a hidden phenomenon of international labour markets, and that organisations pretend to be unaware of the relocation and settling needs of their employees, their partners, and their families.

The self-expatriated trailing spouses in the present study were therefore an unrecognised and unrepresented social underclass of expatriates whom the employers did not acknowledge, and therefore did not support. It seems that the employers took the view that these self-expatriates, the husbands, were recruited within a context of local hire expectations and benefits.
There appears to be no clear reasons why the husbands did not request assistance with the relocation for their families from their employers. Some of the women maintained that their husbands had not wanted to jeopardise their career prospects by bringing up their family circumstances. The families, therefore, used their own financial and material resources to apply for visas and permits. The families also had to find schools for their children, pay preenrolment deposits, and ensure that the children settled in, with no help from the husbands’ employers. Even fellow Zimbabweans already living in SA offered little or no help or support.

6.3.2 Fellow Zimbabweans do not help

The trailing spouses also maintained that fellow Zimbabweans already living in SA were not willing to help and share information that could have helped them to settle in. Elements of resource scarcity and in-group out-group discrimination (Brewster, 1999) were apparent among the different networks of the Zimbabwean trailing spouses. Out-group members were not privy to information, and were often kept at arm's length. Penetrating in-groups was difficult, if not impossible, and, therefore, out-group members also created their own exclusive in-groups, perpetuating the trend.

6.3.3 Self-expatriation versus organisation expatriation

When organisations initiate expatriation, support for the trailing spouse is often provided, because it has been found that the experiences of the trailing spouse can affect the tenure of the expatriate assignment (Harvey 1998; Harvey, Napier, Moeller, & Williams, 2010; Shahnasarian, 1991). The main focal areas of the literature on self-directed expatriation cover areas such as individual agency (Richardson & Mallon, 2005), family matters (Richardson, 2006), and career development (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Support for self-expatriated trailing spouses is not mentioned in the literature.

The present study found that self-expatriated trailing spouses also need support, and that they are a vulnerable social underclass of expatriates; organisations and, perhaps, relevant social groups need to engage with this group of expatriates.

The findings of this study support the notion that self-expatriates emigrate for reasons related to lifestyle, family, career, culture, and the economy (Jackson et al., 2005). The trailing spouses in the present study emigrated for the same reasons that their husbands did. The women maintained that seeking employment had been a primary agenda upon emigration to SA. Figures 3.2, 3.5, and 3.6 highlight the expectations that these women had had of employment in SA, the lifestyles they had expected, and the career- and economic prospects.
they had hoped for. Failure to attain these goals and expectations had disrupted the women’s lives, their livelihood, and their reasons for being.

Beyond trailing spouses in general being unrecognised and unrepresented, Alder and Gundersen (2007, p. 314) postulated that:

in global transfers, the spouse has the most difficult role in any family. Whereas employees have the organisation and job structures from home to the new country, and the children have the opportunity and routine of school, spouses often leave behind many of the most important aspects of their lives, including friends, relatives and meaningful activities (Alder & Gundersen, 2007, p. 314).

The women in the present study were excluded from the workplace through legislation; they were socially isolated and intellectually disconnected from the work place, and felt a sense of ambiguous loss in their lives, which they generally could not accept and deal with. Despite these difficulties, some of the women stated that, upon relocating to SA they had enjoyed a honeymoon period, when they felt relaxed and had expectations of new beginnings and new life experiences.

6.4 The honeymoon period

Only three women in my sample, who had emigrated from Zimbabwe, claimed to have had a honeymoon period upon relocation. SA provided an escape from the hardships that these three women had faced in Zimbabwe.

Two participants were on their third emigration, and had had no expectation of a honeymoon phase. They knew the difficulties of trailing, and had no expectations that SA would be any different. Two other participants were on their third second ‘trailing tours’. The three women, who had emigrated from Sweden, the UK, and the USA, had expected to launch their careers in SA, and had immediately started looking for work. They, too, did not experience a honeymoon period. The women who had had commuter partnerships expected to continue their careers in SA; therefore, they started looking for work in SA; one participant started looking for employment in SA even before she had emigrated, and continued after immigration. Only the women who had initially emigrated from Zimbabwe with little coercion, and who had lower-income jobs, had experienced a honeymoon period. Although the women who had had commuter partnerships were also emigrating from Zimbabwe, they had thriving careers, and they had not expected the move to SA to disrupt their career trajectories. The career-driven women and the women with postgraduate qualifications had had different experiences than
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the women who were less career-driven. The less career-driven women were happy to relax and enjoy the new life, while the career-driven women and the women who had a postgraduate education expected to immediately launch or continue their careers. With time, both those who experienced the honeymoon period and those who did not came to realise that employment in SA was very unlikely. The women were disenfranchised from employment by legislation. The lack of work-related interaction in turn disenfranchised the women at the individual, social, and macro-political and economic levels.

6.5 Dissatisfaction, social isolation, problematic immigration statuses, and evaluation of qualifications

All ten women described very similar experiences in terms of social isolation and problematic immigration statuses. The women had lost the social support of their colleagues, friends, and relatives abroad. Making new friends and networks, as stated earlier, was difficult, because existing networks were usually closed to newcomers and outsiders. These trailing spouses experienced exclusions at an individual level, at group level, and at macro-social, economic, and political level. At the macro level, in the lives of these women they felt they were excluded by legislation. Their immigration statuses were such that they were economically and socially disenfranchised, as discussed in Chapter 3. By emigrating, the women had lost the workplace as a social environment, and their homes had become their main social setting.

Being unemployed and having few prospects of employment, in turn, economically and socially disempowered the women, who became a social underclass, left on their own, “being bumped in to sink or swim” (McNulty, 2012, p. 417). At the individual level, the women had begun experiencing emotional and psychological distress; they questioned their personal choices, their self–worth, and their identity.

The model presented in Figure 6.2 shows the trailing spouses’ experiences after expatriation.
Figure 6.2. Trailing spouses’ experiences after expatriation.
6.5.1 Individual level dissatisfaction

The women experienced losses in terms of social interaction or societal psychological contracts with important people in their lives. I refer to these important people as relevant others. For most adults, these relevant others are colleagues and friends in and outside of the work place and family members, both close and extended. A social interaction/societal psychological contract is a latent, innate framework for social exchange, characterised by one-on-one or group-to-group social and intellectual interaction on demand and in close contact. Loss of this social interaction/societal psychological contract, in the case of the trailing spouses was also characterised by the physical loss of environments and opportunities for social interaction, which led to social isolation, ending the honeymoon period and triggering the trailing spouse syndrome. In the literature, the trailing spouse syndrome is defined as the loss of a career, and a lack of opportunities for educational, cultural, and career development (Shively & Shively, 2005; Johna, 2006; Umunna, 2011). The trailing spouse syndrome is also characterised by boredom, social and intellectual withdrawal, and dissatisfaction with life circumstances (Johna, 2006). The findings of the present study support the literature in this regard. The women felt inadequate, and lacked the fundamental considerations that are part of the human condition, such as meaning to their lives, and the existential themes of living life passionately and with sincerity to one’s self. The women lacked companionship, felt socially isolated, had too much free time, and experienced the loss of their careers, which culminated in emotional and psychological distress. For the participants, the turmoil resulted in a combination of suicidal tendencies, depression, hopelessness, marital problems, a general lack of motivation and drive, and identity crises.

