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**Life history interviews with UK
residents from Zimbabwe as a site for
the discursive construction of subjects,
places and relationships to places**

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PhD thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores how life history interviews I conducted with ten UK residents from Zimbabwe in 2011 were a site for the discursive construction of subjects, places and relationships to place in an occasioned way. Drawing on insights from positioning theory (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999) and the synthetic approach to discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Potter et al 1990; Wetherell and Potter 1992; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999), I argue that while discourses determine what it is possible to think, say and be within a particular historical juncture (Foucault 1972), the way in which people construct phenomena and position themselves as subjects in talk is shaped by the interactional context (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999; Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999).

Building on work which has explored the discursive construction of identities, I demonstrate that during the process of talking about their lives, the men and women I interviewed recapitulated established narrative forms (Elliot 2005); were fabricated into the social order because it is virtually impossible to speak outside of discourses (Foucault 1979); and engaged in a dynamic process of positioning themselves, positioning me, and rejecting, ignoring and accepting the positions made available to them (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999).

My exploration of the construction of places within the interviews focuses on interviewees' talk about Zimbabwe as a country in crisis and Britain as a place where racism is/is not a significant problem. My analysis takes inspiration from two bodies of work relating to the discursive construction of places: work which explores the process in which representations of places invest those places with meaning by appropriating other representations (see Daniels 1992; McGreevy 1992), and research which attends to the way in which constructions of places may be orientated to the achievement of interactional and social goals (see Durrheim and Dixon 2001; Wallwork and Dixon 2004; Garner 2013; Di Masso et al 2011). I explore how interviewees' utterances concerning Zimbabwe and Britain were filled with the echoes and reverberations of preceding utterances (Bakhtin 1986). The action-orientation of these constructions of Zimbabwe and Britain is also explored; I discuss instances in which the men and women I interviewed produced representations of Zimbabwe which explicitly or implicitly attributed blame for the country's economic decline, and constructed accounts of racism in Britain which were orientated to maintaining a positive self-identity and minimising the significance of racism as a problem.

Finally, this thesis demonstrates that the interviews I conducted with UK residents from Zimbabwe were an occasion for interviewees to construct,

rather than provide an insight into, the nature of their relationships with current or former places of residence. Focusing on the accounts of four interviewees, I explore how speakers reproduced tropes and narratives which naturalise the relationship between particular people and places (see Malkki 1992; Taylor 2005b), and negotiated the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2011) relating to past or present places of residence. I also discuss how talking about place attachments was an occasion for identity work (Taylor 2003).

Introduction: Situating the research

The research

This thesis explores the way in which life history interviews I conducted with ten UK residents from Zimbabwe in 2011 were a site for the discursive construction of subjects¹, places and relationships to place in an occasioned way. The notion that the interviews were a site for discursive practice rests on the assumption that discourses determine what it is possible to think, say and be within a particular historical juncture (Foucault 1972). Discourses-linguistic and material practices which constitute phenomena by investing them with meaning (Foucault 1972; Laclau and Mouffe 1987)-offer a sediment of terms, narrative forms and metaphors from which a particular account can be assembled (Potter et al. 1990). During the process of assembling an account, speakers/writers select from available linguistic resources (Potter et al. 1990). When an account is produced in interaction however, the presence of the other person shapes the way the speaker constructs his/her account and positions him/herself (see Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999; Davies and Harre 1999; Davies and Harre 1999).

This study builds on, and contributes to, research which explores the discursive construction of identities, places and relationships to places in talk. Work underpinned by social constructionist assumptions has challenged conventional ways of conceptualising and studying identity, place and place attachment. The shift from examining what identity is, to exploring how it is

¹ Foucault's conceptualisation of the subject is used in this thesis. According to Foucault, a subject is an individual who personifies the knowledge produced by discourse (Hall 1997). A person becomes a subject of discourse when he/she locates him/herself in the position from which its knowledge makes most sense, thereby subjecting him/herself to its meanings, power and regulation (Hall 1997).

discursively constructed, represents one of the most important developments in identity studies according to Wetherell (2010). Discourse analytic studies of identity have explored the way in which people take up subject positions made available by discourse (see for example Frosh et al. 2003; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999). Explanations as to why someone might take up one subject position rather than another have been sought in different places, with some looking to the unconscious (see Henriques et al. 1984; Hall 1996; Mamma 1995; Frosh et al. 2003; Gough 2004), and others turning to the interactional context (see Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999).

Cultural geographers who questioned the assumption that representations of places are either reflective or distortive positioned themselves in opposition to the vast majority of researchers within the field (Barnes and Duncan 1992). Their aim was to deconstruct modernist conceptualisations of place by exploring how places are constituted via representations which appropriate other representations (Barnes and Duncan 1992). Discursive psychologists have shown that apart from being constitutive, representations of places have effects at the socio-political and interactional levels (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Di Masso et al. 2011).

Like identity and place, place attachment has been approached in new ways by discourse analytic research. Until relatively recently, the study of place attachment was dominated by the cognitive approach (Di Masso et al. 2014). Discourse analytic researchers have argued that when people talk about their relationships with particular places, they are not giving expression to emotional bonds developed over time, rather they are engaging in talk which is part of a public dialogue (Dixon and Durrheim 2000) in which narratives and tropes concerning the connections between people and places are reproduced and contested. Discourse analytic research has also drawn attention to the social and interactional actions that talk about place attachments may perform (Di Masso et al. 2014).

Outline of the chapter

The next section will provide some contextual information about UK residents from Zimbabwe followed by an overview of empirical studies of their experiences. I will then go on to discuss how, as a study based on qualitative interviews, this thesis emerges from, and contributes to, a culture within social research and social life more generally in which interviews are central to the way in which we make sense of our lives (Atkinson and Silverman 1997; Gubrium and Holstein 2001; Potter and Hepburn 2005). Next, I will situate the study theoretically within the field of discourse analytic research. The final part of the chapter will outline the structure of the thesis.

UK residents from Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has a long history of migration (Dzingirai et al. 2015; Mlambo 2010). Until the 20th century, the area of southern Africa now known as Zimbabwe was primarily a destination for migrants, notably Ndebele people fleeing conflict further south around 1840, and British colonialists in the early 1890s (Pasura 2014). People began to leave the country in significant numbers from the 1960s onwards; protest and armed resistance to white minority rule in Rhodesia from the 1960s-1979 led to the internal and external displacement of civilians and the exile of political activists (Dzingirai et al. 2015; Pasura 2014). In the context of the Republic of Zimbabwe being granted independence in 1980, a large proportion of the white population left (Tevera and Crush 2003; Pasura 2014). A few years later, thousands of people from Matabeleland and the Midlands fled Zimbabwe to escape the Gukurahundi², a government operation to combat dissidents which led to the deaths of an estimated 2,000-4,000 people (Pasura 2014). Migration caused by the consequences of economic reforms began in the 1990s (Pasura 2014). In the 2000s the number of Zimbabweans leaving the country rose sharply due to soaring inflation, high unemployment and the

² Operation Gukurahundi (Shona for early rain that washes away the chaff) took place in Matabeleland and the Midlands from the 1980s until 1987 when the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) reached a unity agreement and merged to form ZANU (PF) (CCJP 1997).

widespread use of violence to suppress political opposition (Crush and Tevera 2010).

The deteriorating human rights situation in Zimbabwe from the start of the 21st century (see Amnesty International 2002; Amnesty International 2003; Human Rights Watch 2003) led to increasing numbers of Zimbabweans seeking asylum (Pasura 2014). The British government responded by introducing visa requirements for Zimbabwean nationals in 2002 (Pasura 2014). By closing accessible and legitimate routes for entering the UK, the imposition of visas increased the costs of migrating to Britain from Zimbabwe (Bloch 2010). This led to a reduction in arrivals but also created the phenomena of Zimbabweans living as undocumented migrants in the UK (McGregor 2007; Crush and Tevera 2010; Bloch 2010).

It is difficult to estimate how many Zimbabweans are residing in the UK because some have become British citizens, others were not subject to immigration controls due to the system of 'patriality' operating in the UK, and an unknown number are undocumented (Bloch 2006). Data from the 2011 census provides a sense of how UK residents from Zimbabwe self-identify in terms of ethnicity; the largest proportion of the Zimbabwean-born population of England and Wales who completed the 2011 census identified as Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British (60%). This was followed by White British (20%) and Other White (9%) (ONS 2015). Whereas those leaving Zimbabwe are drawn from all social and economic groups in society, Zimbabweans in the UK are predominantly middle class and educated (Crush and Tevera 2010; Bloch 2010). While the majority of Zimbabweans arrive in Britain educated, skilled and fluent in English, there is a tendency for them to be employed in jobs which do not utilise their knowledge, skills and experience (Bloch 2010).

Studies of Zimbabweans in Britain

There is an emerging literature about the lived experiences of Zimbabweans in Britain (Pasura 2014). One of the main areas of interest for academics

studying the Zimbabwean diaspora is their employment experiences (see for example Mbiba 2011; Mbiba 2012; McGregor 2006; McGregor 2007; McGregor 2008; Tinarwo 2015). According to McGregor (2008), Zimbabweans in Britain live and work in sharply polarised circumstances; on the one hand are entrepreneurs and people employed in professional roles, and on the other are people with insecure legal status struggling to meet their basic needs in unskilled jobs. Qualitative studies exploring the employment experiences of Zimbabweans have identified opportunities and challenges associated with working in Britain (see McGregor 2006; McGregor 2007; Tinarwo 2015). According to these studies, employment in the UK has provided a means of coping with Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis, a way of meeting family obligations, and an opportunity to achieve personal ambitions (McGregor 2006; McGregor 2007). However, these studies suggest that Zimbabweans have also encountered difficulties in the labour market including racism, insecurity associated with legal status, exploitation, deskilling and a loss of social status (Mbiba 2011; Mbiba 2012; McGregor 2006; McGregor 2007; McGregor 2008; Tinarwo 2015).

The transnational exchanges of UK residents from Zimbabwe represents another theme within the literature (see Bloch 2008; Chinouya 2010; Pasura 2010; Pasura 2012; Pasura 2013). Bloch (2008) provides an overview of the economic, social, political and cultural transnational exchanges of Zimbabweans in Britain, while others have focused on their engagement in specific types of activity such as transnational diaspora politics (Pasura 2010), social exchanges with family in Zimbabwe (Chinouya 2010), and the fostering of religious ties to Zimbabwe (Pasura 2012; Pasura 2013). Drawing on the survey responses of 500 people, Bloch (2008) argues that Zimbabweans are active in their transnational exchanges. Social contact with close family members followed by economic exchanges were the transnational activities engaged in most regularly by the respondents. Bloch found that the type of transnational exchanges people participated in were affected by their motivations for migration and immigration status; for instance whether the respondent had visited Zimbabwe was influenced by their immigration status, and those who were legally entitled to work in the

UK were six times more likely to be sending remittances than asylum seekers, those appealing a negative decision on their asylum application, and undocumented migrants. Pasura's (2013) study of religious transnationalism amongst Zimbabweans in Britain is an example of a study which focuses on a particular type of transnational activity. Drawing on participant observation and interviews with the Zimbabwean Catholic congregation in Birmingham, Pasura suggests that a hostile reception from the authorities, prejudice from the host society, and a weak co-ethnic community reinforced migrants' transnational religious ties to Zimbabwe. On the basis of this study, Pasura argues that the context of reception shapes the development of religious transnationalism among migrants.

A further theme within the literature is the negotiation of identities by Zimbabweans in Britain (see Pasura 2011; Pasura 2013; Tinarwo and Pasura 2014). Pasura (2011) conducted a multi-sited ethnography to explore the formation of diasporic identities. According to Pasura, the different spaces of association he visited were sites for the formation of sentimental bonds and the construction of a diasporic identity which largely relied on the homeland as a frame of reference. This identity acted as a form of resistance to the institutionally ascribed refugee identity, racism, and discrimination experienced by Zimbabweans in the hostland. Also exploring the negotiation of identities, but focusing on the reconfiguration of gendered and sexual identities are Pasura (2013) and Tinarwo and Pasura (2014). Pasura (2013) argues that the economic situation of Zimbabweans in the UK, including married women having financial autonomy and/or being the primary migrant, and married men feeling like they have no option but to engage in work which they do not deem suitable for a man, has fostered the re-negotiation of gendered relations and identities. Of course, not all Zimbabweans migrate with their spouse, and according to Tinarwo and Pasura (2014), the separation of married women from their husbands has given rise to the second-husband phenomena; women engaging in semi-marital relationships in the UK without their husbands' knowledge. Furthermore, according to Tinarwo and Pasura (2014), living away from the gaze of the extended family, in a context where behaviour that would be considered abnormal in Zimbabwe is deemed

permissible in the UK, has led some women to perform hyper-sexualised feminine identities and has enabled some gays and lesbians to live an open homosexual life.

Like the research discussed in this section, this is an empirical study of UK residents from Zimbabwe. Unlike these studies however, this research does not use participants' accounts as a basis for drawing conclusions about the lived realities of Zimbabweans in Britain. This study, being underpinned by constructionist rather than realist assumptions, regards the interview as a site for the linguistic constitution of phenomena rather than a tool for gaining an insight into the interviewees' inner and outer worlds.

Situating the study

As a study based on qualitative interviews, this research emerges from, and contributes to the pre-eminence of the interview in social research and a broader, cultural preoccupation with interviewing and personal revelation (Atkinson and Silverman 1997; Gubrium and Holstein 2001; Potter and Hepburn 2005; Savage and Burrows 2007). For Atkinson and Silverman (1997), the widespread, sometimes uncritical adoption of the interview by social researchers is an endorsement of the assumptions of the interview society we live in. In an interview society, interviews are central to the way in which we make sense of our lives (Atkinson and Silverman 1997; Gubrium and Holstein 2001). Beyond research practice, interviews are conducted by the media under the auspices of informing and entertaining audiences, and by institutions for the purposes of obtaining useful information (Gubrium and Holstein 2001). For Gubrium and Holstein (2001), there is a romantic impulse behind the ubiquity and significance of the interview in contemporary social life; a desire to 'really know' the individual by gaining access to their true thoughts, feelings and experiences. In social research, this romantic impulse manifests itself as guidance on how to establish rapport and trust between the interviewer and the interviewee as the fostering of a 'genuine' human interaction is thought to encourage interviewees to be open about their experiences, thoughts, feelings and intentions (Alvesson 2002).

From around the 1960s onwards, ethnomethodologists, postmodernists and post-structuralists have questioned this perspective of the interview as a tool for accessing the thoughts, feelings and experiences of interviewees (Gubrium and Holstein 2001). In their distinct ways, these theorists have shown that knowledge is created by the actions carried out to obtain it (Gubrium and Holstein 2001). Ethnomethodologists, and those inspired by their work, have sought to re-cast the interview as a social interaction (see also Suchman and Jordan 1990). Following Cicourel (1964) who argued that social actors in an interview manage their presence before each other in the same way as any other social interaction, researchers have explored how interviewees and interviewers engage in the activity of ‘doing interviews’ and constructing themselves as certain kinds of people (see for example Hester and Francis 1994; Rapley 2001; Lee and Roth 2004).

The conventional perspective of the interviewee as a repository of facts, feelings and experiential information which can be accessed if the interviewer asks the right questions has also been challenged by those who reject the notion that language reflects reality. Instead, the interview is regarded as an occasion for participants to *construct* social reality (Gubrium and Holstein 2001). A common approach for exploring the way in which social phenomena is socially constructed during the interview is to identify the cultural resources employed by interviewees to talk about particular topics (see Gilbert and Mulkay 1984; Wetherell and Potter 1992; Edley and Wetherell 1997; Edley and Wetherell 1999; Reynolds et al. 2007).

Also undermining the conventional view of the interview is the argument that interviewees sometimes have interests other than helping the researcher or furthering knowledge (Scheurich 1997; Alvesson 2002). The romantic perspective of the interview regards the interviewee as eager, or at least willing, to share his or her experiences for the benefit of the researcher, however interviewees may be politically aware actors who take a keen interest in how socially significant issues are represented (Alvesson 2002). The interview may also be used by the interviewee to satisfy his/her relational

or emotional needs (Scheurich 1997).

A further challenge to the ‘vessel of answers’ (Gubrium and Holstein 1995) perspective of the interviewee has come from research which explores the way in which the interview is a site for the exercise of power and resistance (see Scheurich 1997; Schwalbe and Wolkomir 2001; Kvale 2006; Vähäsantanen and Saarinen 2012; Wang and Yan 2012). The scope the interviewer has to control the interviewee’s contribution to the conversation has led some to argue that there is a clear power asymmetry between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale 2006). Others have argued that the asymmetry of power is not a total description of the interaction (Scheurich 1997; Vähäsantanen and Saarinen 2012). Indeed, interviewees may employ various methods to try and exert control during the interview process including testing and challenging the interviewer, providing minimal responses, asking the interviewer questions, and sexualising the interviewer (Schwalbe and Wolkomir 2001; Wang and Yan 2012).