6.5.2 Social isolation

The social isolation experienced by the women was not limited to access to people in their immediate vicinity, such as other Zimbabweans and South Africans, but also included isolation from their siblings, due to distance and difficulties with communication. According to market research done by Frost & Sullivan, between 2005 and 2009, telephone and cellular communications were poor in Zimbabwe (Frost & Sullivan 2011). A Frost & Sullivan press release also stated that Internet access was limited and expensive (Frost & Sullivan, 2011). Therefore, the women could not reach out to family in Zimbabwe.

By being confined to their homes, and not being able to reach out to friends and families, the trailing spouses had become house-bound and lonely. Some of the husbands travelled a lot.
on business. Because of their husbands travelling, some of the women felt they had become grass widows. Indeed these women were often left alone confined to their homes as ‘grass widows’.

Lack of intellectual stimulation as a result of being alone at home also resulted in social and intellectual rifts between the husbands and their wives, which became another ambiguous loss in the marriages. The husbands and wives were no longer dual-career couples, but a combination of a professionally successful husband and a previously career-driven professional woman who had become depressed, psychologically introverted, and intellectually, socially, and emotionally isolated.

On a macro level, the women’s immigration statuses isolated them from any economic participation. The women could not legally financially transact in their personal capacities. BBBEE and EE laws overtly disenfranchised the women from employment. According to Gini (1998), and to some extent disqualified them from the work place, and yet adults need work just as a child need play, (Gini, 19998). If adults need work just as children need play, it can therefore be argued that workplaces are adults’ playgrounds. Without being allowed to work, the women in the present study have lost their ‘playgrounds’ which contributed significantly to their social lives and economic livelihoods. Work is an anchor for adulthood, (Schwartz, 1982) and at a level of mental health; work is also a basic requirement for an adult’s life, mental wellbeing (Schwartz, 1982). Work is a vehicle for achieving “status, stuff and success,” (Gini, 1998, p. 708). Therefore work has a bearing on who we are and who we become. A work based identity therefore plays a critical roles in the development of a personal identities and relationships, (Adams & Crafford, 2012). Alas immigration and legislation has taken work away from the lives of these trailing spouses resulting in the women experiencing identity crises. Beyond immigration and legislation, processes such as evaluation of qualifications and failure and inability to register with professional bodies had also further disenfranchised the women.

6.5.3 Marital disconnect

The combination of the intellectual and social disconnect, and not being financial contributors, made the women unequal partners in their marriages. The women could not even make personal decisions that affected them. Shopping, for instance, could not be done without consultation, because the women generally did not have access to available funds, and their personal needs seemed to always be the last to be met. The women had therefore become
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subordinate, weaker partners in their marriages. Not only were they weaker partners in their marriages, they were living their lives according to their husbands’ life plans, and they had little to no life outside of their family homes.

6.5.4 Perceived under-evaluation of qualifications and registration with professional bodies

Four of the participants had their qualifications evaluated by SAQA. A recap of their stories provides background for the discussion that follows. One participant had UK and USA qualifications, and her qualifications were evaluated at the same levels at which they had been awarded. A second participant had an honours and a Master’s degree from Zimbabwe. Her honours degree was evaluated as bachelor’s degree; therefore, she was considered to not have qualified for a Master’s degree, and her Master’s degree was not accepted. This participant then studied for an honours degree through UNISA. Only then was her Master’s degree accepted as a formal qualification. A third participant had a Master’s degree which she had obtained in Sweden, which was accepted at NQF Level 8, but her honours degree from Zimbabwe was evaluated as a bachelor’s degree. To align her qualifications, she, too, studied for an honours degree at UCT. A fourth participant had a Part Three honours degree from Zimbabwe, which was evaluated as a bachelor’s degree. At the time of data collection, this participant was studying towards an honours degree through UNISA.

Two of the women had wanted to register with the relevant governing professional bodies that regulated their professions; however, one could not register as a nutritionist, as she needed to supplement her qualifications and acquire internship hours. The other, who had studied in the USA, was still in the process of registering as a dietician when she left SA. By the time she left SA for Zimbabwe, the process of registration had already taken longer than 18 months, and her prospects of registering, as a dietician within the next year seemed bleak.

The women felt that there were political reasons for under-evaluating Zimbabwean qualifications. These are provided below:

• Given its current political and economic state, Zimbabwe is considered to be unable to produce people with academic qualifications that are on par with or better than South African qualifications. Shona as a language subject is also not accepted as a subject contributing towards a degree qualification, yet Russian, German, French, Italian, and Portuguese are accepted. Therefore, persons who had taken Shona courses towards
their degree qualification have their degrees evaluated as partial qualifications. The inference is that Shona is inferior to European languages.

• Under-evaluating of these women’s Zimbabwean qualifications makes them eligible only for lower levels of employment, disqualifying them from supervisory and management jobs.

• There is a general lack of understanding among South African educational authorities regarding Part 3 and Part 4 honours degrees (a description of these qualifications was given in Section 3.6.3).

• South African professional bodies perhaps want to limit the numbers of foreign nationals, especially those with African qualifications, from being accepted into their professional bodies or guilds.

The women in the present study experienced downward occupational mobility, having failed to obtain employment that matched their skills sets and academic qualifications. Despite some of the trailing spouses enhancing or aligning their qualifications with SAQA requirements and changing their immigration statuses, the women still could not find meaningful employment. The women maintained that there always seemed to be a reason flimsy why they could not progress academically or otherwise. There were a myriad of stumbling blocks, which the women could only attribute to the attitudes South Africans have about Zimbabwean. The women could however not articulate what these attitudes were.

6.5.5 Problematic immigration statuses

All the women had come to SA on a dependent spouse visa. Five of the women had changed their immigration status so that they would be eligible to work. Two received special skills permits, and one received a treaty permit on the strength of being a trailing spouse of an employee of the UN. Treaty permits are issued under Section 11 of the Immigration Regulations of June 2005. Another participant applied for and was awarded a DZP, available to unskilled, previously undocumented Zimbabweans, even though she was skilled and documented. Another was a student at UNISA, and she had changed her immigration status from accompanying spouse to student, based on her UNISA registration. After changing her immigration status to student, the participant could open a bank account apply for a driver’s licence.

Again, the career-driven women and those with higher-education qualifications had taken the initiative to change their immigration status. Seven of the participants had obtained permanent
residency. Jane qualified and applied for naturalisation as a South African citizen. Changing their immigration status is, however, not a trend among expatriates. Expatriates are usually referred to in literature as people on short-term (three- to four-year) international assignments (Stahl, Miller, & Tung 2002; Tarique & Kabst, 2004; Shuler & Gong, 2006).