As a consequence of both my experience of conducting the interviews and my engagement with literature which undermines the notion that the interview is a tool for gaining access to interviewees’ thoughts, feelings and experiences, the focus of this research shifted over time to explore the way in which the life history interviews I conducted were a site of social interaction and the construction of social phenomena in an occasioned way.

The approach I took to analysing the interviews situates this research within the field of discourse analytic research. Discourse analysis is a rapidly expanding field of research and theorising (van den Berg et al. 2003) which emerged from a convergence of different theoretical and methodological currents from a range of disciplines (Angermuller et al. 2014). Discourse studies is a heterogeneous field with discernible ‘schools’ (Angermuller et al. 2014), however all discourse analysts reject the ‘realist’ model of language (Alvesson 2002; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002; Phillips and Hardy 2002; Wetherell 2003). By exploring how the interactional context shaped the process by which interviewees assembled their accounts and positioned

themselves, this study builds on discourse analytic research which takes a synthetic approach³ (see Potter and Wetherell 1987; Potter et al 1990; Wetherell and Potter 1992; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999; Taylor and Littleton 2006).

The structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows: Chapter Two provides a conceptual framework for the research. The first part of the chapter describes the defining features of the discursive approach and the theoretical antecedents of different approaches to discourse analysis before focusing more specifically on the theoretical assumptions guiding my analysis of the interview accounts. The second part of Chapter Two provides an overview of work which has taken a discursive approach to the three substantive topics of this thesis: subjects, places and relationships to places.

Chapter Three provides a narrative⁴ account of the research process. It details the practices I engaged in, and describes how my experience of engaging in these practices led to shifts in the focus of the research over time. I provide an account of how I (re)formulated a research question, the strategies I used to find interviewees, my experience of conducting the interviews, the approach I took to transcribing the interviews, my exploration of different approaches to analysis, and how I approached the writing of the thesis.

Chapter Four situates the interview talk within a broader discursive context by describing aspects of the ‘vast argumentative texture’ (Laclau 1993: 341) it both derives from and constitutes. Debates occurring in the public realm during the period in which the interviews were conducted are taken as a starting point for exploring the discursive context in which the interview talk occurred. The chapter starts by taking debates concerning the Arab Spring as a point of departure for exploring competing constructions of Zimbabwe. This

³ This is discussed further in Chapter Two.

⁴ Taylor’s (2007) definition of narrative as a construction of sequence or consequence is used in this thesis.

is followed by a discussion of the way in which a speech about immigration delivered by David Cameron in April 2011 built on previous constructions of migrants as a threat to the cohesion of communities. The final part of the chapter takes as its starting point a series of statements made by politicians in Zimbabwe in June and July 2011 denouncing the claim that the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe is marginalised. I explore the way in which those who participated in the debate reproduced and contested representations of Matabeleland residents, and Ndebele speakers in particular, as the long-suffering victims of discrimination and persecution.

Chapter Five explores how the life history interviews I conducted with UK residents from Zimbabwe were a site for the discursive construction of subjects. The first part of the chapter draws on examples from the interviews to illustrate that when people talk about their lives they recapitulate established narrative forms (Elliot 2005); they are fabricated into the social order because it is virtually impossible to speak outside of discourses (Foucault 1979); and they engage in a dynamic process of positioning themselves, positioning each other, and rejecting, ignoring and accepting the positions made available to them (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). The second part of Chapter Five presents two case studies which provide a more detailed discussion of the way in which the life history interviews I conducted were a site for the recapitulation of narrative frameworks and the negotiation of subject positions. I also explore how the two interviewees constructed themselves as subjects narratively by producing life stories which concentrated on particular periods in their lives.

The focus of Chapter Six is talk about Zimbabwe and Britain. The discourse analytic readings I present in this chapter explore how interviewees' talk invested Zimbabwe and Britain with meaning by appropriating other representations. Building on the work of discursive psychologists who argue that constructions of place may perform a range of social actions such as attributing blame, justifying, derogating, excusing and excluding (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Di Masso et al. 2011), I also discuss how some of the men and women I interviewed produced representations of Zimbabwe and Britain which were orientated to achieving particular interactional goals. The first

part of the chapter explores how interviewees constructed Zimbabwe as a country in crisis and decline by reproducing and contesting other representations of Zimbabwe, and how these constructions were orientated to attributing blame for the crisis. Part two of Chapter Six focuses on the ways in which interviewees talked about racism in Britain. I explore how some of the interviewees' talk appeared to have dialogic overtones of arguments that racism does not exist in the UK and those who accuse others of racism are guilty of wrongfully vilifying others. Occasions in which their talk about racism in Britain appeared to be orientated to maintaining a positive self-identity and minimising the significance of racism as a problem are also discussed.

Chapter Seven explores the way in which four of the men and women I interviewed talked about their relationships with current and former places of residence. Building on the work of those who have taken a discursive approach to place attachment (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Taylor 2001; Di Masso et al. 2014), this chapter discusses how the interviews I conducted with UK residents from Zimbabwe were an occasion for the interviewees to construct, rather than provide an insight into their relationships with current and former places of residence. Focusing on the accounts of the four men and women who talked most extensively about their (dis)connections to past and present places of residence, this chapter demonstrates that talk about relationships to place can be regarded as part of a public dialogue in which existing modes of talking about belonging are reproduced and contested (Dixon and Durrheim 2000), and an occasion for identity work (Taylor 2003).

The final chapter reflects on the contributions and limitations of the study and identifies areas for future research.

~ 2 ~

The conceptual framework

This chapter will start by outlining the theoretical antecedents and assumptions of the conceptual framework that guided my analysis of the interviews. The second part of the chapter will discuss work which has taken a discursive approach to the three substantive topics of this thesis: the construction of subjects, places and place attachments.

The discursive approach

The starting point of the discursive approach (in all its variety) is that language is constitutive rather than reflective of reality (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002; Phillips and Hardy 2002). Despite their differences, all discourse analysts are skeptical about the correspondence model of language; the notion that language neutrally describes a world of external and internal entities (Wetherell 2003:12). Whereas other qualitative methodologies seek to understand or interpret social reality as it exists, discourse analysis attempts to identify the way in which it is produced (Phillips and Hardy 2002).

Two strands of linguistic theory have had a major influence on the social constructionist perspective and the field of discourse analysis in particular: structuralism pioneered by the linguist Saussure, and pragmatics inspired by the philosopher Wittgenstein (Angermüller et al. 2014).

Structuralism

The social constructionist view of language owes a great deal to Saussure's work (Hall 1997). Saussure (1959) contested the assumption that words are somehow naturally attached to the objects to which they seem to refer by arguing that this connection is a convention. Language is a system, argued Saussure (1959), which consists of signs and rules which govern the combination of signs. The sign has two components: the material element i.e. the marks on a page or the speech sound (the signifier); and the concept to which the marks or sounds are attached (the signified) (Saussure 1959). The relation between the signifier and signified is fixed by our cultural codes but not on a permanent basis (Hall 1997). This is because the meaning of a sign is defined not by the independent object to which it refers but through its relationships to other signs (Barker and Galasinski 2001). The simplest form of marking difference within language is by means of a binary opposition (Hall 1997). The implication of Saussure's argument that the relationship between a signifier and its signified is the result of a system of social conventions specific to each society and each historical moment is that all meanings are subject to change, from one cultural context to another, and from one historical moment to another (Hall 1997).

Saussure's theories concerning the constitutive role of language and the relationship of difference that generates meaning became a major influence on new lines of research associated with the terms structuralism and post-structuralism (Angermuller et al. 2014). Foucault's work is indebted to Saussure in many ways, although it also departs radically from it (Hall 1997). Foucault was more attuned to historical specificities than the semiotic approach (Hall 1997), as demonstrated by his detailed studies of the way in which phenomena such as madness and sexuality meant different things at different historical junctures. Moreover, Foucault studied discourse rather than language (Hall 1997). Foucault defined discourse as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 49). The materiality of objects was not disputed by Foucault, rather, he argued that

the only way we can comprehend such objects is through discourse (Mills 2004). Foucault also explored the way in which discourses are constitutive of subjects (Hall 1997). Foucault's subjects are produced through discourse in two senses (Hall 1997): firstly, discourse produces subjects who personify particular forms of knowledge; secondly, discourse produces a place or a subject position from which its particular knowledge and meaning makes most sense. For Foucault, the term 'discourse' encompasses material as well as linguistic practice since all social practices entail meaning and therefore have a discursive aspect (Hall 1992: 291). It is virtually impossible to think, write or speak outside such practices; Foucault suggests that doing so would render one incomprehensible or mad (Young 1981).

Numerous discourse analytic approaches are indebted to Foucault (Hook 2001), although some are clearly more indebted than others. A common starting point for discourse analysts inspired by Foucault is to select a corpus of statements relevant to the research question (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine 2008). This appears to be informed by Foucault's definition of discourse as a 'group of statements that belong to a single system of formation' (Foucault 1972: 107). Indeed, Kendall and Wickham (1999:42) argue that recognising discourse as 'a corpus of statements whose organisation is regular and systematic' is the first step to using Foucault's methods. The subsequent steps in Kendall and Wickham's five-step guide centre around the identification of rules which govern the internal organisation of discourses. Carabine's (2001) genealogical analysis also starts with Foucault's (1972) definition of discourse as a group of statements. However, rather than focusing on the way in which discourse is structured by internal rules, her interests lie in the way discourse as a group of statements 'cohere in some way to produce both meanings and effects in the real world' (Carabine 2001: 268). Another discourse analyst for whom Foucault's (1972) definition of discourse as a group of statements is undoubtedly an important point of reference is Parker (1992), although his approach also draws on theoretical insights from Barthes, Derrida and others within the post-structuralist tradition. The first step of analysis, argues Parker, is to specify

which texts will be studied. The analyst can then proceed to explore the connotations, allusions and implications which the texts evoke.

Pragmatics

Linguistic philosophers such as Wittgenstein have also played an important role in shaping the constructionist view of social phenomena which has permeated the social sciences (Phillips and Hardy 2002). Wittgenstein is credited as being responsible for developing a new theory of language: discourse pragmatics (Angermuller et al. 2014). Discourse pragmatics emphasises the performative dimension of language use (Angermuller et al. 2014). In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein (1953/1997: 291) argues that a description is not a 'word-picture of the facts' but a practice which performs an activity. Wittgenstein (1953/1997) challenged the idea that meanings originate and reside in the private space of peoples' minds and emphasised the public nature of language use. For pragmaticians following Wittgenstein's (1953/1997) theory that language is used to perform a range of activities, we should look at what is being done with language in a specific context. Utterances, argues Austin, do not 'describe' or 'report' something, rather the uttering of a sentence is the doing of an action: 'in saying something we do something' (Austin 1962: 91). The action may be performed in ways other than, or in conjunction with, a performative utterance, however the uttering of the words is usually a leading incident in the performance of the act (Austin 1962).

Anglo-American debates concerning language-in-use have influenced numerous fields of study at the crossroads of language and society, including discourse analysis in its pragmatic varieties (Angermuller et al. 2014). Strands of discourse analysis which trace their intellectual heritage to pragmatic theories of language include Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach which emphasises that talk is orientated to global and specific functions, and an analysis of function depends upon the researcher 'reading' the context. Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue that language performs social activities such as making a request, persuading or accusing. Language may also be used by speakers/writers to perform more global functions such as

presenting themselves in a favourable light or portraying others unfavourably (Potter and Wetherell 1987).

The action orientation of written and spoken language is also stressed by Edwards and Potter (1992). The foundation of their ‘discursive action model’ is the assumption that speech acts are not an expression of speakers’ underlying cognitive states but situated and occasioned constructions which accomplish particular actions. They focus in particular on the action orientation of remembering, and the way in which descriptions and reports are used to make accusations. Given that people use reports and descriptions to carry out important and sometimes delicate actions, Edwards and Potter (1992) argue that it is necessary to examine the ways in which particular representations are made to appear factual and disinterested.

The synthetic approach

While it is possible to align particular discourse analytic approaches with a specific intellectual heritage, most approaches are the result of a productive encounter of both structural and pragmatic theories of language (Angermüller et al. 2014). Perhaps none more so than the synthetic approach which combines insights from ethnomethodology/conversation analysis with post-structuralism (see Potter and Wetherell 1987; Potter et al 1990; Wetherell and Potter 1992; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999). In ‘Discourse: Noun, verb or social practice?’, Potter et al. (1990) criticise the reification of discourses as objects arguing that they should be regarded instead as constitutive parts of social practices situated in specific contexts. For Potter et al. (1990), linguistic practice offers a sediment of terms, narrative forms and metaphors from which verbal and textual accounts are assembled. The assembly of a verbal or textual account involves selecting from available linguistic resources. Such verbal and textual accounts are constitutive and may perform context-specific actions. Expanding on this, Wetherell and Potter (1992) argue that their focus on discourse as situated social practice has two consequences for analysis: firstly, it makes primary the ‘action

orientation' of discourse; secondly, it leads to a focus on discursive instantiation in everyday talk and texts. They suggest exploring the way in which interpretative repertoires (shared ways of making sense) are employed selectively to make evaluations, construct factual versions and perform particular actions. In a later article, Wetherell (1998) argues that while the synthetic approach takes inspiration from ethnomethodology/conversation analysis and post-structuralism, it also departs from them as post-structuralists rarely examine actual social interaction and conversation analysts seldom raise their eyes from the next turn in the conversation. Laclau's (1993) argument that objects, social agents, institutions and structures emerge from unceasing linguistic and non-linguistic meaning-making processes is argued to provide a good grounding for analysis. However, post-structuralists such as Laclau are criticised for providing an inadequate explanation for the take up of subject positions in talk. Commensurate with conversation analysts, Wetherell emphasises the highly occasioned and situated nature in which people take up subject positions. For Wetherell, interpretative repertoires serve as a back-cloth for the realisation of locally managed positions in conversation.

Positioning theory also stresses the importance of the interactional context for influencing the process by which people take up subject positions in talk (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). Positioning is 'the discursive process by which selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines' (Davies and Harre 1999: 48). During the process of telling a personal story, the speaker gives themselves and others, including their conversational partners, parts in that story (Davies and Harre 1999). If the other person recognises that he/she has been positioned, he/she may accept or implicitly or explicitly refuse to take up the subject position offered (Davies and Harre 1999). Talk is characterised as a dynamic process in which speakers position themselves, position each other, and reject, ignore and accept the positions made available to them during the course of a conversation (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999).

The synthetic approach and positioning theory were my main points of reference when producing the discourse analytic readings of the interview talk presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. The following theoretical assumptions guided my analysis: Social reality is constituted by discourses; linguistic and non-linguistic practices which construct phenomena by investing them with meaning (Foucault 1972; Laclau and Mouffe 1987). Linguistic practice offers a sediment of terms, narrative forms and metaphors from which a particular account can be assembled (Potter et al. 1990). During the process of assembling an account, speakers/writers select from the linguistic resources on offer (Potter et al. 1990). When an account is produced in interaction however, the presence of the other person makes the way the speaker constructs his/her account and positions him/herself occasioned (see Wetherell 1998; Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999).

Having outlined the theoretical foundations and assumptions of my conceptual framework, the following section will discuss work which has taken a discursive approach to the three substantive topics of this thesis: subjects, places and relationships to places.

Subjects

Identity formation as a process

The term ‘identity’ refers to the concept of who one is and what one is like (Wetherell and Potter 1992: 78). One of the most common ways of thinking about identity is that each person has a true self and this is what makes them unique (Lawler 2008). This conceptualisation of identity derives from the enlightenment subject, a centred and rational individual who has an inner core that remains essentially the same throughout their life (Hall 2006). As Mansfield (2000: 54) points out, the idea that the self is ‘compromised by the world, yet recoverable beneath the detritus and inauthenticity of day-to-day life, still has powerful attraction’. Indeed, ‘most people in the Western world are invested in a philosophical tradition which values personal integrity and

the consistency of identity over time' (Edley 2001: 195), and this leads them to insist that who they are has not changed significantly over the years.

An alternative conceptualisation of identity which has been elaborated in cultural studies and related fields suggests that identities are 'constantly in the process of change and transformation' (Hall 1996: 4). According to Hall (1996: 4), identities should be thought of in terms of becoming rather than being, 'not 'who we are' or 'where we come from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.' Similarly, Gilroy (1993) argues that although identities tend to be thought of in terms of roots, the movement and mediation involved in their formation means that it is more appropriate to think of them in terms of routes.

The discursive construction of identity

Our identities are unstable because of our exposure to multiple discourses (Alvesson 2002). Identities can be thought of as 'the successful articulation or 'chaining' of the subject into the flow of discourse' (Hall 1996: 6). To say that identities are constituted within discourse is to say that they are 'produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies' (Hall 1996: 4). This is illustrated by a study conducted by Halvorstrud (2012) which explored the way in which white South African migrants positioned themselves in British society. Halvorstrud explains that the identities these migrants constructed for themselves as 'hard workers' and more deserving than other migrants on account of their cultural/colonial links with Britain emerged out of a restrictive policy environment which distinguished between desirable and undesirable migrants.

One of the key antecedents of this conceptualisation of identity as an unfinished product of discourse is Althusser's (1971) 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses'. Althusser argued that capitalism is sustained by more than the repressive forces of the police and the army. Rather, the

capitalist system is reproduced by the institutions which produce its values, and by the constitution of subjects which act as its instruments and bearers. This occurs through a process Althusser refers to as interpellation. To illustrate the process by which we become subjects of the capitalist system, Althusser provides an example of a policeman hailing a passerby on the street and the passerby being constituted as a subject at the very moment he turns to recognise himself as the one who is hailed: ‘By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*’ (Althusser 1971:163).

While Althusser’s theory of interpellation continues to influence contemporary debates on subject formation (Butler 1997), the notion that identity is discursively constructed owes a great deal to Foucault’s genealogy of the subject (Barker and Galasinski 2001). For Foucault (1972), to speak is to take up a pre-existing subject position and to be subjected to the regulating power of that discourse. Foucault provides a decentered account of the subject by exploring the way in which the subject is constituted as an effect of power/knowledge regimes rather than being a stable universal entity (Mansfield 2000):

One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject in a historical framework. (Foucault 1980: 117)

Foucault’s work identified two mechanisms by which human beings are made into subjects: technologies of domination and technologies of the self. Technologies of domination are the ‘dividing practices’ used by experts to distinguish ‘the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the ‘good boys’’ (Foucault 1982: 208). Technologies of the self concern the ways in which ‘a human being turns him-or herself into a subject’ (Foucault 182: 208) by telling the truth about him/herself, in order to know him/ herself, and be known by experts. If one wants to understand the constitution of the subject in Western civilisation, argues Foucault (1993: 203), one should take into account the interaction between these two types of technologies; the points where the technologies of domination have recourse to processes by

which the individual acts upon himself, and techniques of the self are integrated into structures of coercion or domination.

Foucault's account of the formation of subjects helps us understand the way the social order is constituted by discourses which produce subjects who are both part of, and reproduce that order (Barker and Galasinski 2001). However, Foucault can be criticised for failing to explain why people take up one subject position rather than another (Henriques et al. 1984; Hall 1996). Some have suggested that insights from psychoanalytic theory may improve our understanding of the process by which subjects identify or do not identify with the positions to which they are summoned (see Henriques et al. 1984; Hall 1996; Mamma 1995; Frosh et al. 2003; Gough 2004). For Hall (1996), 'an effective suturing of the subject to the subject position requires, not only that the subject is 'hailed', but the subject invests in that position' (Hall 1996: 6). Similarly, Frosh et al. (2003) argue that while culture makes available the subject positions which we can inhabit, the investment that people have in these subject positions hinges on unspoken and at times unspeakable events, experiences and processes. According to Frosh et al., 'in the accounts which individuals give of their experiences, one can see at work both the powerful effects of social discourses and the agentic struggles of particular subjects as they locate themselves in relation to these discourses'. They illustrate this with data from a study of young masculinities based on narrative interviews with 11–14-year-olds in London. Discussing an account produced by an interviewee called John, Frosh et al. suggest that his vulnerability and sense of rejection by his father is translated into a need to maintain a 'hard' masculinity premised on the rejection of anything that holds the slightest taint of effeminacy and the homosexuality associated with it.

Others have turned to the interactional context in which talk takes place in an effort to understand why people take up particular subject positions and not others. Positioning theory posits that positions from which to speak are offered by the people with whom we are interacting in addition to culturally available discourses (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). Similarly, the synthetic discourse analytic approach questions the notion that

subject positions and thus the identities of participants in social life are determined solely by discourses (see Wetherell 1998). Wetherell (1998) argues that it is not only discourse which fuels the take up of subject positions but the participant's orientation to their setting and their accountability to others. Drawing on interview extracts from research she conducted with Nigel Edley exploring the construction of masculine identities in an independent school for boys in the UK, Wetherell (1998) demonstrates that speakers take up a range of seemingly inconsistent subject positions in a highly occasioned way for different rhetorical ends. For those who take a synthetic approach, a seemingly stable identity can be understood in terms of the normative expectation that people will be fairly consistent in their thoughts and actions rather than as evidence of a more or less fixed self (Edley 2006). As Taylor (2005a) and Taylor and Littleton (2006) point out, there is an onus on speakers to be consistent, both with their own previous identity work and also with what is expected of them, so prior positionings act as a constraint on a speaker's identity work.

The role of the other

Another important dimension of the construction of identities is the process of drawing boundaries between oneself and others. Indeed, it has been argued that 'identities can function as points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected' (Hall 1996: 5). The notion that identities derive their meaning through comparison to that which they are not is informed by Derridean deconstruction. Derrida (1972/1991) argues that a signified concept is never present in and of itself, rather it is inscribed in a system within which it refers to other concepts by means of the systematic play of differences. The endless chain of signifiers results in the constant deferral of meaning. To capture the way in which both difference and deferral are central to the production of meaning, Derrida employs the term *différance*.

Othering has been discussed in terms of its role in the production and maintenance of unequal power relations. Feminists have shown that the

process of constructing women as the other has been central to the legitimisation and reproduction of unequal gender relations (Kitzinger and Wilkinson 1996). One of the earliest formulations of this argument can be found in Beauvoir's (1949/1997) *The Second Sex*. Beauvoir explores the way in which knowledge produced in a range of disciplines including biology, psychoanalysis and history has perpetuated the notion of woman as Other through their contribution to the myth of the 'Eternal Feminine'; a set of characteristics which distinguish women from men. For Beauvoir, the continued oppression of women is not only due to the 'profit' men gain from the alterity of women, but because women have failed to see themselves as subjects.

The centrality of othering to the legitimisation of colonisation has also been explored. Memmi's (1965) *The Colonizer and the Colonized* focuses on the function that representations of colonised people perform for the colonial regime. Take laziness, states Memmi, 'it is easy to see to what extent this description is useful...Nothing could better justify the colonizer's privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized's destitution than his indolence' (1965/2003: 79). Apart from being constructed as lazy, colonised people were portrayed as 'weaklings' which enabled colonisers to argue that they required protection and should, for their own sake, allow the coloniser to take responsibility for them (Memmi 1965).

According to Bhabha (1994), stereotypes of the colonial Other need to be read not only in terms of how they legitimise the power/knowledge regime of colonialism, but in a psychoanalytical sense, as a form of identification. Bhabha challenges 'deterministic or functionalist modes of conceiving of the relationship between discourse and politics' (1994: 66-67) and stresses the ambivalence of colonial discourse. The stereotype of the colonial Other is not simply an apparatus of power, argues Bhabha, but 'a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive' (1994: 70). The colonial Other is 'at once an object of derision and desire' and so stereotypes of the Other can provide an insight into the psyches of colonisers (Bhabha 1994: 67).

Place

A place is a space that has been invested with meaning (Tuan 1977; Cosgrove 1989; Cresswell 2015). One way in which spaces are made meaningful is via their representation in verbal, written and visual forms. The representation of place has been one of the main preoccupations of cultural geography since its encounter with cultural studies in the late 1980s (Barnett 1998). Proponents of this approach suggest that rather than regarding representations of place as reflective or distortive of the world, they should be regarded as constitutive (Matless 1992; Barnes and Duncan 1992; Duncan and Ley 1992). Barnes and Duncan (1992) argue that texts (broadly conceived to include maps, paintings and other cultural productions of place) produce meaning by appropriating other texts. One of the methodological implications of the assumption that representations are highly mediated is that objects of enquiry must be approached intertextually; that is, there should be an attempt to show ‘the way that texts from other conceptual realms cross-cut, transform and, in turn, are transformed by the texts in question’ (Barnes and Duncan 1992: 13).

A discussion of the literary and political associations of J.M.W Turner’s painting *Leeds* by Daniels (1992) demonstrates how representations of place may be approached intertextually. According to Daniels, *Leeds* builds on, and contributes to celebrations of industriousness in England. The prominence of textile mills in Turner’s depiction of the landscape, and the activity in the foreground, including a man carrying a roll of cloth and two men hanging newly woven and washed cloth to dry, resonates with political and literary appraisals of England’s textile industry.

Further illustration of the intertextual approach is provided by McGreevy’s (1992) discussion of the way in which Niagara Falls has been symbolically associated with death since the 19th century. Drawing on novels, travel journals and other texts, McGreevy argues that visitors to the landscape have brought with them legends of death, and perhaps a familiarity with the writings of others, which makes their readings of Niagara complexly

intertextual. Furthermore, this representation of Niagara has shaped the landscape around the falls as the presence of museums of horror build on, and reinforce the association between Niagara and death.

Imaginative geography

Places are often constructed through relations to an outside (Cresswell 2015). Said (1978/2003: 54) refers to this ‘universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space which is ‘ours’ and an unfamiliar space beyond ‘ours’ which is ‘theirs’’, imaginative geography. Drawing on a range of literary, academic and journalistic texts, Said discusses the way in which Europe has articulated the Orient by representing the space beyond familiar boundaries as backward and degenerate. This image of the Orient has helped ‘the mind to intensify its own self of itself’ (Said 1978/2003: 55). In other words this representation of the Orient has been used to define Europe ‘as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience’ (Said 1978/2003: 1-2). Said argues that there is a considerable material investment in this system of ideas as it has been used to dominate and have authority over the Orient. Consequently, the Orient is one of Europe’s ‘deepest and most reoccurring images of the Other’ (Said 1978/2003: 1). Said’s discussion of imaginative geography encourages us to view representations of place as a means by which those doing the representing are constructing a positive identity for the place they define as ‘ours’, and as knowledge implicated in relations of power.

Building on Said (1978), Gregory (2004) explores the mobilisation of imaginative geographies by America, Britain and Israel in the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington to justify the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and defend the intensification of incursions in the West Bank. Gregory demonstrates that the architecture of enmity forwarded through the actions of America, Britain and Israel turned on imaginative geographies which folded difference into distance and constructed the people of Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine as objects and barbarians. Seen as occupying a space beyond the pale of the modern, the inhabitants of these

regions were ‘held to have repudiated its moral geography and for this reason to have forfeited its rights, protections, and dignities’ (Gregory 2004:28).

Also employing the concept of imaginative geography, but focusing more specifically on the way in which ‘their’ place is used as a means of constructing a positive identity for ‘our’ place is Light’s (2008) discussion of the production of the Transylvania ‘place myth’. Light argues that in the Western imagination Transylvania has been constructed as a remote, backward and sinister place and the Other of Western Europe. He traces the origins of this place myth to articles and books produced by the Scottish novelist Emily Gerard who depicted Transylvania as a land of superstition through comparisons with the rest of Europe. However, the most significant contribution to the development of the Transylvania place myth, argues Light, was Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* published in 1897. Light argues that Victorian readers of *Dracula* would have had little difficulty accepting the Transylvania place myth as it reinforced constructions of Eastern Europe as less civilised than Western Europe, and confirmed Britain’s self-appointed position as the pinnacle of Western civilisation.

Dominant representations of place

One of the consequences of representations of places being implicated in relations of power is that particular constructions of places become dominant. Representations of places which justify colonial domination or military intervention will be repeatedly reproduced in various forms for as long as it is politically expedient to do so. However, it is not simply the repeated reproduction of a representation which leads to its dominance. Rather, effects of truth are produced discursively through the use of rhetorical devices (Barnes and Duncan 1992; Duncan 1993). One way the veracity of one’s account of place can be ‘proved’ is to state or demonstrate through detailed description that one has seen the place with one’s own eyes (Duncan 1993). Duncan (1993) discusses how this trope was employed by 19th century travellers and missionaries, and 20th century ethnographers to convince others of the accuracy of their representations. Another trope employed to

convince others that one's representation of place is mimetic is by emphasising one's expertise (Duncan 1993). This can be seen in the efforts of 20th century ethnographers to elevate their representations of place above those of amateurs by presenting their accounts as objective descriptions based on fieldwork (Duncan 1993).

Even when a particular representation is constantly reproduced, and a range of rhetorical devices are used to work up its truthfulness, this representation does not go unchallenged. The meanings surrounding a place are struggled over and these discursive struggles are 'just as fundamental to the activities of place construction as bricks and mortar' (Harvey 1996: 322). At the national level, the 'narrative of the nation'-the dominant representation of the nation which gets reiterated in national histories, literature, the media and popular culture (Hall 2006)- is contested by counter discourses which draw attention to its silences and exaggerations. In Zimbabwe, the dominance of ZANU-PF and Shona histories, symbols, heroes and monuments has been challenged by those who claim that they are being denied a dignified place in the nation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011b). Contestations of ZANU-PF's 'monopolization of the discursive space of national history' (Bull-Christansen 2000: 203) have come in various forms including journalistic and academic texts, art and literature (see Duval Smith 2010; Bull-Christansen 2000; Tendi 2010b).

Challenges to the dominant representation of a place may cause it to shift over time (Massey 1994). This process is illustrated by Wemyss's (2009) study of the Invisible Empire, a dominant discourse about Britishness explored through a case study of an area of east London in the borough of Tower Hamlets known as the 'Docklands'. By comparing representations of the West India Docks produced by the Canary Wharf developers in 1990 and 2000, Wemyss demonstrates that challenges posed by local residents helped facilitate a change in the way in which the area was represented. Publicity brochures produced by the Canary Wharf development company in the early 1990s echoed the colonial doctrine of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no-one) by stating that there was virtually nothing there before they arrived. Drawing on extracts from a souvenir programme and exhibition panels

displayed at an event in 2000 to mark the 200th anniversary of the founding of the docks, Wemyss demonstrates that by 2000 this construction was no longer tenable and the Island community were central to representations of the area.

The way in which place meanings are reproduced and contested at the micro-level is also illustrated by Cohen's (1996) study of 'narratives of nativism' in the Isle of Dogs area of London. Cohen interviewed Isle of Dogs residents in 1993 and found their 'inside stories' about the Island were constructed in relation to the grand narratives of the area produced by political parties, the media, anti-racist organisations and academics. The residents were defensive about the area's image, dismissing negative depictions of the Island as being ill-informed and prejudiced. They also adopted a strategy of narrative impression management by telling stories which showed the area in a positive light. Studies of the reproduction and contestation of place meanings at the micro level complement research which maps shifts in representations of place over time by focusing on the individual creative acts which 'cumulatively establish restructured orders of discourse' (Fairclough 1989: 172).

The interactional effects of representations of place

As discussed in the previous section, constructions of places have social effects because they are implicated in relations of power. However, when the analytical focus is representations of places produced in interaction, it is important to consider the way in which such representations have interactional as well as social effects (Di Masso et al. 2014). One study which attends to the way in which representations of place produced in talk may be orientated to the achievement of particular interactional goals is Condor's (2000) study of identity management in English people's talk about 'this country.' Condor asked a sample of 170 English people a series of questions about the nation in which they lived, and she found that their talk was orientated to ensuring that they would not be perceived as xenophobic. She discusses numerous manifestations of interviewees treating talk about 'this

country' as accountable. Firstly, they were disinclined to talk about 'this country' in categorical terms; they made numerous banal references to 'here' but when they were asked direct questions about 'this country' they demonstrated a reluctance to tell the interviewer in their own words what 'this country' is like by casting themselves as the relayer, rather than the producer, of stereotypes about the nation and its people. The second manifestation of interviewees treating talk about 'this country' as accountable was through their avoidance of explicitly national self-identifiers. Thirdly, interviewees disavowed the notion that they are proud to be English by producing negative depictions of the country. When respondents did formulate positive accounts of 'this country' they tended to do so in the role of relayer, or they prefaced such utterances with a disclaimer or an apology, which suggests that they found this interactionally difficult.

The way in which talk about place is occasioned because speakers are aware that their utterances serve to position them in particular ways is also explored by Kirkwood et al. (2013). Drawing on interviews conducted in Scotland with asylum seekers and refugees, people who work with asylum seekers and refugees, and residents of areas in which asylum seekers and refugees have been housed, Kirkwood et al. explore the way in which constructions of places are used to legitimate the identities of refugees, and justify or oppose their presence in the host society. As Kirkwood et al. point out, the official UNHCR definition of a refugee hinges on whether someone has a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted' and in turn, this rests on judgments about the political situation in the country of origin. This means that the way in which a country is constructed helps to determine whether or not those who leave are recognised officially and unofficially as 'genuine' refugees. Kirkwood et al. argue that since forced migrants are a group whose very identity and right to remain are tied up with constructions of place, it is understandable that most of the asylum seekers and refugees they interviewed justified their presence in the UK by constructing their country of origin as dangerous. However, Kirkwood et al. demonstrate that the way in which the asylum seekers and refugees they interviewed talked about Scotland or the UK was also orientated to legitimising their identity. Apart from constructing

Scotland or the UK as a safe place, when asked about any difficulties they had experienced in the UK most denied that they had any, despite mentioning such difficulties elsewhere in the interview. Kirkwood et al. argue that this variability across the interview accounts suggests that the interviewees were attempting to negotiate an ideological dilemma (Billig et al. 1988), namely, how to make critical remarks about the host society without seeming ungrateful or undermining their identity as a refugee. Thus, by constructing their country of origin as a legitimate place from which to flee, and representing the UK as an appropriate place of refuge, the asylum seekers and refugees Kirkwood et al. interviewed legitimised their identity and their presence in the host society.