The couples in the present study, strictly speaking, could not claim to be expatriates, according to Stahl, Miller, and Tung (2002), Kabst (2004), Tarique, Shuler, and Gong (2006), they are immigrants. Vance (2005), on the other hand, stated that expatriates are persons who have left their homelands to live or work in another country, usually for a long period of time. Therefore, according to Vance (2005), the participants in the present study qualify as expatriates. If the two views mentioned are taken into account, these couples straddled the statuses of immigrant and expatriate. They are immigrants, in that they emigrated to SA with the aim of permanent residency, and, in the long term, intended to become naturalised South Africans. On the other hand, they can be called expatriates because they maintained homes in Zimbabwe, albeit holiday homes to which they returned, on average, twice a year, and to which they intended to return permanently upon retirement. One participant has already returned to her home in Zimbabwe after more than 20 years as an expatriate in four different countries.

The types of expatriation/migration these women and their families had applied for could perhaps be a phenomenon of Zimbabwean migration. These expatriates were born and raised in one country (Zimbabwe), had worked in one or several countries, and may even naturalise in these countries, but they eventually returned or intended to return to Zimbabwe as retirees. All the participants maintained that they would one day permanently return to Zimbabwe. These women and their families had one foot in their host country, SA, and another firmly set in Zimbabwe. The families took up permanent residency and even citizenship as ways of solving their unemployment, and for ease of access to resources in SA, while investing in and intending to return to Zimbabwe. Three of the families had even sent their children back to Zimbabwe for a high school education. Therefore, many of the families were invested in both countries, and maintained strong financial and social commitments in both, thereby exercising circular migration as proposed by Hugo (2013).

6.5.6 Unemployment

On realising that employment remain elusive, some of the women took on menial jobs. The expectation was that the women with the lower academic qualifications would take menial jobs. However, one of the participants who had a master degree took on work as a nursery
school teacher. In Zimbabwe this participant had been a General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level (A-Level) English teacher and chief examiner at national level. A-levels are a Zimbabwean school leaving qualification modelled on the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCEA) qualification offered by English educational bodies in the UK. “A” Levels are pre-university qualifications usually taken by pupils in their 13th year of school. Another of the career driven women worked as a cook in a caravan kitchen on a roadside in Pretoria.

Five of the participants had worked illegally, for very low wages of between R3 500 and R5 000 per month. The women maintained that, even though they had worked illegally, they were law-abiding, moral people; however, their immigration status and the employment system in SA were not neutral, transparent, and fair, which justified their violation of the immigration laws.

It was also interesting to note that the wording in Section 38(1) of the Immigration Act prohibits employers from employing illegal foreigners and certain classes of foreigners, rather than prohibiting these foreigners from accepting work.

In the court case of Discovery Health Ltd v CCMA & Others (Contemporary Labour Law) (CLL), Vol. 17, April 2008), it was found that it was the responsibility of the employer not to employ illegal foreigners and other classes of foreign nationals who were not permitted to work in SA. It was also found that illegally employed persons are not excluded from labour laws, and could seek recourse through the CCMA or the Court if they have been treated unfairly (Israelstam, 2008). In the same judgement, it was stated that Section 23 of the South African Constitution provides that everyone has the right to fair labour practices; neither the judgement nor the Act states that illegally employed foreigners are excluded from this Constitutional right. Therefore, technically, the women who worked illegally would not be held liable for contravening the Immigration Act, because the onus, according to Section 38(1), is on the employers not to employ illegal or other classified foreigners. Perhaps the reason why employers do not readily accept special skills permits and other work permits is because they do not want to take the burden of responsibility or the risk of possibly employing persons who are not entitled to work in SA since the law is likely to protect the illegal employee.

Dissatisfaction, social isolation, problematic immigration statuses, perceived under-evaluation of their qualifications, and unemployment had therefore became the status quo for the trailing
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spouses in the present study. The consequences of the status quo and the women’s attempts at coping are discussed next.
6.6 Identity work

The starting point of identity transition is the separation from key social roles and personal roles as a result of external forces or events (Levinson, 1978). The liminoid state of these trailing spouses’ identities had triggered intensive social and personal identity work, characterised by identity remodelling of relational and contextual, aspects of their lives.

People with an identity in transition attempt to recreate congruent, integrated identities or possible selves aligned with their new circumstances (Schouten, 1991). These possible selves can be formulated from past identities, role models, and even hypothetical selves based on fantasy (Schouten, 1991). These new identities are then incorporated to fit the individuals’ new roles, leading to a new state of relative stability and non-liminality. The present study found that identity work does not always guarantee the desired non-liminality. For the participants, liminality generally persisted. For these women, persistent identity liminality leads to identity crises, identity incongruence, and poor identity maintenance, due to a loss of the fundamental notion of whom one is in relation to the external world.

The trailing spouses in the present study have had to recreate their social and personal identities in order to make sense of and reconcile their identities with their current situations. In stable life situations, identity work is often resolute, instinctive, and automatic (Schouten 1991). For the trailing spouses in the present study, identity work processes had become conscious, and, in some cases, may even have become a process of reactive identity repair. Their identity work took place in environments of confusion, uncertainty and even personal crises. These environments were characterised by social degradation and personal insecurities, as presented in chapter 3. The women felt that their identity as Zimbabweans was a source of stigmatisation. Link and Phelan (2001, p. 382) stated that “stigma exists when elements of labelling, stereotyping, separating, status loss and discrimination co-occur in a power situation that allows these processes to unfold.” The stigmatisation contributed to the women in the present study perceiving themselves as having spoiled identities. The women, however, performed identity work to create more positive identities through a number of identity work processes. These identity work processes are discussed below.

6.6.1 Identity work through talk and narrative therapy

Identity work through talk allowed the women to claim identities from their past, and legitimise them through describing who they were professionally and in society, and why these past identities were still viable. As highlighted on the network Identity work through talk: A life
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*narrative*, provided in Figure 5.1, the women claimed past identities such as career woman, role model, and provider and carer for the family. In their current situations as trailing spouses, the women felt objectified. Their future identities were based on possible career changes and future studies. Within their identity work through talk, narrative therapy was evident. Figure 6.4, shows the process of identity work through talk and narrative therapy.
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Figure 6.3. Identity work through talk and narrative therapy
Narrative therapy is described as “the social construction of preferred realities” through storytelling (Freedman & Combs, 1996). In their description of narrative therapy, (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p. 16) stated that the aim of narrative therapy is to:

“with people to bring forth and thicken stories that do not support or sustain problems. As people begin to inhabit and live out the alternative stories, the results are beyond solving problems. Within the new stories, people live out new self images, new possibilities for relationships and new futures.”

In narrative therapy, a dominant plot is presented to the therapist as the overt source or cause of a problem or situation. Often, events from the past and the present are selected to fit with the current dominant plot, leading to thin, subjective conclusions about one’s experiences. The job of the therapist is to dig deep, beyond the dominant plot, to get beyond the thin conclusions, in an attempt to unveil the untold stories, the alternative stories, that do not fit with the dominant plot, but, perhaps, the real story behind the experiences, new possibilities, and new futures.

Inadvertently, I became the therapist during the present study. I am a trailing spouse, just like the participants. I was respectful of their situations; I did not blame them for their circumstances, and I gave them latitude to freely express their views about their lives. The first set of interviews represented identity work through talk. Identity work through talk provided the dominant story of the trailing spouse experience, and it became the dominant plot for narrative therapy. The dominant plot/story was true to the research questions.