Place attachment

Relationship to place or place attachment has traditionally been defined as an emotional bond between people and places (Shumaker and Taylor 1983; Altman and Low 1992). Most empirical studies on this topic have sought to measure place attachment using proxy measures and scales, although there is an established body of research which explores the nature of peoples' relationships to place via interviews and focus groups (Lewicka 2011; Manzo and Devine-Wright 2014). Qualitative studies of place attachment tend to use the accounts provided by interviewees as a basis for identifying types of belonging (see Hummon 1992; Savage et al. 2005) or factors that facilitate or inhibit the development of place attachment (see Christensen and Jensen 2011; Risbeth 2014).

An alternative approach to place attachment has developed in the last 15 years or so which is founded on the assumption that when people talk about their connections to particular places they are doing far more than revealing a subjective sense of belonging (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Di Masso et al. 2014). Talk about place attachment is conceptualised as social practice through which relationships with place are performed and negotiated (Taylor 2001). Instead of treating place attachment as a mental structure which develops through individuals' transactions with their environment, a

discursive reading of talk about belonging would explore the way in which it is part of a public dialogue (Dixon and Durrheim 2000) in which narratives and tropes concerning the connections between people and place are reproduced and contested.

Modes of representing relationships to places

One commonly employed trope for representing the connection between people and place is the root metaphor (Malkki 1992). This taken-for-granted mode of talking about place attachment which is employed in ordinary language, nationalist discourse, and academia, suggests that people, like plants, are rooted in a particular place and derive their identity from that rootedness (Malkki 1992). The rooting of people is considered not only normal, but a moral and spiritual need (Malkki 1992). Notions of rooted belonging make nation and citizenship seem like natural phenomena (Gilroy 2000) and render displacement a pathological experience (Malkki 1992). Indeed, the notion of an immutable link between people and place has been used to justify repatriation as the best available ‘durable solution’ to the ‘refugee problem’ (Hammond 1999).

A related mode of talking about place attachment discussed by Taylor (2001; 2003; 2005b) is the born-and-bred narrative. Like the root metaphor, this narrative naturalises the relationship between people and places by suggesting that birth and long-term residence within a place constitutes the basis of belonging. Drawing on extracts from interviews she conducted with 19 women resident in the south-east of England, Taylor (2001; 2003; 2005b) explores the ways in which speakers positioned themselves in relation to this narrative in the process of discursively constructing their relationships to place. Some women evoked this narrative to claim a relationship to place (see Taylor 2003: 203), whilst others countered its logic by suggesting that they regard their current chosen place of residence as their home, not the place in which they were born and/or brought up (Taylor 2005b: 256). Another way in which speakers orientated their accounts to this narrative was to suggest that identifying a particular place as their home presents them with a dilemma

as they would like to call their current place of residence home but they do not feel that they can plausibly do so because they were not born there, they did not grow up there, or they do not have a long term family connection to the area (see Taylor 2003: 207).

The politics of belonging

Apart from reproducing or contesting tropes and narratives concerning the relationship between people and place, in the process of talking about place attachments speakers may also negotiate the politics of belonging relating to a particular place. The politics of belonging involves the construction and maintenance of boundaries, and the delineation between social categories and groupings within those boundaries in terms of who does and does not belong (Geddes and Favell 1999; Yuval-Davis 2011). Requisites of belonging vary according to political project but may include: autochthony; the myth of common decent; common culture, religion and language; and solidarity based on shared values and a projected myth of common destiny (Geschiere 2009; Yuval-Davis 2011). This is illustrated by Yuval-Davis (2011) who traces three political projects of belonging articulated in Britain over the decades, each of which emphasised a different signifier of belonging: Enoch Powell's stress on descent as the ultimate criterion of belonging; Norman Tebbit's cricket test which specified sole identification with, and emotional attachment to, a country as the basis of belonging; and New Labour's political project of belonging which stressed that to belong to Britain one had to hold certain political and ethical values.

To legitimate their exclusion, those who are deemed outsiders are often represented in ways which suggest that they are part of the natural world (Sibley 1992). Cresswell (1997) explores the way in which inner-city residents in Kansas City and Trenton, New Age Travellers in the UK, and Greenham Common protestors in Berkshire were constituted as people out-of-place by governments and the media in the 1980s and 1990s through their metaphorical representation as weeds, disease and bodily secretions. Non-human imagery is often used to represent migrants, particularly water

metaphors such as wave (Philo and Beattie 1999; O'Brien 2003; Charteris-Black 2006; Musolff 2011), although they have also been compared metaphorically to animals (Santa Ana 1999; O'Brien 2003), disease (Santa Ana 2002; O'Brien 2003) and pollution (Cisneros 2008). Water metaphors which suggest that migration, like a flood or a tide, is difficult to control, are often combined with the metaphorical description of the state as a container which is full (Charteris-Black 2006).

The way in which people negotiate the politics of belonging in the process of talking about their place attachments is demonstrated by Wemyss's (2006) ethnography of the Tower Hamlets region of London. Drawing on extracts from letters to a local newspaper and opinion polls in the local and national press from 1993-1994, Wemyss demonstrates that white working class people were rendered the natural inhabitants of the area. According to Wemyss, this construction of the East End as a place where only certain people have a legitimate right to claim that they belong there is illustrative of a more widespread phenomenon in which different ethnicised/racialised/religious communities are ranked, with those at the top of the 'hierarchy of belonging' being rendered the natural inhabitants of that space. Furthermore, their position at the top of the hierarchy gives them the power to tolerate or withhold tolerance from those below them in the hierarchy. Demonstrating 'the power of the dominant discourse to impose the meaning of 'East Enders' as a fixed category of white people' (Wemyss 2006: 230), Wemyss provides extracts from interviews she conducted with Bengali and African-Caribbean residents who stated that although they consider themselves East Enders, they are well aware that most white East Enders would either exclude them from this category or consider them lesser status East Enders.

Micro-level effects of talk about connections to place

Apart from considering the way in which people enter a public dialogue when they talk or write about their relationships to places, the discursive approach to place attachment also attends to the ways in which 'discursively locating the self may fulfil varying social and rhetorical functions' (Dixon and

Durrheim 2000: 33). One such function is the construction of identity as discursively constructing a place and positioning oneself in relation to it provides considerable scope for identity work (Taylor 2003). As Taylor (2003) points out, positioning oneself as someone who is *of* a place can connect a speaker to the multiple established meanings and identities associated with that place. Conversely, a person may engage in rhetorical work to distance him/herself from a place if he/she does not wish to be associated with the dominant meanings attached to that place. This is illustrated by research conducted by Howarth (2002) in Brixton, South London. Howarth carried out focus groups in three secondary schools in Brixton to explore the construction of social identities through and against representations of a 'neighbourhood that the media constantly associate with crime, drugs, violence and social deprivation' (Howarth 2002: 237). Some of the young people Howarth interviewed denied that they came from Brixton altogether which enabled them to avoid a discreditable identity by distancing themselves from the place and its stigmatising representations. Others told Howarth that while they cannot deny that they come from Brixton, they would conceal this fact from prospective employers to protect themselves from prejudice.

Summary

The first part of this chapter discussed the theoretical foundations and assumptions of the conceptual framework which guided my analysis of the interview accounts. I started by outlining the defining features of all discursive approaches: an interest in the ways in which social reality is produced underpinned by the belief that language is constitutive rather than reflective of reality. Moving on to explore the theoretical antecedents of the discursive approach, I argued that two strands of linguistic theory have made a significant contribution to the development of the social constructionist perspective and discourse analysis more specifically: structuralism pioneered by the linguist Saussure, and pragmatics inspired by the philosopher Wittgenstein (Angermuller et al. 2014). I discussed the way in which Saussure's (1959) theory that language is a system consisting of signs which

obtain their meaning from their relationship with other signs has shaped numerous strands of theory associated with the terms structuralism and post-structuralism. Focusing on Saussure's influence on Foucault in particular, I argued that while the latter's work was indebted to Saussure in many ways, it also departed radically from it by focusing on discourse rather than language (Hall 1997). Having summarised Foucault's theory of discourse as a social practice which is constitutive of objects and subjects, I described three discourse analytic approaches inspired by Foucault's work (see Kendall and Wickham 1999; Carabine 2001; Parker 1992).

Moving on to the second strand of linguistic theory which has had a major influence on the field of discourse analysis, pragmatics (Angermuller et al. 2014), I argued that Wittgenstein's theories concerning the performative dimension of language use had a major impact on pragmatists such as Austin (1962) who argued that utterances perform actions rather than merely describe or report. I went on to outline two discourse analytic approaches which have placed a particular emphasis on the action-orientation of language (see Potter and Wetherell 1987; Edwards and Potter 1992).

It was argued that while it is possible to align particular discourse analytic approaches with a specific intellectual heritage, most have resulted from the productive encounter of both structural and pragmatic theories of language (Angermuller et al. 2014). This is particularly apparent for the synthetic approach which draws on theoretical insights from ethnomethodology and poststructuralism (see Potter and Wetherell 1987; Potter et al. 1990; Wetherell and Potter 1992; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999). The synthetic approach emphasises the highly occasioned nature in which speakers take up subject positions in talk due to their accountability to other speakers. The role of the interactional context in shaping the process by which people take up subject positions in talk is also stressed by positioning theory which posits that it is not only discourse which offers positions from which to speak but other speakers (see Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999).

I concluded this part of the chapter with an outline of the theoretical assumptions which guided my analysis. I argued that discourses-material and linguistic practices which constitute phenomena by investing them with meaning (Foucault 1972; Laclau and Mouffe 1987)- offer a sediment of terms, narrative forms and metaphors from which a particular account can be assembled (Potter et al. 1990). During the process of assembling an account, speakers/writers select from the linguistic resources on offer (Potter et al. 1990). When an account is produced in interaction however, the presence of the other person makes the way the speaker constructs his/her account and positions him/herself occasioned (see Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999; Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999).

The second part of the chapter discussed the work of those who have taken a discursive approach to identity, place and place attachment. I started by presenting a de-essentialised and decentred conceptualisation of identity. According to this perspective, identities are always in the process of formation due to the plurality of discourses in our lives (Alvesson 2002). It was argued that while Foucault's work has paved the way for discourse analytic studies of identity, it does not provide an adequate account of the mechanisms by which individuals identify or do not identify with the subject positions made available to them (Henriques et al. 1984; Hall 1996). I discussed the way in which some researchers have turned to the unconscious in an effort to understand why people take up one subject position rather than another (see Henriques et al. 1984; Hall 1996; Mamma 1995; Frosh et al. 2003; Gough 2004), while others have directed their attention to the interactional context in which people position themselves in discourse (see Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999). The discussion then moved on to the importance of the Other for the formation of identity. Two ways in which constructions of the Other have been read by researchers were outlined: firstly, as an insight into the unconscious identifications of those who produced them (see Bhabha 1994); and secondly, in terms of the function they perform for the legitimisation and perpetuation of unequal power relations (see Memmi 1965).

My discussion of the discursive approach to place started with a definition of place as space that has been invested with meaning (Tuan 1977; Cosgrove 1989; Cresswell 2015). I described how this approach explores the constitution of places through the production of intertextual representations and the act of making comparisons with Other places. As studies by Said (1978) and others have shown, constructions of Other places have been used for political ends such as the justification of military intervention. While particular representations become dominant because they are implicated in relations of power, counter constructions may lead to shifts in the dominant representation over time (Massey 1994). Drawing on two studies which show that speakers treat talk about particular places as accountable (see Condor 2000; Kirkwood et al. 2013), I argued that when the analytical focus is representations of place produced in interaction, it is important to consider the way in which such representations have interactional as well as social effects.

The final section of the chapter explored the discursive construction of place attachments. Two ways in which modes of talking about particular places may influence the way in which people talk about their relationships with those places were discussed: firstly, exclusive notions of who belongs in a particular place may make some people unable or unwilling to claim they belong there (Wemyss 2006); secondly, people may attempt to associate/dissociate themselves from a place if it is imbued with meanings that they would/would not like to be associated with (Taylor 2003; Howarth 2002). However, as discussed in relation to the research conducted by Howarth (2002), the interactional context in which people are asked to place themselves locally or internationally also influences the way they talk about their place attachments.

Using the synthetic approach and positioning theory (see Potter and Wetherell 1987; Wetherell and Potter 1992; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999; Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999) as a conceptual framework, and building on theoretical and empirical investigations of the discursive construction of identity, place and place attachment, particularly studies

which have attended to the way in which the interactional context influences the way in which people take up subject positions and construct places and relationships to place in talk (see Wetherell 1998; Condor 2000; Kirkwood et al. 2013; Howarth 2002), the aim of this research is to explore the way in which the interviews I conducted with UK residents from Zimbabwe were a site for the discursive construction of subjects, places and place attachments in an occasioned way.

The research process: Showing my workings

A significant aspect of qualitative research is the need for researchers to show their workings.

-Adrian Holliday (2002)

This chapter provides a narrative account of how this thesis came about; I detail the practices I engaged in and describe how my experiences of engaging in these practices led to shifts in the focus of the research over time. While I attempt to show my workings (Holliday 2002) in this chapter, what I present is still a carefully constructed account of what happened (Aldridge 1993). Furthermore, like all texts, this chapter is mediated by other texts, specifically books, theses and articles with highly reflexive methods sections (see Gunaratnam 1999; Knowles 2003; Knowles 2006; Cook 1998). As MacLure (2003: 127) points out, the accounts of researchers are fabrications, ‘assembled out of fragments and recollections of other fabrications such as the interview ‘data’ and field notes, as well as scattered traces of innumerable other cultural texts’.

The chapter has been divided into the following sections for navigational purposes⁵: (Re)formulating a research question; accessing interviewees and conducting the interviews; transcribing the interviews and exploring approaches to analysis; and writing.

⁵ The use of these subheadings should not suggest that the research process itself was divided into discrete stages.

(Re)formulating a research question

After conducting a search and review of the literature during the first year of my PhD, I planned to build on research which has explored the 'new geography of asylum migration' (see Collyer 2005; Van Wijk 2008) and conduct a comparative study of the factors shaping the direction and selectivity of forced migration from Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka to Britain. Practical and theoretical considerations guided my choice of Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka as countries of origin. I planned to conduct qualitative interviews with forced migrants and since I am monolingual, my options were to learn additional languages, hire interpreters, recruit interviewers or find interviewees who speak English fluently. Time and resource restrictions meant that learning additional languages or hiring interviewers or interpreters were not viable options. Furthermore, communication across languages involves more than the passive and faithful transfer of information (Temple and Edwards 2006). Zimbabwe was selected because at that time, the UK was the top destination for Zimbabwean asylum seekers after South Africa (UNHCR 2009), and female asylum applicants had outnumbered male applicants since 2004 (Home Office 2004; Home Office 2005; Home Office 2006; Home Office 2007; Home Office 2008; Home Office 2009). Furthermore, research indicates that a high proportion of people from Zimbabwe living in Britain speak English fluently (Kirk 2004; Bloch 2005). Sri Lanka was selected on the basis that it provided an interesting case for comparison with Zimbabwe as despite both countries having colonial links with the UK, statistics indicated that Britain was not the principal destination country for Sri Lankans applying for asylum in industrial countries whereas the vast majority of people from Zimbabwe who applied for asylum in industrial countries did so in Britain (UNHCR 2010).

During my upgrade presentation at the end of my first year, one of the examiners suggested that I take a more inductive, grounded theory approach in order to generate my own theoretical insights rather than using existing concepts as a theoretical framework. In *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*,

Glaser and Strauss (1967) outline a methodology for generating theory from data systematically obtained from social research. They argue that theory inductively developed from research is more likely to fit and work (predict, explain and be relevant). Later, Glaser and Strauss parted company to develop their own interpretations of the methodology and one of Strauss's students, Kathy Charmaz, devised a constructivist approach (see Glaser 1978; Glaser 1992; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Strauss and Corbin 1994; Strauss and Corbin 1998; Corbin and Strauss 2008; Charmaz 1988; Charmaz 2006). Glaser has tried to prevent alternative interpretations of the methodology being 'confused' with 'classic' or 'pure' grounded theory (see Glaser 1992; Glaser 2009). Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1994; 1998; Corbin and Strauss 2008) on the other hand, have attempted to distance themselves from the realist and positivist assumptions underpinning Glaser and Strauss (1967), although they continue to argue that concepts must be allowed to 'emerge' from the data. Charmaz (2000) has gone further in this respect, arguing that researchers can take a grounded theory approach to research without embracing the positivist leanings of its early proponents. She identifies five features of the constructivist approach to grounded theory which demonstrate that it has not lost sight of the 'form and logic' of Glaser and Strauss's approach: the structuring of enquiry; the simultaneity of data collection and analysis; the generation of new theory rather than the verification of existing theory; the refinement and exhaustion of conceptual categories through theoretical sampling; and the direction to more abstract analytical levels (Charmaz 1988). After familiarising myself with these three main approaches to grounded theory (Bryant 2009), Charmaz's version which recognises the interactive nature of both data collection and analysis became the guiding methodology of the research.

Around the time that I was attempting to familiarise myself with the various schools of grounded theory, I read that the biographical interview is an ideal non-directive method for grounded theory research (Flick 2009). Although life histories have been used by sociologists for decades (see Thomas and Znaniecki 1918-20; Shaw 1930), there has been a 'burgeoning interest' in the biographical approach to research since the 1990s (Chamberlyn et al. 2000;

Stanley and Temple 2008). Researchers taking a biographical approach employ a variety of methods including interviews, observation and the analysis of personal documents. Biographical interviews typically involve asking the interviewee to provide an account of their life from childhood to the present although some biographical interviews are more focused. Rosenthal (2007), building on the work of Fritz Schütze, recommends opening the interview with a broad generative narrative question and allowing the interviewee to produce their life story without interruption⁶. Once the interviewee indicates that they have finished their narrative the researcher should attempt to elicit further narratives on aspects of their life story which require further elaboration (referred to by Rosenthal as ‘internal narrative questions’). The interviewer can then move onto the final phase of the interview whereby he/she asks extrinsic questions based on his/her areas of interest (‘external narrative questions’). This approach to interviewing is said to minimise the implosion of the researcher's relevance system onto the narrator, and open up thematic connections to the research question that he/she had not envisaged (Rosenthal 2007).

Studies of migration which have taken a biographical approach argue that this approach to research has the potential to provide a more nuanced account of the decision to migrate given that a person may have multiple reasons for moving that prove difficult to articulate in response to a direct question such as ‘Why did you leave?’ (Vandsemb 1995; Boyle et al. 1998). Biographies are said to capture the situatedness of migration within everyday life, the way in which it is part of a person's past, present and predicted future (Halfacree and Boyle 1993). Furthermore, by treating ‘lives as a vantage point onto broader social processes’ (Knowles 2006: 394), biographical research can provide an alternative approach to studying macro-level processes of social transformation⁷ and crisis.

⁶ Wengraf (2001) provides similar, albeit more detailed guidelines for conducting biographical interviews.

⁷ Social transformation can be defined as ‘the way society and culture change in response to such factors as economic growth, war, or political upheavals’ (Castles 2001: 15).

My reading around the biographical approach to social research culminated in the abandonment of the grounded theory methodology and the formulation of a new research aim: to conduct a comparative study of migration in the context of social transformation using Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka as case studies. Biographical interviews would provide an insight into the way in which people experience and make sense of social, cultural, economic and political changes and this would be complemented by a comparative historical structural analysis of Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka. As explained in the following section, the aim of the research underwent further shifts over time, and after conducting the first few interviews, I decided to focus solely on interviewing UK residents from Zimbabwe.

Accessing interviewees and conducting the interviews

In preparation for conducting the interviews, I produced a list of refugee community organisations, day centres for homeless people, organisations providing legal advice, NHS walk-in centres, counselling services, and organisations offering advice for those at risk of deportation that I could use to signpost interviewees if necessary (see Appendix A for a selection of pages from this list).

I employed a variety of strategies to identify interviewees. Firstly, I contacted refugee community organisations and Zimbabwean and Sri Lankan community organisations to ask if I could visit the organisation and talk to their service users about my research. Secondly, I contacted churches with a Zimbabwean congregation, and Sri Lankan churches, mosques and temples to ask if I could hand out leaflets to people as they arrived or left. Thirdly, I met contacts of my supervisor who provided advice on gaining access to interviewees, and agreed to act as gatekeepers by passing on my details to anyone they knew who might be interested in taking part in the research. Two of the people I interviewed found out about the research in this way. Fourthly, I contacted the administrators of Zimbabwean and Sri Lankan email groups to ask if they could forward my email requesting research participants to

members of the group. Finally, I placed an advertisement (see Appendix B) on two websites (gumtree.com and newzimbabwe.com) and in one newspaper (*The Zimbabwean*). Gumtree is a network of online classified advertisements, and adverts were posted in the community sections of the London, Berkshire, Bedfordshire and Manchester pages (areas identified by Pasura (2006) as having large concentrations of Zimbabweans). *The Zimbabwean* is a weekly newspaper published in Britain. My advertisement featured in one print edition of the newspaper in January 2011 and two editions in February 2011. The advert produced a significant number of emails and telephone calls from people in Britain, Zimbabwe and South Africa expressing an interest in taking part or requesting further information, five of which actually culminated in interviews. *New Zimbabwe.com* is a UK based news website. A banner advertising my study featured on the home page of *New Zimbabwe.com* for one week in July 2011. Although this internet banner produced less interest than the newspaper advert, two of the men and women I interviewed found out about the research in this way.

Overall seven out of the ten men and women I interviewed contacted me in response to a newspaper or internet advertisement. This would clearly be an unacceptable approach to sampling if the aim of this study was to make generalisations about Zimbabweans in the UK. Firstly, those who read this particular newspaper and visit this particular news website would not even provide access to the total population of people from Zimbabwe living in the UK interested in current events in Zimbabwe, least of all the total population of Zimbabweans in the UK. Secondly, self-selection produces biased samples (Olsen 2008); most obviously those who volunteer to take part in a study are likely to have a particular interest in the topic of the research or in research more generally. Making generalisations about people is not the aim of discourse analytic research so the success of a study is not dependant on sampling techniques or sample size (Potter and Wetherell 1987). Rather, discourse analysts are interested in identifying patterns in language use and for this, small samples are both adequate and necessary as discourse analysis is an extremely labour intensive approach to analysis (Potter and Wetherell 1987).

One of the issues associated with advertising as a means of gaining access to research participants is that unlike approaches which involve the use of an intermediary such as a gatekeeper, friend or family member, there is no one to vouch for the researcher's identity and trustworthiness. This can be especially important when seeking the participation of people who may have particular concerns about trustworthiness such as forced migrants (Hynes 2003). Some of the men and women who responded to my advertisement arranged an interview without telling me their name, or used a pseudonym from the outset which suggests that trust was an issue for some participants, at least initially.

Since making generalisations about Zimbabweans in the UK was never the aim of this research, I did not have a carefully designed sampling strategy. The only condition for participation in the research was that the person lives in the UK and self-identifies as being from Zimbabwe. My self-selected 'sample' included six men and four women whose ages ranged from early 20s to late 70s (see Appendix C for a short biography of each interviewee). Their length of residence in the UK ranged from around five to 30 years. Not all those interviewed described themselves in ethnicised terms, and I did not ask them to do so, however those who did included Eugene who told me that he comes from a minority tribe and speaks Ndebele, Samantha who described herself as Shona, Sarah who referred to herself as Ndebele, Steve who self-identified as white Zimbabwean of British decent, and Zweli who described himself as Sotho.

The interviews

As I conducted the first few interviews I was overwhelmed by how rich and multifaceted they were. The interviewees were clearly doing far more than producing a narrative of their life; they were accounting for their actions, constructing particular images of themselves and others, contesting particular versions of events, and so on. At this stage I was unsure how I would analyse the interviews but I knew that I wanted to carry out more detailed analyses than the broad between country comparisons I had planned to undertake. It

was at this point that I decided to concentrate on interviewing UK residents from Zimbabwe as the first few interviews I had conducted were with people from Zimbabwe rather than Sri Lanka. I added some follow-up questions to the interview schedule to reflect some of the reoccurring themes of the interviews I had conducted. These centred around identity, home⁸ and belonging.

Following Rosenthal (2007) who discusses the advantages of asking the interviewee to produce a narrative of their life without specifying which aspects of their life they should focus on, I began each interview with a request for the interviewee to tell me the story of their life from whichever point they would like to begin. This approach to interviewing gave the interviewees considerable control over how they constructed their narrative and as a result, some concentrated on particular aspects of their life such as their career or political activism, while others focused on particular periods in their life, most notably Sarah whose narrative focused on her childhood, and Steve whose life story ended at the point at which he left Zimbabwe. One aspect of their lives I did not expect interviewees to talk about given that we had just met was their romantic/sexual relationships. Some interviewees did talk about their relationships however, most notably Zweli whose life history started with a detailed account of his school years, including the girlfriends he had during this period. Zweli told me near the start of his second interview that he planned to tell me more about his marriage as he realised he had not said a great deal about this aspect of his life during his first interview:

Z: The other thing I realised as well was that I haven't given a lot of my personal life at the moment, like here in England. I remember that we were just walking down the road that I mentioned my child. Then I realised that I have been so absorbed with my childhood and high school and coming to England and nostalgia of being Zimbabwean that I had failed to reflect that um part of what encouraged the reflections was the fact that I've been married for quite a while now, my wedding was in xxxx. I think I'm happily married, I don't know [...]

⁸ 'Home' is a difficult concept to define as it is subject to constant reinterpretation (Black 2002). A home can be 'made, re-made, imagined, remembered or desired; it can refer as much to beliefs, customs or traditions as physical places or buildings' (Black 2002: 126).

L: But you're not compelled to tell me anything you don't want to tell me, if you don't want to talk to me about your relationship, I'm not going to ask you direct questions about your relationship, that's exactly why I've choose this style of interview because it means people have control over what parts of their life they want to talk about. There may be some things people want to keep private.

Z: I know. I'm just saying to you that that's one of the reflections I was having because I didn't venture there. [...] Yeah so I think the childhood, the coming to the UK, studying I mentioned last time so this time, that's the other thing I was reflecting that this time I could venture more into my feelings and current-

L: -If you're happy to, as I say only talk about what your comfortable talking about.

Z: Yeah.. I currently live with my wife [...]

Despite my efforts to steer Zweli away from talking about his marriage because I did not feel particularly comfortable talking about such an intimate topic, he went on to tell me about his wife and the relationships he had in the UK prior to getting married. As Scheurich (1997: 71) points out, interviewees do not simply go along with the researcher's program; they often carve out a space of their own, control some part of the interview, and push against or resist the researcher's goals, intentions and meanings. Zweli's determination to talk about his relationships and how they have shaped him as a person seemed to stem from a frame of reference provided by Jean Jacques Rousseau's autobiography, *The Confessions* (1782/1985). He told me at the start of the second interview that he had recently re-read *The Confessions* and this had inspired him to try and produce a life story that was as complete and honest as possible. My interviews with Zweli made me appreciate the importance of considering autobiographies and memoirs⁹ as texts which contribute to the discursive context in which the interviews took place. Apart from helping interviewees make sense of how they should approach the task of telling me their life story by providing a narrative framework, autobiographies and memoirs are texts which are constitutive of the 'vast argumentative texture' (Laclau 1993: 341) out of which people construct reality.

⁹ According to Nuttall (1998:80), a memoir can be distinguished from an autobiography on the basis that a memoir usually focuses on a 'portion (usually an obsessive or a troubled one) of a life-a pathological experience, or an experience of victimhood.'

Most of the interviews I conducted followed the main narrative-internal questions-external questions format recommended by Rosenthal (2007), but there were a few exceptions to this. Reading through the transcripts of the first few interviews I conducted, I realised that I proceeded straight to the questions I had prepared before the interviews; at this stage I must have found it difficult to take notes and use these to formulate ‘internal narrative questions’. The other interviews which did not follow a main narrative-internal questions-external questions format were those I conducted with Sarah. I met Sarah on more occasions than the other men and women I interviewed (three times) and her interviews were all relatively long (the interviews I conducted with Sarah are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five). Sarah’s life story centred on her childhood with a particular focus on her experiences of the Gukurahundi and the years she spent living with relatives of her mother who subjected her to physical and sexual abuse. Her narrative was interspersed with reflections on her relationship with her mother and her emotional well-being. Sarah did not bring her narrative to a close during the first or subsequent interviews so it was not possible to follow Rosenthal’s (2007) advice to allow interviewees to complete their narrative before asking internal and external follow up questions. During the second and third interview she seemed reluctant to talk about anything other than her childhood experiences, the Gukurahundi, and her relationship with her mother, however she eventually told me a little about her teenage years and adult life including her move to the UK at 14 years old.

Sarah made me realise that my aim of exploring migration in the context of social transformation by conducting biographical interviews with men and women who had migrated to the UK from Zimbabwe erroneously rested on the assumption that this experience would inevitably feature in their life story. I am unsure why I made this assumption; perhaps it is because migration is often framed as ‘one of those events around which an individual’s biography is built’ (Fielding 1992: 201). Or, more disturbingly, perhaps this assumption stemmed from internalised discourses which position those who have migrated to the UK, regardless of how long they have lived here, as “in’

Britain but not 'of Britain' (Brah 1996: 191). As Anderson (2013: 7) points out, '[p]eople typically continue to be designated as migrants or asylum seekers even when they have attained formal citizenship'. On some level I was conscious not to engage in this process of othering potential interviewees as the advertisement I produced did not contain the word 'migrant'. However, by stating in the advert that the 'aim of the research is to develop an insight into the experiences, views and concerns of people who are from Zimbabwe and currently living in Britain', I clearly expected those I interviewed to speak *as* migrants. The advertisement created a particular subject position for interviewees to take up, which they in turn negotiated and in some cases rejected.

During the process of conducting the interviews, I began to realise that people have their own reasons for taking part in research, aside from an interest in the study or a desire to help (Scheurich 1997). As Scheurich (1997) points out, the interviewee may use the interview experience to satisfy her/his relational or emotional needs or play out a persona. Interviewees may also be politically aware and politically motivated actors who have an interest in how socially significant issues are represented (Alvesson 2002). Indeed, while Sarah seemed to treat the interview primarily as an opportunity to talk about childhood experiences for therapeutic purposes, others seemed to frame the interview as an opportunity to raise awareness about the past and present persecution of political opponents and ethnicised minorities in Zimbabwe (this is discussed further in Chapter Five). At various points since I conducted the interviews I have wondered whether I am doing these interviewees a disservice by subjecting their accounts to discourse analytic readings rather than treating them as testimonies.¹⁰ I have often wondered how some of the men and women I interviewed would feel if they read my thesis and saw that rather than their words being used as evidence of the persecution people have experienced in Zimbabwe, they are discussed in terms of linguistic resources and rhetorical strategies. I imagine that whilst some of the men and women I

¹⁰ Uusihakala (2008), who spent nine months in 1999-2000 with 'ex-Rhodesians' in South Africa reportedly had similar concerns. She describes how near the end of her fieldwork period, when Zimbabwe's political situation worsened dramatically, her research seemed 'harrowingly trivialized' in the face of 'deeply real, tormenting distress and agony in Zimbabwe' (2008: 25).

interviewed would be unsurprised to see their life story interpreted in this way- particularly those who have conducted academic research themselves- others would be shocked to hear their story told back to them in such a way that it has become mine (hooks 1990: 151). I have tried to remind myself that the men and women I interviewed were aware from the start that I was a sociology student writing a thesis, not a journalist or representative of a NGO writing a report about human rights abuse in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, my advert did not state that I was looking for Gukurahundi survivors or people who have experienced persecution in Zimbabwe which may have suggested that I was writing a thesis that was orientated to raising awareness about past and present political violence in Zimbabwe. I have also consoled myself with the thought that perhaps this research will fulfil these interviewees hopes of raising awareness about the past and present treatment of political opponents and ethnicised minorities in Zimbabwe one day, even if the accounts were not treated as testimonies and left to 'speak for themselves'¹¹.

Apart from interviewees who suggested that they regarded the interview as a chance to raise awareness about the past and present treatment of political opponents and ethnicised minorities, and Sarah's framing of the interview in therapeutic terms, one man suggested that he was using the interview as an opportunity to meet someone new. During the interview Jacob talked at length about how he was keen to get married and asked if I had any friends who were interested in meeting someone new (I replied that all my friends were in relationships). He also suggested near the end of the interview that perhaps we could meet again some time to 'see if the chemistry is there'. It was only later when I listened to the tape recording of the interview that I realised what Jacob had said. Apart from the fact that the background noise and activity in the coffee shop in which the interview was conducted sometimes made it difficult for me to follow what he was saying, this invitation was not framed as a question and it came after a long stretch of talk containing lots of reported speech relating to people meeting. After we had

¹¹ By presenting the testimonies of 30 Zimbabweans without commentary or analysis, Staunton's (2009) *Damaged: The personal cost of political change in Zimbabwe* seems to have been guided by this objective of letting people speak for themselves.

left the coffee shop, Jacob told me that he responded to my advertisement in the newspaper as 'you never know where these things could lead'. He mentioned that we should keep in touch and I reiterated that, like me, all of my friends have partners so I do not think I will be able to help him in that respect. I asked him if he would like a transcript of the interview and he told me that he was not particularly interested in reading what he had said. This meant that it was not necessary for me to contact him further.