The second set of interviews inadvertently sought out the alternative stories, the identity narratives beyond the dominant plot, therefore providing alternative possibilities for new futures and a zone of narrative therapy in action. These second interviews presented a forum for the women to discuss their identity work. The women openly acknowledged that other life circumstances that were not directly linked to their trailing had impacted on their current problems. One case in point that was that, previously, the women did not hold joint bank accounts with their husbands. As trailing spouses, the regulations in SA forced them to hold joint back accounts. Neither the husbands nor the wives wanted to hold a joint banking accounts, therefore women find it difficult to financially. All ten participants did not want to have joint accounts with their husbands. Other stories that told of the impact of the women’s trailing experiences also emerged. It became evident that the participants’ problems were not just a result of emigration.
Some of the women claimed that they felt like objects towards which actions and thoughts were directed and therefore felt they had object identities. They felt subjectified and felt like passive victims. The women were, however, not passive victims. The women exercised agency, power, and resistance towards experiences and circumstances that they did not like. For instance, the women generally said that, if their husbands insisted on going grocery shopping with them, the women would make sure that the grocery bill was very high. The huge grocery bills, which would deter the husbands from going grocery shopping again. The husbands would then allocate grocery allowances. Often, the allowance would be less than what could be had been spent when the husband and wife had gone shopping together. Somehow, the wives would manage to buy adequate groceries on the allocated allowance without necessarily buying fewer groceries.

Although the narrative therapy only scratched the surface of the women’s identity work, it brought perspective to the hidden stories, with the bigger picture superseding the dominant plot. The women also showed agency in their identity work. Agency had become integral to their identity work. In exercising agency, the women were able to study, to trade, and to volunteer.

### 6.6.2 Studying, trading, and volunteering as identity work

For the participants, studying, trading, and volunteering mimicked work. These were productive activities that had meaning for the women. Volunteering allowed the women to exercise their work-related skills. Trading brought in an income. Studying meant professional development, and presented the women with opportunities to play with their professional identities within an academic setting. Trading provided financial rewards, while volunteering provided purpose. A work identity for these women encapsulates social interaction, professional development, financial reward, and purpose. Identity work through studying, trading, and volunteering provided ‘fragmented frameworks’ for the women’s identity work.

In considering my data, the processes of Walsh and Gordon (2008) were useful. Walsh and Gordon (2008) provided a foundational process for creating an individual work identity based on organisational and occupational identification. Walsh and Gordon (2008) proposed that individuals create their work identity by consciously choosing organisations and occupations whose membership would enhance their work- and career-based self-concepts. Individuals use their organisational and occupational distinguishing competencies to determine their organisational and occupational identities (Walsh & Gordon, 2008). Thereafter, individuals in
this case the trailing spouses select groups whose defining features offer them greatest identity distinction and status enhancement (Walsh & Gordon, 2008). The final step involves the status enhancement features that are central to the attractiveness of the identity being used to create an individual work identity. The process of creating an individual work-based identity based on organisational and occupational identification is illustrated in Figure 6.4.

The women in the present study used processes similar to organisational and occupational identification processes in their identity work. The women consciously determined and chose universities, volunteer organisations, and occupations whose membership could enhance their self-concept. Thereafter, the women internalised and interpreted the institutions’ and the occupations’ distinguishing competencies to determine their own organisational and
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occupational identities. The women selected groups that provided the greatest perceived distinction and status enhancement within a context of resource scarcity. Lastly, the women adopted the status-enhancing features central to identity attractiveness as tools for creating individual identities.

The model provided in Figure 6.5 is an adaptation of Walsh and Gordon’s (2008) process of creating an individual work identity, and illustrates the process discussed above, outlining how the women used organisational and occupational identification in universities and volunteer organisations to create their individual identities.
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Figure 6.5. Adapting processes of an individual work identity to the identity work practices of the trailing spouses
6.6.3 Distancing as identity work

Interpretation of occupational and professional identities influenced the way in which the women dressed and presented themselves in public. However, some did say they had become tracksuit-clad, unkempt mothers. Most claimed they were unkempt because they could not afford to maintain a professional appearance. However, on the whole, the women did not want to look like stay-at-home mothers, and dressed to look like they were going to work, thereby exercising associational distancing as described by Snow and Anderson (1987). Associational distancing occurs when individuals present themselves as different from the stereotype that is associated with their identities (Snow & Anderson, 1987). Stay-at-home mothers do not normally dress to look like they are going to work. However, the participants in the present study were not comfortable with presenting themselves as stay-at-home mothers, and not working women. They were not comfortable with the people around them, especially at their children’s schools. The women resorted to what I have termed ‘dramaturgical physical and psychological distancing’ as identity work. Dramaturgical physical psychological distancing occurs when an individual dramatically, actively and consciously avoids physical, social and psychological interactions in an endeavour to self-preserve and add mystery to his/her identity. Through dramaturgical physical distancing, the women also avoided having to explain who they were, which allowed their ‘mystery identities’ to persist. However, dramaturgical physical distancing further socially isolated the trailing spouses.

6.6.4 Student identity, trader identity, and volunteer identity

All the women, at some point, took on a student identity, and some took on a trader identity and a volunteer identity. These were short-term, interim identities with shallow identity anchors. Beech (2008) stated that being an expert and being different are identity anchors. In the context of the present study, I propose a definition of identity anchors as the mainstay, the rooting and supporting attributes, traits, behaviours, attitudes, and values of an identity.

Borrowing from career anchor theory, identity anchors have technical attributes, functional attributes, and tenure. Career anchors also have three main components, namely talent and abilities, motives and needs, and attitudes and values (Schein, 1978). Identity-anchoring attributes are a combination of the technical attributes, functional attributes, and tenure of the claimed identity. The technical and functional attributes of a claimed identity can include the talent, abilities, motives, needs, attitudes, values, observable traits, behaviours, qualifications, and competencies of a claimed identity. When considering the aforementioned definition of identity anchors, it is clear that a student identity has shallow anchors, because it has limited
tenure, and the observable traits and behaviours of a student identity are only valid during the studentship tenure. Therefore, a student identity cannot hold tenure, unless the core anchors of studentship are in place. It is evident from the findings of the present study that anchored or rooted identities make claimed identities resilient, ensuring self-verification and depersonalisation.

The women's trader identities also had shallow anchors; the women were generally able to trade only for very short periods of time. The women could also not sustain the core anchors of the trader identity — buying and selling — because, sometimes, they did not have the money to buy goods for resale, or the trading interfered with family activities, causing conflict.

6.6.5 Adopted identities: Tutor/educator identity

Eight of the women in the study, at some point, took on tutoring or teaching. Teaching/tutoring was one of the occupations that these women found accessible. Teaching/tutoring therefore was a 'portable career' for these women. Although educator registration and evaluation of qualifications were difficult processes, the women who followed through on the processes managed to be registered as educators. Although none of the women had full-time employment, they often got temporary teaching/tutoring contracts. The women had been required to supplement their qualifications in order to meet South Africa's requirements for employment. For this study it was apparent that teaching was an area of employment to which the women could adapt their qualifications for possible employment. Teaching/tutoring appears to have adaptable job traits. Most of the participants, including those who were not registered as educators, had taught or worked as educators in SA. However, the challenge for the women who were not interested in being educators was to find other careers and professions adaptable traits which suited the South African job market.