Exploring the way in which the interviews were not a mere research tool, but a site for social interaction, was one of my main considerations when analysing the interviews. In the early stages of the research, however, I did regard the interviews as a means of gaining an insight into the experiences of those I met. In this vein, I discussed with some of the men and women I interviewed how they thought 'my social characteristics' affected the research process, something I later came to regard as problematic on various levels. In some cases interviewees marked particular social categories as relevant to the research process unprompted, but in most cases they did so in response to questions I asked. Sarah told me that when she saw my advertisement in the newspaper she was excited at the prospect of her life story helping to raise awareness about the Gukurahundi but she was also concerned that I could have links to the CIO (Zimbabwe's intelligence agency). She described how she was nervous about calling the telephone number on the advert but when we spoke on the telephone she thought to herself, 'surely a British woman wouldn't be working for ZANU'. According to Sarah, when she arrived at the place we had arranged to meet, if I was black she would probably have 'run a mile' because she would be thinking, 'she could be, she could be'. I asked her whether she would have felt more comfortable talking to someone who speaks Ndebele, like her, to which she replied 'No, no, don't make a mistake, we've all learned from these mistakes because during the Gukurahundi, Shona people were speaking Ndebele. That doesn't guarantee you are trustworthy.'

After hearing Sarah's reported concerns about the advert being posted by Zimbabwe's intelligence agency, I asked Eugene whether he had similar misgivings when he saw my advert in the newspaper:

L: One lady said that when she saw my advert she was a little concerned that I could be CIO¹² in disguise, I might not be a student. Was that something you were concerned about?

E: It came to my mind but I thought....it came to my mind but I didn't take it serious. You don't know who to trust at times. Particularly if it was a black person, I would have been hesitant. I just, when I realised you were white I just had the confidence... Because even if there are white intelligence people, there must be very few, very few. Even people who supported him [President Mugabe] all along they have now realised the reality.

At the end of Steve's second interview I asked him how he thought 'my identity' affected the interview process:

L: I don't want to sort of make any assumptions about how my identity as a white British woman in her late twenties has influenced the interview process, have you got any thoughts on that?

S: No...I'm glad you're not a fat, old man [Laughter]

L: It's quite a strange question I know. I'm not saying you would have told someone else a completely different story but do you think the fact that I'm British or-

S: No I don't think it's made any difference because I think I've sussed you to some extent and I realise that you obviously know quite a bit about what's happened there, therefore it's meant that I can be quite open with you because I think you do, obviously I know you're educated and you've obviously studied some part of what's happened out there so no, the answer's no.

L: You wouldn't have felt, because there's this view in social science that if you match the characteristics of the interviewer with the interviewee then the interviewee has a greater sense of trust. Do you think if I was a white Zimbabwean man you would have felt more comfortable?

S: Yes I probably would have spoken in a different way, probably used more slang and slightly different language maybe, maybe worse language. I probably would have discussed it in a different way yes but I don't know if it would have changed much of what I've actually said. But the fact that you're, I don't know how to say this...but I can identify with your social class because you're not... if you were a cockney lass I probably wouldn't have opened up quite as much.

L: It's interesting, it's something I have to address. I have to imagine how my characteristics will have influenced the process so I'm interested in

¹² Central Intelligence Organisation

what you think, as I say I don't want to make assumptions. One woman I've spoken to said that when she called me she was listening to my accent and if she thought I was Zimbabwean she wouldn't have agreed to meet. She said when we met if I was black she would have walked away due to the possibility that I could have a connection with the politics there.

S: No I don't think I would have been that much different with really whoever it was, even if you had been black to be honest. Because as I said to you I don't have that same fear, I don't believe that they are bothered with wanting to knock me off. You're well-spoken and that's helped. If you had been a black girl who had come to speak to me I don't think it would have made any difference. If you had been a black Zimbabwean male I might have had some reservations as to why you were doing it and I may have judged what I said a little more closely. But I don't think being who you are I have adjusted what I was going to say. But if it was a white Zimbabwean man I would have probably been a bit more matey and a bit more blokey and used more colloquialisms and slang.

This notion that 'my characteristics' have influenced the research process suggests that I *possess* a set of social characteristics which represent some sort of extraneous variable which can be isolated for their effect on the interviews. What is also striking about this exchange is the way I assume that Steve will unquestionably share my assumption that 'my social characteristics' will have influenced the interview process. I failed to appreciate that although I was not going to be assessing his life story on the basis of its truthfulness, Steve, like the other men and women I interviewed, constructed his account as if I was. Thus my question concerning how my social characteristics influenced the way he told his life story is akin to me questioning the truthfulness of his account. It is unsurprising then that Steve is reluctant to agree that my social characteristics had any impact on the interview process but eventually suggests that, if anything, his sense that we are similarly positioned in terms of class has helped him to open up.

Apart from the problematic underlying assumptions of this question, I would now regard asking interviewees for their thoughts on how my social characteristics influenced the research process as problematic in itself. As Frith and Kitzinger (1998:317) point out, 'when social scientists make the methodological leap from what people 'say' to what they 'believe' or how they 'behave' they obscure the social function of talk and obscure its role as *talk-in-interaction*.' The emphasis should be on exploring the way in which differences and similarities are 'an emergent property of social situations'

(West and Fenstermaker 1995: 8), or 'made relevant' during the interview (Frith 1998: 531), rather than assuming that interviewees have all the answers.

Transcribing the interviews and exploring approaches to analysis

By August 2011 I had interviewed ten men and women, some on more than one occasion as they did not complete the story of their life the first time we met and/or there was not enough time for me to ask follow-up questions. I interviewed six of the participants once, three participants twice and one person was interviewed three times. Fred is included in the six people I interviewed once, despite the fact that he participated in his wife Mary's interview. The interviews varied in length from one hour 15 mins to five hours. All 15 interviews (which totalled approximately 36 hours) were tape recorded and transcribed.

Transcription involves the 'transformation of one narrative mode-oral discourse-into another narrative mode-written discourse' (Kvale 1996:166). Different approaches to transcription place different degrees of importance on trying to ensure that the textual representation of the verbal account captures everything that can be heard on the audio or video recording. The approach I took to transcribing the interviews lies somewhere between the detailed notation system used by conversation analysts (see Jefferson 1984), and a practice which involves only recording the words spoken, producing a 'clean' and easy to read transcript (see Appendix D for transcription notation). During the process of transcribing the interviews I aimed to capture some of the details that can convey additional meaning in a verbal exchange such as laughter, false starts, repetition and pauses. I also included non-lexical utterances such as 'um' and 'ah' and indicated when one speaker's talk overlapped the other's. My 'back channelling' responses which punctuated the interviewees' talk were included in brackets so the reader could get a sense of the way in which the interviews were social encounters (Rapley

2001). I did not include the exact length of pauses or indicate when someone took a sharp intake of breath, sighed, coughed or words were characterised by rising or falling volume or intonation. The level of interactional detail included was deemed sufficient for the type of analysis conducted; it reflects my interest in the words spoken in the context of an interaction rather than an exclusive focus on the interaction itself in which case it would have been necessary to transcribe the interviews using the detailed notation system used by conversation analysts. Kvale (1996: 166) describes transcripts as hybrids and this seems a particularly accurate description of those I produced as they include both interactional details and punctuation. As I transcribed the interviews I inadvertently imposed an order on the messiness of the talk I heard on the audio recordings by forming words into sentences. Although this makes the interview transcripts easy to read, they would be considered too close to written text for some.

The men and women I interviewed were asked if they would like a copy of the interview transcript so they could read through what they had said and reflect on whether they had any objections to me using their interview account for the purposes of my research. Of the ten people I interviewed, nine said that they would like to be sent a transcript of the interview. In my email/letter accompanying the transcript, I asked interviewees to contact me if they had any comments or questions or would like something in the transcript to be removed or changed. Apart from one man providing the correct spellings of names I was unsure of, and another reminding me of the details he would like removed and changed to protect his anonymity, no requests for changes or omissions were made.

Although sending interviewees the transcript of their interview is seemingly good ethical practice as it provides an opportunity for the renegotiation of consent, this may create another ethical issue in that participants may be surprised to learn that they talk in a way that is less coherent and eloquent than they imagined (Kvale 1996). Indeed, when one of the men I interviewed emailed me to inform me that he had received the transcript of his interview, he made reference to his '(sometimes) incoherent ramblings and dreadful

sentence construction and syntax.' From this point on my email/letter accompanying the transcripts mentioned that I attempted to transcribe the interviews verbatim and therefore the transcripts include the imperfections of speech that characterises *all* talk. It is acknowledged however that this does not provide a straightforward solution to this issue.

Safeguarding the anonymity of research participants is particularly challenging in research based on life history interviews as 'the extensive use of individuals' stories...render participants more vulnerable to exposure than conventional qualitative studies do' (Chase 1996: 46). In this thesis I do not engage in the conventional practice of introducing interviewees with a description which locates them in terms of particular social categories, firstly to protect the anonymity of those who wish to remain anonymous, and secondly because this implies that their identities are already known and fixed rather than the interview being a site of identity construction (Taylor 2010).

Six of the ten men and women I interviewed chose their own pseudonyms. The advertisement I produced stated that I would ask those I interviewed to choose a pseudonym and some people used one from the moment they first made contact, indicating that it was a pseudonym by placing it in inverted commas in their text or email. Of those, Steve told me that he would like his identity to be known as an act of defiance but he had to think about those who remained in Zimbabwe, particularly the couple renting his farm.

Three of the men and women I interviewed told me that I could choose a pseudonym for them. This was something I hoped to avoid, not only because the process of naming is tied up with the exercise of power, but because names have particular connotations and I did not want to infer 'all sorts of connotative baggage onto research participants that may or may not be appropriate' (Clark 2006: 6).

Another interviewee, Patson, told me that he wanted me to use his actual name so that others could verify his account. Ethical guidelines are based on the assumption that research participants not only have a right to anonymity

but prefer it (Grinyer 2002; Sinha and Back 2014). This assumption is being challenged however by research participants requesting that their name and any other identifying information be retained (see Grinyer 2002; Corden and Sainsbury 2006; Wiles et al. 2008). Several of the social researchers interviewed by Wiles et al. (2008) had encountered such requests for actual names to be used. Some reportedly informed their research participants that they could not agree to this, while others stressed the importance of enabling this to happen, once they had checked with the research participant that they were aware of how their data would be used. This was the approach Grinyer (2002) and her team adopted in their study into young adults diagnosed with cancer. The research team wrote to the research participants to ask if they would like their accounts to be anonymised and three-quarters specified that their own names be used in any publications. After one of the participants contacted the researchers some time later expressing regret that she had asked for a pseudonym to be used, the researchers sent participants a draft of their book to give them the opportunity to reassess whether or not they would like all identifying information to be removed. On the basis of this study, Grinyer (2002) concludes that the balance of protecting respondents from harm by hiding their identity while at the same time preventing 'loss of ownership' is an issue that needs to be addressed by each researcher on an individual basis with each respondent. Even then, it is still possible that respondents will make the 'wrong' choice.

Despite knowing that Patson had talked publicly about his life on numerous occasions before the interview as part of his campaigning activities in the UK, I was still anxious that using his name could put him or those he knew at risk. I was also aware that using a pseudonym on his behalf would deny him full ownership of his story and refuse him the opportunity to bear witness to the persecution he and his fellow opposition supporters suffered in Zimbabwe. I contacted Patson a few months after the interview to discuss this with him further and he reiterated that it was important to him that I use his actual name. Of course refusing anonymity not only has implications for the research participant, but all those he/she knows and refers to during the

interview, and this was something I was mindful of when using extracts of Patson's interview in this thesis.

By September 2011 I had transcribed all but one of the interviews and I was keen to start the process of analysis. I experimented with coding the interviews thematically using Nvivo software but I soon realised that I would need to find an alternative approach to analysing the interviews. Extracting a few words or sentences and placing them into a set of categories and subcategories felt wrong; these words were part of a longer exchange and I felt they should be interpreted as such.

One approach to analysis which avoids de-contextualising the interviewee's words by analysing extracts of the interview as part of a longer sequence of talk is the biographical case reconstruction method (Rosenthal and Fisher-Rosenthal 2004). This approach is tailored specifically to analysing accounts produced during biographical interviews which have followed the generative narrative question-internal narrative questions-external narrative questions format outlined by Rosenthal (2007). The biographical case reconstruction method treats the uninterrupted narrative produced at the start of the biographical interview as the 'life story', while the interviewee's responses to follow up questions are used to fill in the gaps of their 'life history'. It is argued that by comparing the life story and the life history, the researcher can see which incidents and events are blown up narratively to test hypotheses about the function the presentation has for the interviewee at the time of the interview (Rosenthal and Fisher-Rosenthal 2004). I soon rejected this as a possible approach to analysis however as I disagreed with the assumption that some parts of the interview can be interpreted as a more accurate representation of the interviewee's past than others. Furthermore, the process of generating and rejecting or accepting hypotheses in order to determine why the interviewee presented their life story in a particular way, as described by Rosenthal and Fisher-Rosenthal (2004), seems to imply that it is possible to produce *the* correct interpretation of an interview account whereas 'in an interview there is no stable 'reality' or 'meaning' that can be represented' (Scheurich 1997: 73).

In an attempt to find a suitable approach to analysis I revisited empirical studies I found engaging such as *White Women, Race Matters* (Frankenberg 1993) and *Mapping the Language of Racism* (Wetherell and Potter 1992). What I found interesting about these studies was the way in which they approached their interviewees' accounts. Rather than treating the accounts as an insight into their attitudes regarding racialised groups and relations, both studies explore the way in which those they interviewed *talked about* racialised groups and relations. *White Women, Race Matters* (Frankenberg 1993) examines the way in which race discourses in the United States at the time of the study provided the parameters for talking about race during the interviews. Frankenberg demonstrates that in the process of talking about, for instance interracial relationships, the women interviewed had no choice but to engage with the discourse against interracial relationships, although the ways in which they engaged with it varied with some espousing it and others challenging it. Similarly, Wetherell and Potter (1992:4) demonstrate that the way in which Pakeha (white) New Zealanders make sense of racialised relations 'works out the remnants of broader discursive systems through which the Empire was made accountable'.

I started to read introductory accounts of discourse analysis to get a sense of what distinguishes discourse analytic research from other research, and on what basis discourse analytic approaches differ. I learnt that discourse analysis is a methodology rather than a method and all discourse analytic approaches share a set of assumptions about the constructive effects of language (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002; Phillips and Hardy 2002). After familiarising myself with various approaches to discourse analysis, the synthetic approach which combines insights from post-structuralism and ethnomethodology/conversation analysis (Wetherell and Potter 1992; Wetherell 1998) seemed most congruent with my (shifting) theoretical assumptions and interests.

According to proponents of the synthetic approach, the analyst needs to consider both the socio-historical context and the interactional context¹³ in which the talk took place in order to properly understand it (Wetherell 1998). One way of exploring the way in which talk is highly occasioned is to consider the variability within an account. This involves tracking the emergence of different and sometimes contradictory versions of selves, others, events etc. and asking, why this formulation at this point in the conversation? (Wetherell 1998: 395). This represents a significant divergence from research underpinned by realist assumptions which tends to see variability as a methodological problem (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984; Potter and Wetherell 1987).

My readings of the interview accounts also took inspiration from positioning theory (see Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). Positioning theory, like the synthetic approach, draws attention to the interactional context by suggesting that those with whom one is conversing offers positions from which to speak (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999).

Writing

I produced readings of the interview accounts during the process of writing the substantive chapters. The focus of the substantive chapters was identified at an earlier point however, soon after I had transcribed the interviews. Extracts corresponding to re-occurring themes in the interviewees' talk were grouped together. For each of the three substantive chapters I used this collection of interview extracts as a starting point for identifying patterns in language use. As I read through the interview extracts I was particularly attuned to what actions were being performed as people spoke, and how speakers were positioning themselves, positioning each other and rejecting or accepting the positions made available to them (see Wetherell and Potter 1992; Wetherell 1998; Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). Of course these features of language use were not there waiting to be found.

¹³ The context dependence of speakers' utterances was explored earlier by Gilbert and Mulkay (1984).

Rather, the readings I produced were an outcome of the very particular discourse analytic approach I took, not to mention the ‘considerable conscious and unconscious baggage’ (Scheurich 1997: 73) I brought to the research process. Indeed, I do not claim to present the definitive interpretation of the interview talk in this thesis as apart from the fact that other people are likely to interpret this talk very differently, the process of conducting a discourse analytic readings is never complete (Billig 1997).

The way in which I used interview extracts in the substantive chapters was guided by the analytic approach I employed to analyse the interviews. Rather than treating the interview accounts as an insight into some aspect of social reality or interviewees’ lives, thoughts or feelings, talk was treated as the main unit of analysis. This means exploring ‘how the account is constructed or organized, on what occasions attitude x is espoused and what occasions attitude y and what functions do they achieve’ (Potter and Wetherell 1987:35). This not only explains the length of the interview extracts I have used in the substantive chapters (which for some will be excessively long), but also the way in which extracts from interviews with the same person are presented in succession as this enabled me to discuss continuity and variation within the interview accounts. Variation within accounts is of great interest to discourse analysts as it enables them to explore the way in which talk is highly occasioned and orientated to action (Mulkay and Gilbert 1984; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Wetherell 1998).

Before presenting my readings of the interview accounts in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, the following chapter situates the interview talk within a broader discursive context.

~ 4 ~

Situating the interview talk

Intelligible exchanges are always situated
-Michael Shapiro (1992)

This thesis is based on interviews I conducted with UK residents from Zimbabwe in 2011 and this chapter situates the interview talk within a broader discursive context. Whether it is necessary or desirable to take into account elements of the social context when analysing talk is a matter of debate amongst discursive researchers and conversation analysts (van Dijk 2007; McKinlay and McVittie 2008). Some argue that analytical attention should be restricted to the conversation sequence, and aspects of the social context should only be invoked if the analyst can demonstrate that speakers themselves have attended to them (see Schegloff 1997; Schegloff 2003). According to this perspective, it is inappropriate for the researcher to try and reach conclusions about the patterning of talk in a particular social context. Others argue that accounts are mediated by the socio-historical context of their telling, so referring to this context is vital to the analytic enterprise (see Laclau 1993; Wetherell 1998; Edley 2001; Wetherell 2003). For instance, Laclau (1993) argues that people construct reality from an ensemble of arguments that constitute the texture of a group's common sense. Building on this, Wetherell (1998) suggests that to properly understand an extract of talk,

it must be placed within a broader discursive context as interpretative repertoires provide a back-cloth for the realisation of locally managed positions in conversation. Similarly, Edley (2001: 190) argues that ‘when people talk, they do so using a lexicon or repertoire of terms which has been provided for them by history’. For Edley (2001), a study of the discursive construction of, for instance, masculinity, entails an identification of the various resources that society makes available for the construction of masculine identities, as seeing what forms of masculinity are ‘on offer’ gives us an insight into the kinds of choices that are being made.

Following those who argue that it is important to situate language use within a broader socio-historical context, this chapter provides a sense of the discursive context in which the interviews took place. Since mapping competing representations of the range of phenomena talked about by the men and women I interviewed was not possible, three debates occurring in the public realm during the period in which the interviews were conducted were taken as a starting point for exploring the discursive context in which our conversations took place.

The chapter begins by outlining a debate which took place in early 2011 concerning whether Zimbabweans might follow in the footsteps of Tunisians, Egyptians and Libyans and stage a mass uprising against the government of Zimbabwe. I explore the way in which those who engaged in these discussions reproduced competing constructions of Zimbabwe as a state in crisis and as a state under threat from Western imperialism. The chapter then moves on to consider a speech given by Prime Minister David Cameron to Conservative Party activists in April 2011 outlining the Coalition government’s proposals for reducing levels of immigration to Britain. It is argued that Cameron’s speech reproduced a well-established mode of justifying attempts to reduce immigration by representing migrants as a threat to the cohesion of communities. The final part of the chapter takes as its starting point a debate taking place in June and July 2011 concerning whether the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe is marginalised. I discuss the way in which those engaged in this debate reproduced and

contested constructions of Matabeleland residents as the long-suffering victims of discrimination and persecution.

News websites such as *BBC News*¹⁴, *New Zimbabwe*¹⁵ and *The Zimbabwean*¹⁶ were used to identify debates occurring in the public realm during the six month period in which I conducted the interviews (February-August 2011). These debates about Zimbabwe, migrants in Britain and the residents of Matabeleland were selected from the range of debates taking place at the time because of their perceived relevance; talk about the crisis in Zimbabwe, the representation of migrants in Britain, and the Matabeleland region featured in a number of the interviews I conducted. However, even for those interviewees who did not engage directly with these debates, this ensemble of arguments is still constitutive of the ‘vast argumentative texture’ (Laclau 1993) out of which they constructed reality. This argumentative fabric that utterances both derive from and constitute is continually shaping and transforming, but for recognisable periods it is the same kind of cloth (Wetherell 2003).

This chapter draws on ‘public domain media texts’, texts which are available in the public sphere and are connected interactively, thematically and argumentatively within a ‘dialogical network’ (Leudar et al. 2004: 245). Extracts from television and radio station websites, speeches by politicians and online newspaper articles were selected purposively to illustrate competing constructions of Zimbabwe, migrants in Britain, and Matabeleland residents.

The uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East and constructions of Zimbabwe

In the weeks leading up to, and during the period in which I conducted the interviews for this research, large anti-government demonstrations were

¹⁴ www.bbc.co.uk/news

¹⁵ www.newzimbabwe.com

¹⁶ www.thezimbabwean.co

taking place in countries throughout North Africa and the Middle East. A week before I conducted the first interview on 18th February 2011, President Mubarak resigned after thousands of Egyptians demanded an end to his 30 year rule. The previous month the president of Tunisia, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, had fled the country after weeks of anti-government demonstrations. As protests raged in countries across North Africa and the Middle East, people began to discuss the likelihood of similar mass anti-government demonstrations occurring elsewhere, including Zimbabwe. At the Times CEO Summit Africa in March 2011, the British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, argued that ‘demands for freedom will spread’ and ‘undemocratic governments elsewhere should take heed’ (Kirkup 2011). ‘Just as Gaddafi is an obstacle to the peaceful development of Libya, there are others who stand in the way of a brighter future for their countries,’ William Hague stated, before singling out President Mugabe by way of example (Shackle 2011).

The British Foreign Secretary was not the first to suggest that the citizens of Zimbabwe might follow the lead of Tunisians and Egyptians and stage a mass demonstration against their government. When Morgan Tsvangirai, the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe’s unity government and leader of the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T), was asked by Fox News in January 2011 how he thought the events in Tunisia and Egypt related to Zimbabwe he replied that there was a ‘general resentment of autocratic regimes, the manner in which these governments have stayed in power forever and ever’ (Kellogg 2011). Tsvangirai went on to argue that ‘there was nothing wrong with people demanding their rights, including in Zimbabwe’ (Kellogg 2011). The Zimbabwean state-owned and controlled newspaper, *The Herald*, was quick to respond, arguing that Tsvangirai’s comments exposed a ‘penchant for violence’ and an ‘inclination for non-democratic means of resolving disputes’ (The Herald 1 February 2011). Zimbabwe’s defence minister, Emerson Mnangagwa, stated that Zimbabweans who were thinking of emulating the people of Egypt and Tunisia would regret doing so as ‘the police are told that wherever violence

rears its ugly head it should be crushed' (New Zimbabwe 7 February 2011). The former leader of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association, Andy Mhlanga, also warned Zimbabweans not to rise up against the president, stating that if they do, they will be dealt with 'once and for all' (Zvauya 2011).

A number of media commentators writing in early 2011 suggested that an uprising in Zimbabwe was quite possible given the parallels between the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe and those countries in North Africa and the Middle East that were in the throes of a revolution. Some pointed to the vast personal fortunes amassed by President Mubarak and President Mugabe at the expense of the citizens of Egypt and Zimbabwe (The Zimbabwean 31 January 2011; The Standard 13 February 2011). Media commentators also pointed to the violent suppression of opposition and the absence of basic civil liberties in both Zimbabwe and Egypt (see The Zimbabwean 31 January 2011; The Standard 13 February 2011). Others went beyond the drawing of parallels to argue that the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt were an inspiration to Zimbabweans as they demonstrate that people-power can topple even the most formidable repressive regimes (see Dlamini 2011; Macaphulana 2011; The Zimbabwean 16 February 2011; Ncube 2011b; Chari 2011). The most important lesson Tunisians and Egyptians have taught Zimbabweans, argued some, is that they should take responsibility for their own liberation rather than waiting for others to take the lead in ousting President Mugabe (see Dlamini 2011; Ncube 2011b).

However, not everyone shared the belief that Zimbabwe was on the brink of a revolution and fear of violent reprisals was the most commonly cited reason for why Zimbabweans would not take to the streets and demand an end to ZANU-PF rule. As one commentator put it, 'Zimbabweans want democracy and good governance, but they are not willing to die for it' (Mtero 2011). Another pointed to the 'mass slaughter' of people during the Gukurahundi and the 'shocking violence' in the run up to the 2008 presidential election as periods in Zimbabwe's recent history which serve as a reminder of 'what Mugabe can do' (see Nyoni 2011). Based on the international community's inaction in the past, argued one commentator,

there is no guarantee that the sight of hundreds of innocent people being killed for demanding that Mugabe step down would ‘focus the world’s conscience’ to the point of intervention (Mail & Guardian 21 February 2011). When the ‘Million Citizen March’ planned for the 1st March 2011 failed to materialise, Chingosho (2011) argued that it was unrealistic to expect ‘a traumatized, over-policed and bitten-down Zimbabwean population trapped in extreme fear of a bloodthirsty regime to gather in millions demanding Mugabe’s resignation’.

The notion that parallels can be drawn between the conditions in Zimbabwe and the conditions in countries in North Africa and the Middle East undergoing revolutions was strongly refuted by the ruling party and their supporters. ZANU-PF MP, Jonathan Moyo, dismissed Tsvangirai’s ‘pipe dream’ of mass anti-government demonstrations taking place in Zimbabwe and provided an alternative interpretation of what the citizens of Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere were demonstrating against by casting the uprisings as ‘anti-American and anti-West’ (Bulawayo 24 1 February 2011; The Herald 1 February 2011). Moyo argued that unrest is occurring in places where citizens perceive their governments to ‘be under massive handholding by the US’ and, on that basis, the only way Zimbabwe would experience similar unrest would be if the country suffered the ‘misfortune of falling into the hands of a puppet MDC-T under massive handholding by the US administration’ (The Herald 1 February 2011). Support for the view that the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere were demonstrations against governments receiving financial support from countries in the West also came from Tafataona Mahoso, writing for *The Sunday Mail*:

the people of North Africa must be seen as rising up against their governments which had accepted neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes; which had integrated them into the EU economy; governments which had accepted the Bush-Blair re-definition of the imperialist war on revolt as a global war on terror...governments which had accepted Euro-American corporatism (fascism) as development. (Mahoso 2011)

This mode of representing the events in North Africa and the Middle East as struggles against governments propped up by the West shares ‘a common vision with ZANU-PF’s anti-imperialist message’ (Raftopolous 2011: np).

Zimbabwe as a state in crisis

Discussions concerning whether Zimbabweans might follow in the footsteps of Tunisians and Egyptians and stage a mass uprising against the ruling party built on, and reproduced, two prevailing constructions of Zimbabwe: as a country in crisis; and as a state under threat from Western imperialism. Constructions of Zimbabwe as a state in crisis, which have been produced by political opponents, journalists, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations and academics, tend to date the start of the crisis to around the beginning of the 21st century (see for example Moyo 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya 2011; Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003). Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003: 3) argue that while there is much debate about what constitutes and has caused the crisis, what its consequences are and for whom, ‘by any measure, Zimbabwe is *in* crisis.’ Narratives of crisis and decline characterise Zimbabwe as a country with a failing economy, widespread corruption and an absence of civil liberties (see for example The Independent 25 June 2002; Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003; Meldrum 2007; Human Rights Watch 2009; Chogugudza 2006; Crush and Tevera 2010). For example, a Human Rights Watch report published in 2009 entitled ‘Crisis Without Limits’ represents Zimbabwe in the following terms:

Zimbabwe is in a humanitarian crisis that is the result of a political crisis [...] The country is experiencing the sharpest rise in infant mortality in its history, and maternal mortality rates have tripled since the mid-90s. Meanwhile, over five million Zimbabweans face severe food shortages and are dependent on international aid [...] ZANU-PF’s longstanding assault on political freedoms and civil rights lies at the heart of Zimbabwe’s humanitarian crisis. (Human Rights Watch 2009: 3)

A frequently employed trope in narratives of crisis and decline, invoked to stress the extent of the degeneration, is the notion that Zimbabwe has gone

from being the ‘bread basket’ of Africa to a ‘basket case’ (Willems 2005; Pilossof 2009). For instance, Power (2003)¹⁷ asks,

How could the breadbasket of Africa have deteriorated so quickly into the continent's basket case? The answer is Robert Mugabe, now seventy-nine, who by his actions has compiled something of a "how-to" manual for national destruction.

Those who have sought to explain Zimbabwe’s crisis often argue, like Power (2003), that President Mugabe and his party are largely, if not entirely responsible for the country’s economic decline. Indeed, this focus on ‘internal dynamics’ represents one of the main positions in an ongoing debate concerning who is to blame for Zimbabwe’s crisis (Freeman 2014). Accounts which place responsibility for the crisis squarely on the shoulders of the President have pointed to his mismanagement, thirst for power, and greed as the primary cause of Zimbabwe’s ‘collapse’ (see Rotberg 2000; Meredith 2002; Lessing 2003; Mlambo 2003; Power 2003; Clemens and Moss 2005; Nyathi 2005; Magaisa 2006; Compagnon 2010). Those who produce this explanation for Zimbabwe’s economic crisis sometimes make reference to other factors such as the legacy of colonialism and white minority rule (see Rotberg 2000; Compagnon 2010), or the role of the IMF and the World Bank in the failure of the Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) (see Magaisa 2006), but their overwhelming focus is on the actions of the President and his party¹⁸.

Others have sought to move beyond ‘Mugabe-centric’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b) explanations of the crisis by discussing its multiple internal, external, historical and contemporary causes (see Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003; Moore 2003; Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010; Bourne 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012b). According to Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003: 203), ‘the crisis is not about a single issue, neither is it rooted in a one-off event or single historical trajectory, nor is it the predictable outcome of an assumed

¹⁷ See also: The Economist (27 June 2002), Lee (2003), News24 (22 November 2004), DiManno (2010), Crush and Tervera (2010) and Hunt (2011).

¹⁸ For example, Compagnon (2010: 269) argues that the collapse of Zimbabwe is the predictable outcome of Mugabe’s leadership and while he does make reference to the legacy of white minority rule as a contributory factor, his use of language minimises its significance: ‘Somehow and beyond the fate of Mugabe and his cronies, the Zimbabwe crisis is a distant legacy of Ian Smith’s white minority regime and the obtuse repression of African nationalism’.

pattern of “failed states” in post-colonial Africa.’ Similarly, Mlambo and Raftopoulos (2010) identify a ‘constellation of factors’ including 90 years of colonial rule, the World Bank/IMF-inspired ESAP, the authorisation of unbudgeted gratuities and monthly pensions to war veterans, the deployment of soldiers into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the fast track agrarian reform, and the targeted economic sanctions by the international community.

Zimbabwe as a state under threat from Western imperialism

The way in which members and supporters of the ruling party discussed the 2011 uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and the Middle East built on earlier constructions of Zimbabwe as a state under threat from Western imperialism. Just as international events such as the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003 were used by commentators at the time to argue that Zimbabwe’s sovereignty is under threat (Tendi 2010a), NATO’s military intervention in Libya in March 2011 was cited as a warning that Zimbabweans should be vigilant against Western aggression carried out under the guise of human rights and freedom:

[O]ur revolution is a continuous process as the enemy is always retreating and re-strategising and waiting for the most opportune moment to strike. And in Libya, they seized the opportunity presented by the minor disturbances in that country to pounce... Once again, the world has been hoodwinked, just as it was when Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries were invaded. Never listen to the nonsense about human rights, freedom and some such rainbow terms that the West use to smokescreen the truth, the heart of the matter is oil . . . just as they are salivating at our vast natural resources. (Financial Gazette 25 March 2011; see also Amengeo 2011)

This construction of Zimbabwe as a state under threat from Western imperialism was well established by 2011. Around the start of the 21st century, the ZANU-PF government championed the ‘Third Chimurenga,’ the third struggle against imperialism in Zimbabwe after the uprisings against colonialists in 1896-1897, and the liberation war in the 1960s-

1970s. The ruling party told Zimbabweans that the time had come for them to engage in a struggle for full political and economic independence:

Remember Zimbabwe is under attack; our sovereignty is under fire from the very same imperialist forces which took it away more than a century ago [...] We seek to complete the realisation of the objectives of our just struggle by dismantling everything that attenuates our sovereignty and sovereign right to our heritage and resources, principally land; by empowering our people through greater say and control over our resources, indeed by challenging a political economy which yields a two race nation, yields a white leisure employer class while the black majority wallows in poverty, serfdom and indigence. We have to be ready; we have to gather courage for the enemy is back on parade, for we either get back into our trenches or we surrender as a slave nation. (Mugabe 2001: 71)

While the invocation of past glories is a common feature of nationalism which aims to produce a unified culture (Hall 1995), the excavation of liberation war memories, images, songs and anti-colonial rhetoric around the start of the 21st century is thought to be linked to growing support for the opposition party, the MDC, at that time (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems 2009). While the ruling party had engaged in ‘memory politics’ in previous election periods, the use of ‘scripturalised memory’ in the lead up to parliamentary elections in 2000 is said to have been ‘more intense, transparent and cynically nostalgic’ (Sylvester 2003: 31). By constructing Zimbabwe as once again under attack from imperialists, ZANU-PF could argue that the only way the country will remain in safe hands is if Zimbabweans vote for the party that played a central role in its liberation in the past, and will continue to struggle against imperialist interference and aggression in the future:

ZANU-PF is the true fighter for the people and their rights, and the MDC uphold the interests of imperialists and colonialists thereby working against the people and their rights (President Mugabe quoted in Zimbabwe Mail 2010).