Two of the participants were in the process of completing doctoral studies. Both women stated that, since registering for doctoral studies, they had been taken on as contract lecturers and research associates, suggesting that their doctoral studies made the women attractive candidates for employment.

Despite intensive identity work and the women also employed identity play as a coping mechanism and as a way of exercising trial identities. These trial identity do not necessarily become affirmed identities however the women seemed to use identity play as mechanisms for coping with identity liminality and creating possibilities of identities which could provide identity nonliminality.
6.7 Identity Play

Identity play as discussed in section 1.8.6 is an alternative complimentary concept of identity work by which people engage in provisional active trials of possible future selves without necessarily taking on these possible future identities. In so doing identity play provides environments for trial identities within the individuals comfort social zones. These comfort zones allow for experimental, playful and flirtation with identity rehearsal which may or may not influence future or provisional identities. Through identity play, individuals generate, conceptualise and even enact different possible or desirable future selves. For the women in this study, identity play also provided a space for the women to claim back independence and present themselves as they wish to be known.

6.7.1 Pseudo-professional identity as identity play

Most of the identity work practices the women employed also doubled as identity play. They used studying, trading, volunteering, as identity work. These identity work processes sometimes doubled as identity play. Studying provided the women with qualifications that provided them with identity play on their chosen professional and career paths. Fadzi studied to become a Dietician and could call herself a dietician even though she was not a practicing dietician. Rose studied as Economics and called herself and economist even though she was not practising as an economist. Therefore the women played at pseudo-professional identities anchored in the academic qualifications.

6.7.2 Volunteering as identity play

Volunteering also provided environments where the women could practice their professions and somewhat play at their professional and work based identities. Debby volunteered with MSF and practiced and played at her career as a nutritionist. Therefore Debby played at her professional identity anchored in her volunteering at MSF.

6.7.3 A second life an avatar as identity play

Yvonne used a deceptive identity as identity play. Yvonne used her second life as presented in section 3.8.2.3 to “became a South African” Yvonne played at becoming a South African citizen indeed with time she can become a naturalised South African and her play at this second life gave her a rehearsal at being a South African.
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6.7.4 Dress as identity play

The women also used dress as identity work as presented in sections 4.5.2 and 6.3. By dressing up and not looking like stay at home mothers the women played at dressing up and looking like they were dressed for work. In so doing the women played at being employed and therefore played at possible identities as employed individuals.

6.8 Identity maintenance

The women in the present study found it difficult to maintain their new identities. Identity maintenance was problematic for the women. Their non-liminality was temporary, mainly because the women experienced temporary identity legitimacy. The failure for the women to create symbols that represented their claimed identities, the difficulties in coding and signifying these claimed identities, and their failure to find environments in which to affirm, enact, and validate these claimed identities made identity maintenance difficult. Even though the women had internally claimed certain identities, they needed external and social validation in order to legitimise these identities.

6.8.1 Dramaturgical distancing as identity maintenance

For these trailing spouses, dramaturgical distancing entailing selective interaction became a form of identity maintenance. Robinson and Smith-Lovin (1992, p. 12) postulated that “people select interaction partners to enhance their self-images.” Dramaturgical distancing supports identity control theory (Burke 1991), which holds that individuals seek interaction that provided consistency to their self-schemas.

The identity maintenance of the participants in the present study seemed to be centred on the women limiting and creatively selecting contexts and individuals for social interaction that preserved their claimed identities. In so doing the women actually perpetrated their social isolation. Because the claimed identities were not fully activated and were not salient, the trailing spouses tended to focus on identities that could have been, identities in transition, rather than claimed identities, possible selves, ideal selves, and actual selves.

6.8.2 Problematic identity maintenance and identity crisis

Although dramaturgical distancing was used by the women as identity maintenance, on the whole the women found identity maintenance problematic because their claimed identities had shallow identity anchors as stated in sections 6.6.4. As proposed in section 6.6.4 "identity
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anchors as the mainstay, the rooting and supporting attributes, traits, behaviours, attitudes, and values of an identity” The claimed identities that the women adopted often were short lived as in a student identity, trader, volunteer identity and pseudo professional identity. The rooting of these identities were therefore shallow and could not support the traits, attributes, behaviours, attitudes of these identities in the long term. As a result identity maintenance was problematic for these women and they found themselves in prolonged cycles of identity work.

Although their temporary identities allowed temporary non-liminality, prolonged liminality occurred once the identities’ tenure expired or was no longer applicable. For instance, Fadzi could claim to be a dietician because she had the necessary qualifications; however, a professional identity as a dietician was difficult to maintain, because she was unemployed.

Some of the trailing spouses referred to themselves as professionals. Indeed, at some point, the women had been professionals — economist, dietician, teacher, and programme officer; however, their daily existences at this point in time did not support their claimed professional identities. Therefore identity maintenance for the women was difficult.

Deceptive identities are also shallow identities. Yvonne’s deceptive identity was transitory, short–lived, and based on fictive, deceptive traits that can be unravelled. Although Yvonne had not yet been caught out, she could not fully adopt the claimed identity of being a South African. She knew she did not have the documentation to support this identity; therefore, the deceptive identity was claimed in ‘safe’ environments, where her true identity was not likely to be exposed.

It seemed that identity liminality was therefore permanently prevalent in the lives of the trailing spouses. The women constantly had identities in transition, which caused instability in their core identities, resulting in an identity crisis. Some of the women expressed their identity crises and identity issues as stated below:

• Marian stated, “I am a Jack of all trades, but a master of none. I’ve tried everything just to survive” (P2:015). Although Marian was talking about the many things she did in order to earn money, it was apparent that this also applied to her identity;

• Rose said, “I bet you, if I were to meet me on the streets, I would not be able to recognise myself” (P23:16);

• Tina said, “I do not know this person I have become. This (gesturing towards herself) was never part of the plan” (P8:068);
• Fadzi said, “I go with the flow, I have been an expatriate in three countries, but at my age I need to take control of my life,” (P20:015). When asked what she thought the career title on her passport should be, Fadzi replied, “Public health nutritionist, dietician, food technologist, registered psychiatric nurse, mother par excellence. I guess everything that I have done in the past 20 or so years” (P20:013). Fadzi moved to Zimbabwe while the present study was being conducted, and decided on a commuter partnership.

For all the women, identity maintenance was problematic. I cannot categorically state from the findings that there was substantial identity maintenance. Resilience, though, seemed to be a characteristic of these women’s identity maintenance. However, it was evident that the women suffered prolonged identity liminality, even though they actively performed identity work. It was also evident that the women struggled to establish congruence between their ideal selves and their actual selves. From the findings, it seemed that the trailing spouses took on identities based on creative coping mechanisms and identity play. This made their identities irregular, and made identity maintenance problematic.

6.9 Extending work identity to incorporate reflexivity

The iterative nature of grounded theory allows constant revision of the data. My reflexive contemplations added insight into the identity work processes of the participants.

The model shown in Figure 6.6 illustrates the interplay between social identity and identity theory in the identity work of the participants. The women made decisions on their identity work based on reflexive internal processes. I, on the other hand, performed reflexive identity work. The tools for my reflexive identity work included talking, listening to other trailing spouses’ stories, writing down my personal reflections on my interactions with the participants, and reflecting on my findings with my study leaders. Through the reflexivity and the findings that emerged, I was able to identify that, for these women, some basic conditions were required for effective identity work. The women stated that their social needs, their need for self-esteem and self-confidence, and their need for self-actualisation were not being met. I also found that financial security is an important aspect of the identity work process. Meeting needs portrayed in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, including financial security, is pivotal in creating an environment for effective identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance, which actions, in turn, ensure identity resilience and identity legitimacy. Figure 6.6 is a proposed theoretical model of the women’s identity work and identity play. Incorporated in the model is probationary theorisation on the women’s identity maintenance.
Figure 6.6. A theoretical model for identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance of Zimbabwean trailing spouses.
6.10 The theoretical model of identity work identity play and identity maintenance

I developed a ten-step identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance model for Zimbabwean trailing spouses that encapsulates all the research questions, and provides theoretical explanations that emerged from the data. Step 3 to Step 6 of my model were adopted from Walsh and Gordon’s (2008) model, creating an individual work identity model, which is provided in Figure 6.4.

The first step of the model shows that the trailing experience had brought disruption to the trailing spouses' lives, which meant that some of the women's basic needs were not being met. Their physiological, safety, and security needs were, however, adequately met. The women’s husbands provided food and shelter, and the women were content in this regard. The second step shows that the women were unable to meet higher needs: social, financial, esteem, and autonomy. In order to find meaning in their lives, and to try and find ways to mitigate their failure to fulfil their higher needs, the women took the third step, which was to engage in identity work processes. In their identity work processes, the women took the fourth step — they chose organisations where they wanted to study and volunteer. The organisations provided the women with distinguishing competencies, which aided the women’s identity work. The fourth process also involved the women choosing defining professional/occupational roles necessary in their identity work. The fifth step involved reflexive internal processes, whereby the women interpreted their chosen organisations’ identities, and translated them into appropriate roles — those of student and volunteer. The fifth step involved the women interpreting and reflecting on their chosen occupational/professional roles and identities. The women also used talk as identity work. I used reflexivity as identity work. Both talk and reflexivity feed into the sixth step on the model. The sixth step involved the women selecting groups that best enhanced their social identities and selves, and that conferred the greatest distinction on their individual identities. The seventh step provided the conditions necessary for effective identity work. These conditions included social needs, financial independence, esteem needs, self-actualisation needs, and deeply anchored claimed identities. Once these needs were met, Step 8 — effective identity work — took place, as they then had safe zones for identity play and identity maintenance. When their needs were not met and identities had shallow anchors, their identity work was ineffective — the ninth step. Ineffective identity work extended their liminality, and more identity work became necessary. Liminality provided a negative feedback loop, leading to the women re-engaging with the identity work process.
Most of the women were unable to realise the conditions necessary for effective identity work as illustrated in the model. They found themselves in feedback loops that led to what I have termed 'identity work fatigue.' Their identity work fatigue was characterised by giving up on identity work and relinquishing agency regarding their hopes, dreams, and aspirations. Most of the women were devoid of agency, and had surrendered their lives to the will of God. These women generally became apathetic in their identity work and in their lives in general.

The model discussed above provides the step-by-step process that emerged regarding the women’s experiences, their identity work, identity play, and their identity maintenance. It also became apparent that the most fundamental condition for effective identity work is financial independence. Where financial independence was possible, the women were able to overcome their social difficulties, and were able to work towards meeting their social, esteem and actualisation needs.

The model also provides the reasons behind ineffective identity work. The identity work of the participants had become difficult because it failed to meet their higher social, esteem-, and actualisation needs, and the identities the women’s had claimed had shallow identity anchors.

It was also evident that, on the whole, the women were unable to create opportunities for enacting and validating their claims to an identity, because of social isolation.

6.11 Insights from the chapter

The trailing spouses in the present study were not permitted to seek employment in Zimbabwe, because they were not permanently resident in Zimbabwe, and, at the same time, they could not work in SA, due to legislative limitations. The women were not recorded in Zimbabwe’s or SA’s unemployment figures, even though they were actively seeking employment in both countries.

As self-expatriated trailing spouses, the women had come to SA on accompanying spouse visas, with no intentions of being true accompanying spouses. They, like their self-expatriated husbands, had had intentions of building their careers and improving their lifestyles. Some of the couples were third-country expatriates. The women and their husbands had undertaken career-actuated and, for some, in search of better career- and economic prospects.

Construal-level theory was also apparent in the women's decision to emigrate; therefore there was high-level construal in their decision to trail. It was also evident that there were elements

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203 See immigration stamps on appendix 5
of patriarchal based decision-making in the decision to emigrate. Patriarchal based decision making occurs when decisions are made by the head of the family for the good of all as stated in section 6.2.4.

Nine of the couples were self-expatriated. Four of the families had lived in countries further abroad, showing that the families were not settler immigrants, but rather relayed immigrants migrating in search of economic and career prospects. One of the families' emigration was relayed circular migration; they have since returned to Zimbabwe for retirement, after relay stints in the UK, Kenya, the USA, and SA.

Though some of the women had enjoyed a short-lived honeymoon period as a trailing spouse, but, over time, the women found that their immigration status prevented them from seeking employment and financially transacting in their personal capacity. The women also encountered difficulties in having their Zimbabwean qualifications evaluated. As the findings suggest their Zimbabwean qualifications were undervalued, resulting in the women feeling that there was possibly a political agenda to undervalue Zimbabwean qualifications.

The women's status quo was characterised by prolonged periods of forced unemployment. The women's inability to integrate also meant that they had become socially isolated, with few to no career possibilities. Therefore, these trailing spouses had had no choice but to become stay-at-home mothers. As a result, the women had become dissatisfied with their lives. They had lost hope of having a career, a professional working life, and financial independence. One of the women even became suicidal.

The trailing spouse experience was also characterised by ambiguous loss in the women’s careers, life situations, and marriages. Ambiguous loss in their marriages had occurred through orphan spousing

The women had also experienced financial degradation since becoming trailing spouse. They generally did not have allocated personal funds.

Integration into South African society had also been difficult for these women. Eight of the ten women had not been able to learn the local languages, and found it hard to integrate into the South African culture, even though the cultural gap between SA and Zimbabwe is small. When the women had tried to integrate, they said they were perceived as cultural frauds and imitators. The women did not want to be perceived as cultural frauds; therefore, they generally chose not to assimilate or learn the culture further perpetrating their social isolation. Yvonne, the participant who had created a South African avatar, was the only exception.
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The women performed identity work through talk, which then became a form of narrative therapy, as discussed in Section 6.6.1. They also used studying, trading, volunteering, distancing, caring, as identity work. These identity work processes sometimes doubled as identity play. The identities that the women had adopted were the teacher/tutor/lecturer, trader, carer, professional, and devoted Christian.

Identity maintenance was problematic for these women. Non-liminality was usually temporary, because of shallow identity anchors, and because the conditions necessary for effective identity work were often not available.

Figure 6.6 provides a theoretical model that draws together the study by showing how the trailing experience triggered identity work and identity play, the activities that were necessary for identity work, the identity maintenance processes, the feedback loop following ineffective identity work, and the resultant identity work fatigue. In order to limit identity work fatigue, the women had to adopt portable identities, even in situations where the conditions necessary for effective identity work were not available. The women had to seek mobile careers. It was found that careers in teaching/tutoring/lecturing and trading are easily transferable to a host country, and are therefore mobile. The women also need to become ‘career chameleons’ by had to experiment with and adapting their existing skills, qualifications, and experiences to the employment needs of SA their host country.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present what this study contributes to the body of knowledge in this field, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies.

7.2 Contributions to the body of knowledge

Although the study provides historically and culturally situated knowledge the knowledge that has been generated from this study is useful in understanding the circumstances and struggles of these women and the findings can be theoretically and practically be extrapolated into the situations of other trailing spouses. This study has provided an empirical dialogue on the experiences of self-expatriated trailing spouses in SA. Because of the international careers of their husbands, these trailing spouses lived nomadic lives. The nomadic existence of these women impacted on their personal well-being, which, in turn, affected their identities. Their lives were devoid of work, which caused identity liminality. Given that, for adults, a work identity plays an important role in individual identity.

The study also provides insight into reasons for identity work for these trailing spouses. From the model presented in Figure 6.6 it is evident that the women experienced identity liminality because of disruptions in the fulfilment of their hierarchy of needs. Their higher needs of belonging, esteem and self-actualisation were disrupted because of emigration and subsequent unemployment. Identity work and identity play were therefore initiated in order to mitigate these disruptions. The study therefore shows that there is a direct relationship between disruptions in the fulfilment of the women’s hierarchy of needs and their need for identity work. Failure to meet these needs and ineffective identity maintenance lead to prolonged cycles of identity work and identity play resulting in identity work fatigue. For these women identity work fatigue was characterised by losing hope and generally giving up on identity work and life in general.

Figure 6.6 ties together the research aims and objectives, as stated in Chapter 1. Figure 6.6 provides a basis for understanding the experiences of these women, their identity work, and their identity maintenance in so doing the model therefore meets the objectives of the present study. In addition, the study also explored and provided:

- theoretical insight into construal and distancing in the discussion and decision to trail;
descriptions of self-expatriated trailing spouses’ experiences in SA, and the social degradation associated with their trailing experiences;
• insight into the problems associated with the evaluation of the women’s qualifications and professional registration;
• insights into the impact of orphan spousing, grass widowing and ambiguous loss in their marriages and in their lives;
• a model for identity work through talk;
• insight into the primary identities the trailing spouses adopted;
• insights into identity anchors;
• insight into portable careers and portable professions;
• probationary theoretical provisions into the women’s identity maintenance; and
• a theoretical model for these women’s identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance.

7.2 Limitations and recommendations

This study was limited to a relatively affluent group of participants who lived in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. A broader socio-economic spectrum of participants could provide greater insight into trailing spouses’ experiences in SA. None of the participants had naturalised as South African citizens. Naturalisation may or may not affect the trailing experience, and having naturalised participants may have provided more insight into the trailing experience in SA.

Accounts of the husbands’ perceptions of their trailing wives’ experiences may have provided alternative stories and insights regarding the expatriation process and the decision to expatriate. The husbands’ views could provide new perspectives on the families’ financial situations, men’s understanding of their wives’ circumstances, the pressure that men feel to provide for their families, and the realities orphan spousing, and ambiguous loss in the men’s lives.

7.3 Conclusion

This study has been a journey in which I explored the experiences of ten trailing spouses. Through this journey, I made new friends, women who allowed me access to their pain and difficulties as trailing spouses. These women shared intimate details of their journeys as trailing spouses, and allowed this research project to come to life and meet its objectives.
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

Because of these women’s journeys, I engaged in my own reflexivity, which became part of my identity work and, therefore, part of my own journey.

Through these ten trailing spouses’ journeys, I have met all the objectives of the study, and have contributed to literature on Zimbabwean trailing spouses and self-expatriated trailing spouses in South Africa. I have developed a model that illustrates the identity work, identity play, and identity maintenance of trailing spouses. The identity work practices led to a number of claimed identities. The claimed identities were often short-lived, and identity maintenance was problematic. The probationary theory that emerged on identity maintenance holds that identity liminality persists when claimed identities are not anchored or have shallow roots, as individuals cannot lay permanent claim to these identities. Therefore, the women in the present study found themselves constantly having to perform identity work, which resulted in identity work fatigue.

Testing the models provided in Figure 6.6 in other contexts for other expatriates would be useful for organisations and trailing spouses, as it could assist in determining the conditions necessary for effective identity work. The findings could help to limit and mitigate the impact of trailing on families.

Finally, I considered that Neumann (1997) maintains that ethics begin and end with the researcher. My greatest sensitivities and ethical concerns were with relational ethics and exiting ethics. Relational ethics recognises and values mutual respect, dignity and connectedness between researcher and the researched (Ellis, 2007, p.4) while exiting ethics consider how researchers leave the research scene and share their results (Tracy, 2010). The participants in this study have all become my friends and we share our personal struggles and experiences as trailing spouses in SA. I became more than just a researcher, I became a friend and a confidante. In terms of exiting ethics, I went back to the participants, and presented the model presented in Figure 6.6 to them. The model was my attempt at offering support to these women. The model has helped the women better understand their lives and craft ways forward for effective identity work and identity maintenance. I also provide insights into portable careers and propose that teaching tutoring and lecturing are portable professions which may help these women into overcoming their difficult experiences as unemployed trailing spouses and perhaps help them in creating environments for effective identity work.
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The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses


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Appendix 1

Introduction to participants

My name is Varaidzo (Varie) Wekwete. I am a postgraduate student at the University of Johannesburg, and am studying the experiences of female accompanying spouses in South Africa and the identity issues that affect them.

This study is an exploration of the experiences and identities of female spouses who relocate or immigrate to South Africa in order to join their husbands who have taken up expatriate assignments, or are already resident in South Africa. These trailing spouses are usually highly skilled and well-educated individuals, and often come from dual-career and dual-earning backgrounds. In the past, these trailing spouses worked, and were actively involved in their own career development.

Whether the expatriation was self-initiated or initiated by an organisation, the costs can be enormous for both the family and the organisation. The contributions of the study will be a framework for understanding the trailing spouse experience and the processes trailing spouses use to develop identities congruent to their trailing spouse experiences, and, specifically, how they can use identity work and identity play in adopting, developing, and maintaining a coherent sense of self.

All data collected will be anonymous, and will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

Participants for the study

I hope you will be able to help me in this study by being a participant. I intend to have at least two interviews with you. Each interview will be about one hour long.

My hope is to be able to highlight the issues that affect trailing spouses in South Africa, and maybe even draw attention to us as valuable, skilled candidates for employment. I also intend to find ways to help us as trailing spouses to understand the trailing spouse experience, and to find ways of understanding the identity issues that affect us.

If there is any further information that you may require, do not hesitate to contact me.

My mobile number is 0728596511. My email address is varaidzo_w@hotmail.com. You can also contact my supervisors at the University of Johannesburg, Professor Anita Bosch on anitab@uj.ac.za, and Dr Roslyn De Braine on rosllynd@uj.ac.za.

Thank you

Varaidzo (Varie)
Appendix 2

Consent form

An exploration of identity work and identity play process among Zimbabwean trailing spouses in South Africa

Researcher: Varaidzo (Varie) V M Wekwete

This study is an exploration of the experiences and identities of female spouses who relocate or immigrate to South Africa in order to join their husbands who have taken up expatriate assignments, or are already resident in South Africa. These trailing spouses are usually highly skilled and well-educated individuals, and often come from dual-career and dual-earning backgrounds. In the past, these trailing spouses worked, and were actively involved in their own career development.

My supervisors are Prof A Bosch and Dr R De Braine from the University of Johannesburg.

The research plan will include a series of interviews with you. I would like your permission to audiotape and take notes during the interviews, and to transcribe the interviews for further analysis. The interviews will last approximately one hour each.

Participation in this study is confidential, and all information will be presented in a way that will ensure that participants will not be identified. Pseudonyms will be used in transcripts, notes, and the final report.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask me. You may also contact my supervisors, Prof A Bosch on 27 11 559 3137 or email anitab@uj.ac.za, and Dr R De Braine on roslyn@uj.ac.za, if you need any further information.

Please ensure that you have read this form and the research study has been explained to you satisfactorily. By signing below, you are declaring that you have given informed consent to participate in this study.

__________________________________________________________________________
| Participant's signature | Date |

__________________________________________________________________________
| Researcher's signature | Date |
Appendix 3 Questions for second interviews

1. When you were not working, can you remember what you spent your time doing?
2. What do you enjoy doing, and do you find time to do it?
3. If you were in Zimbabwe, where do you think you would be career-wise?
4. What occupation is on your passport?
5. What do you think should be the career on your passport?
6. Can you describe yourself. Who is (participant’s name)? What is important to her, and what makes her tick?
7. Where are you going with life, and where do you expect to be in ten years?
8. If you could rewrite your life script, what would you change?
9. How important is your marriage to you?
10. What is your greatest fear?
11. If you were given a choice to do anything you want, what would you do?
12. Do you think South Africa is your last move? If so, why? If not, why not?
Appendix 4 Code suffix descriptions

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<td>Identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Identity play</td>
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<td>IW</td>
<td>Identity work</td>
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<td>TS</td>
<td>Trailing spouse</td>
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Appendix 5

Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education (REQV).

A basic structure for evaluation of qualifications for employment in education

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<thead>
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<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>NQF level</th>
<th>REQV</th>
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</thead>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diploma in Education</td>
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<td>Partially approved degree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Education</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levels 16 and 17 are evaluated on the basis of additional qualifications taken after an approved general degree or after a Bachelor of Education degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>NQF level</th>
<th>REQV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved general degree or Bachelor of Education plus Approved honours degree and/or</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma in Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved general degree or Bachelor of Education plus Approved Postgraduate Diploma</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and/or approved honours degree plus Approved Master's degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6

Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Scorecard

The B-BBEE generic scorecard has seven elements. The table below shows recommended scorecard for organisations with a turnover of more than R35 million. Each element has weighting points of compliance targets.

An organisation presents its raw score of the compliance target, and the weighting of this score is given. The total scores for each element are added, and the weighted scores are added to determine the organisation’s B-BBEE score.

These codes have since been revised and new codes came into effect on the 1st of May 2015. The main change are in the code of share ownership which as of the 1st of May 2015 gives more points to individual ownership of shares in a company over group/employee share ownership.
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

EQUITY ELEMENT/ OWNERSHIP: GENERIC SCORECARD: Code 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership. Total points: 23 (including 3 bonus points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voting rights</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercisable voting rights in the enterprise in the hands of black people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercisable voting rights in the enterprise in the hands of black women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic interest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic interest in the enterprise to which black people are entitled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic interest in the enterprise to which black women are entitled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic interest of the following black natural people in the enterprise • black designated groups • black participants in employee ownership schemes • black beneficiaries of broad-based ownership schemes; or • black participants in co-operatives are entitled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Realisation points</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership fulfilment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bonus points</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the ownership of the enterprise of black new entrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the ownership of the enterprise of black participants in employee ownership schemes • broad-based ownership schemes; or • co-operatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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MANAGEMENT ELEMENT: GENERIC SCORECARD: Code 200

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Compliance Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Control. Total points: 11 (including 1 bonus point)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercisable voting rights of black board members using the adjusted recognition for gender (ARFG)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black executive directors using the adjusted recognition for gender (ARFG)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top management participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black senior top management using the adjusted recognition for gender (ARFG)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black other top management using the adjusted recognition for gender (ARFG)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black independent non-executive board members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EMPLOYMENT EQUITY: GENERIC SCORECARD: Code 300

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weighting points</th>
<th>Interim Target (Years 0-5)</th>
<th>Compliance Target (Years 6-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black disabled employee as a percentage of ALL employees using the ARFG</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black employees in senior management as a percentage of all such employees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black employees in middle management as a percentage of all such employees</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black employees in junior management as a percentage of all such employees</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus point for meeting or exceeding the Economically Active Population (EAP) targets in each category above</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: GENERIC SCORECARD: Code 400**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weighting points</th>
<th>Compliance Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills development expenditure on learning programmes specified in the Learning Programmes Matrix</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills development expenditure on learning programmes specified in the Learning Programmes Matrix for black employees as a percentage of leviable amount using the ARFG</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learnerships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of black employees participating in learnerships, or category B, C and D programmes as a percentage of total employees using the ARFG</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Preferential Procurement: Generic Scorecard: Code 500

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weighting points</th>
<th>Interim Target (Years 0-5)</th>
<th>Compliance Target (Years 6-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B-BBEE procurement spend from all suppliers based on the B-BBEE procurement recognition levels as a percentage of total measured procurement spend</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-BBEE procurement spend from all Qualifying Small Enterprises (QSEs) or from Exempted Micro-Enterprises (EMEs) based on the applicable B-BBEE procurement recognition levels as a percentage of total measured procurement spend</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-BBEE procurement spend from any of the following suppliers as a percentage of total measured procurement spend: - suppliers that are 50% black owned (3 out of 5 points); or - suppliers that are 30 % black women owned (2 out of 5 points)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The experiences, identity work and identity play of Zimbabwean trailing spouses

**ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT: GENERIC SCORECARD: Code 600**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weighting points</th>
<th>Compliance Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average annual value of all Enterprise Development contributions and Sector</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3 % of NPAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Programmes as a percentage of the target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: GENERIC SCORECARD: Code 700**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weighting points</th>
<th>Compliance Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average annual value of all Socio-Economic Development contributions as a</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1% of NPAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage of the target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the Department of Trade and Industry's B-BBEE Score card.
Appendix 7

Page from Jane’s passport

- Identifier barcodes and numbers have been blocked out of this document to ensure anonymity of the participant.
- At the left is the temporary residence permit, issued under Section 11 of the South African Immigration Act.
- At the bottom right is a visitor’s entry permit allowing the holder to enter Zimbabwe for three months, with any employment prohibited.