Indeed, one of the main ways in which the ruling party and their supporters have delegitimised the MDC over the years is by constructing it as a party without liberation war credentials (Willems 2005; Ndlovu Gatsheni and Willems 2009).

This construction of Zimbabwe as a state under threat from Western imperialism is part of a broader nationalist project which divides the world into patriots and external and internal enemies of Zimbabwe (Raftopolous 2004). Like the invocation of past glories, the identification of internal and external Others who pose a threat to the nation is a common feature of nation building (Cohen 1995; Anderson 2013). Indeed, in the following section I will explore the way in which a speech about immigration by Prime Minister David Cameron in 2011 reproduced a well-established mode of representing migrants as a threat to the cohesion of communities.

David Cameron's speech on immigration and representations of migrants as a threat

On the 14th April 2011, a week before I interviewed Mary, David Cameron delivered a speech to Conservative Party activists in Romsey outlining the British government's plans to reduce immigration (Cameron 2011a). The Prime Minister started by pointing out that Britain has 'benefited immeasurably from immigration' however he went on to argue that 'for too long, immigration has been too high' and this has 'placed real pressures on communities up and down the country'. He suggested that these pressures extend beyond those placed on schools, housing and healthcare to include social pressures:

[R]eal communities aren't just collections of public service users living in the same space. Real communities are bound by common experiences, forged by friendship and conversation knitted together by all the rituals of the neighbourhood, from the school run to the chat down the pub. And these bonds can take time. So real integration takes time. That's why, when there have been significant numbers of new people arriving in neighbourhoods perhaps not able to speak the same language as those living there on occasions not really wanting or even willing to integrate that has created a kind of discomfort and disjointedness in some neighbourhoods.

As Cameron's talk of 'real' communities being bound by common experiences and shared rituals illustrates, modern states such as Britain construct themselves as a 'community of value composed of people who share common ideals and (exemplary) patterns of behaviour' (Anderson

2013: 2).¹⁹ By suggesting that the arrival of people without the necessary language skills or desire to integrate has created ‘discomfort and disjointedness’ in neighbourhoods, the Prime Minister constructed migrants as a threat to the cohesion of communities.

Criticisms of Cameron’s speech tended to centre on its tone and its unfair problematisation of migrants. The Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Vince Cable, told the BBC that the Prime Minister’s choice of words was ‘very unwise’ and that ‘talk of mass immigration risked inflaming extremism’ (BBC 14 April 2011). The tone of the speech was also criticised by Trilling (2011), writing for *The Guardian*, who referred to it as a ‘dog whistle for the right’. According to Trilling, the speech pandered to racism and indicates that David Cameron is happy to invoke the rhetoric of Enoch Powell when it suits him. Unite Against Fascism (2011) also criticised the Prime Minister for offering dangerous encouragement and endorsement to racists by feeding the myth that Britain is somehow being flooded by immigrants.

A further criticism of the speech was that the condemnation of migrants who are unable to speak the same language as their neighbours is unfair given that the Coalition government had made severe cuts to funding for ESOL classes and stopped allocating money to the Migration Impacts Fund²⁰ (Durnan 2011; *The Guardian* 15 April 2011; Hunt 2011; *The Independent* 2011; Lee 2011; Trilling 2011).

An alternative response to Cameron’s argument that new arrivals cause discomfort and disjointedness in neighbourhoods was that he had merely confirmed what everyone knows but politicians rarely ‘admit’ (see Chapman 2011; Dudley Edwards 2011; Newton Dunn and Schofield 2011). According to Ruth Dudley Edwards, writing for *The Telegraph*, the Prime Minister should be applauded for ‘admitting that people are profoundly

¹⁹ A speech delivered by Tony Blair in 2000 provides further illustration for the argument that national belonging is commonly defined by commitment to a set of core values (Gilroy 2012; Anderson 2013). Blair argued that ‘True Britishness lies in our values not in unchanging institutions’ before identifying ‘core British values’ as ‘fair play, creativity, tolerance and an outward-looking approach to the world’ (Blair 2000).

²⁰ The Migration Impact Fund was introduced in 2009 with the aim of helping public service providers cope with the transitional pressures of immigration.

disturbed by the havoc that mass immigration has wreaked on parts of Britain' (Dudley Edwards 2011). She went on to state that she does not blame immigrants for failing to integrate, rather 'the blame lies at the feet of our rulers for failing to set clear boundaries by requiring them to learn English, respect British culture and obey the house rules' (Dudley Edwards 2011). Similarly, the associate editor of *The Sun*, Trevor Kavanagh, argued that the Prime Minister had merely told the truth about the impact immigration is having on society. According to Kavanagh, if Cameron had spoken as 'honestly' during the TV debates (in the run up to the general election) as he did during his speech on immigration in April 2011, he would have won the election outright (Newton Dunn and Schofield 2011). This framing of the Prime Minister's utterances as common sense is a rhetorical strategy used to convince others that they should be accepted as such, as once a particular perspective is deemed common sense, it is extremely difficult to challenge (Hall 1998).

Migrants as a threat

The way in which David Cameron justified reducing immigration in his speech to Conservative party members in April 2011 built on previous representations of migrants as a threat to the cohesion of communities (see Fortier 2010; Mulvey 2010). Over the decades, politicians representing the main political parties in Britain have argued that immigration controls are required to maintain good race relations (Solomos 1993). As part of the long-standing association between migrants and problems (Schrover and Schinkel 2013), the attitudes and behaviour of migrants have been identified as the main cause of community cohesion problems (Mulvey 2010).

The Coalition government's predecessor, a Labour government in power from 1997-2010, also constructed migrants as both an asset and a potential source of unease for 'settled communities' (Fortier 2010). In the foreword to the 2002 White Paper, *Secure Borders, Safe Havens: Integration with Diversity* (Home Office 2002), the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, wrote:

the tensions, as well as the enrichment, which flow from the inward migration of those arriving on our often wet and windy shores, must be understood, abated and addressed... to ensure that we sustain the positive contribution of migration to our social well-being and economic prosperity, we need to manage it properly and build firmer foundations on which integration with diversity can be achieved.

The Labour government's proposed approach to minimising the 'tensions' caused by migration was immigration control combined with an integrationist agenda (Young 2003). The government's emphasis on integration can be regarded as part of a broader shift away from multiculturalism that was occurring in Britain at the time (Lewis and Neal 2005; Alexander 2007; McGhee 2008; Julios 2008; Bagguley and Hussain 2008; Fortier 2010; Vertovec 2010). In the wake of the civil disturbances in Burnley, Oldham and Bradford and the attacks on New York's Twin Towers in 2001, people were questioning the value of multiculturalism (Lewis and Neal 2005; Kundnani 2007; see The Economist 2001; Young 2001). A report commissioned by the government after the disturbances in the north of England in 2001 argued that there is an urgent need to promote community cohesion, as communities in Britain are living 'parallel lives' (Cantle 2001).

One of the ways in which the Labour government sought to achieve 'integration with diversity' was to change the process by which migrants obtained citizenship. In *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity*, the Home Secretary argued that becoming British through naturalisation is an important step in the process of achieving integration in society and yet 'some applicants do not have much practical knowledge about British life or language' (Home Office 2002: 32). He went on to suggest that this not only has the potential to make those individuals 'vulnerable and ill-equipped to take an active role in society', but may 'contribute to problems of polarisation between communities' (Home Office 2002: 32). As McPherson (2010: 546) points out, in political contexts where conformance by 'outsiders' is emphasised, 'migrants and refugees are represented as problematic, deficient and in need of changing'. In Britain, one of the main vehicles through which migrants have been taught 'our values' and problematic subjectivities have been rectified (McPherson

2010) is the Life in the UK Test. This multiple choice test assesses whether individuals seeking British citizenship fulfil the requirements for naturalisation set out in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. Applicants are required to have sufficient knowledge of a language for the purpose of making an application; sufficient knowledge of life in the United Kingdom; and make a citizenship oath and pledge at a citizenship ceremony.

After the London bombings in July 2005, the stakes in integrationism reached new heights (Kundnani 2007; Bagguley and Hussain 2008). In January 2006, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, argued that Britain's ability to meet the security challenges ahead 'requires us to rediscover and build from our history and apply to our time the shared values that bind us together' (Brown 2006). Later that year, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, stressed that while people have the 'right to be different', they also have a 'duty to integrate' (Blair 2006a). He argued that while Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and other faiths have a right to their own identity and religion, 'what gives us the right to call ourselves British' is a set of 'essential values', namely 'belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage' (Blair 2006a). This emphasis on 'integrating at the point of shared, common unifying British values' (Blair 2006b) illustrates how the integrationist agenda was further developed in the post 7/7 context (McGhee 2008).

The Coalition government, which came to power in 2010, continued this integrationist agenda (Redclift 2014). Apart from Cameron's problematisation of migrants who cannot speak English and are not 'even willing to integrate' in April 2011, earlier that year he criticised 'state multiculturalism' for encouraging 'different cultures to live separate lives' (Cameron 2011b). At the Munich Security Conference in February 2011, the Prime Minister argued that 'we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism'. According to Cameron, this entails the promotion of values such as freedom of speech,

freedom of worship and democracy, and ‘practical things’ such as ‘making sure immigrants speak the language of their new home’ and ‘ensuring that people are educated in elements of a common culture and curriculum’.

In a context in which integration has come to be regarded as a personal process (Schrover and Schinkel 2013), those deemed insufficiently integrated have been held accountable for not making enough effort to integrate (Vasta 2007; Mulvey 2010; Spencer 2011). However, as criticisms of Cameron’s April 2011 speech illustrate, this tendency to blame migrants for failing to integrate has not gone unchallenged. The Coalition government, and the Labour government before them, were criticised for not only failing to remove the barriers to integration encountered by migrants, but for actually hindering their integration (see Bloch 2003; Bloch and Schuster 2005; Sales 2005; Mulvey 2010; Da Lomba 2010; Camilo 2010). Policies the Labour government introduced in an effort to deter the arrival of forced migrants such as detaining asylum applicants, housing them in areas outside of the south east of England in an effort to ‘relieve the burden of provision in London’ (Home Office 1998: 8.2), and withdrawing their right to work, were condemned for delaying and undermining the integration process (see Bloch 2003; Bloch and Schuster 2005; Sales 2005; Mulvey 2010; Da Lomba 2010; Camilo 2010). As previously discussed, criticisms were also levelled at the Coalition government for blaming migrants for not being fully integrated into British society whilst simultaneously cutting funding for initiatives and organisations that support their integration such as the Migration Impact Fund, ESOL programmes, and the Refugee Council’s Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) (see Wintour 2010; Shepherd 2011; Hill 2011). Critics of government policy and rhetoric which has hindered the integration of migrants have repositioned the source of integration problems from migrants to policy-making processes (Mulvey 2010).

Debates concerning whether the Matabeleland region is marginalised and constructions of the people of Matabeleland

In June and July 2011, around the time that I interviewed Fred, a series of government ministers from the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe²¹ publicly dismissed the notion that Matabeleland residents are marginalised. These denials of marginalisation seem to have been prompted by comments made by Welshman Ncube, the president of the MDC-N party and a minister in Zimbabwe's unity government, during an interview in June 2011. Ncube argued that the government must act decisively to stop the marginalisation of Matabeleland before people from the region lose patience (Paul 2011; The Herald 20 June 2011). He warned that recent calls for the secession of Matabeleland²² may receive more support in the future if people in other regions of Zimbabwe continue to receive preferential treatment. Following Ncube's comments, the Vice-President of ZANU-PF, John Nkomo, asked:

Can't we consign this term and put it in history?...Who is marginalising you?...It is just inertia and dragging your feet. This is your country and the resources are yours. If you are called upon to do work, you should not drag your feet. (Tshuma 2011)

ZANU-PF chairman, Simon Khaya-Moyo, spoke in similar terms about the people of Matabeleland, arguing that they had become 'cry-babies' who point the finger at the political leadership 'while they sit on their laurels and wait for unprophesied development messiah to liberate them from the shackles of marginalisation bondage' (Ncube 2011a). ZANU-PF Politburo member, Naison Khutshwekhaya Ndlovu, added his voice to the debate by dismissing claims of marginalisation as 'beerhall talk' and referring to those

²¹ Matabeleland is situated in the west and south west of Zimbabwe. The region was the site of the Mthwakazi nation (also referred to as the Ndebele nation) from the 1840s until 1893 when British South Africa Company troops defeated the Ndebele army in the Anglo-Ndebele war (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b). Narratives of Zimbabwe's pre-colonial history describe how the nation was founded by Mzilikazi Khumalo who left present day South Africa around 1820 and trekked north with his followers, eventually settling in the region now known as Matabeleland in the early-1840s (Raftopoulos and Mlambo 2009).

²² The calls for the secession of Matabeleland referred to by Ncube include those made by the Mthwakazi Liberation Front, a political movement launched in Bulawayo in 2010. One of its main rallying cries is the marginalisation of people from Matabeleland (see Newsday 17 April 2011).

who complain of marginalisation as otitisi (small dogs) (The Herald 4 July 2011). Ndlovu suggested that jobs in Matabeleland were being filled by people from outside the region because ‘we are leaving for South Africa’. Building on Nkomo’s point that people in Matabeleland were dragging their feet, Ndlovu inadvertently suggested that people in the region only have themselves to blame for their position by stating that ‘those from other provinces were also backward at some point but they worked hard to be where they are’ (The Herald 4 July 2011).

A common response to these dismissals of marginalisation by government ministers from Matabeleland was to frame them as an act of betrayal (see Mlotshwa 26 June 2011; Moyo 2011). Others reiterated that Matabeleland *is* marginalised and argued that this is part of an ongoing process in which the people from the region are punished for the lack of support they have shown the ruling party in elections over the decades. For instance, an article in *Newsday* published in June 2011 stated that ‘threats were made in the past to the effect that development would not be brought to the region if the people kept on voting against Zanu PF, and they were carried out’ (Tutansi 2011). Similarly, an article by Dumisani Nkomo on the *ZimDiaspora* website connected the present day economic marginalisation of Matabeleland and the violence perpetrated by the fifth brigade during the Gukurahundi period in the 1980s:

How can Nkomo have the temerity of accusing Ndebeles of being lazy, cry babies when his government has presided over the wholesale genocide and economic degradation of Bulawayo? (Nkomo 2011)

The people of Matabeleland as long suffering victims of discrimination and persecution

Representations of the Matabeleland region as marginalised reproduced an existing construction of Matabeleland residents, and Ndebele-speaking people in particular, as the long-suffering victims of discrimination and persecution. This construction of the people of Matabeleland has been produced by media commentators, academics and groups calling for the

secession of Matabeleland and the Midlands from the rest of Zimbabwe. Like the media commentators above, some argue that the economic marginalisation Matabeleland residents are currently experiencing, like the suffering caused by the fifth brigade soldiers in the past, is politically motivated (see for example Eppel 2003; Guma 2009). In an article posted on the *New Zimbabwe* website in 2006, Khanyisela Moyo refers to the Ndebeles as ‘a long-term politically persecuted minority...persecuted in the sense that their region has to suffer the consequences of bad policies made by a government that they have not chosen and have continuously shown their disapproval of’ (Moyo 2006). The Gukurahundi is also described by Moyo (2006) as politically motivated, ‘a tool for absorbing his [President Mugabe’s] party’s principal rival, Nkomo’s Zapu, thus creating a defacto one-party state.’ Similarly, Ian Phimister argues that the ‘overriding intention’ of the Gukurahundi ‘was the destruction of ZAPU and the political re-orientation of the region’s inhabitants’ (Phimister 2008: 209). According to Phimister, the inhabitants of Matabeleland were turned into an ‘essentialised other’ but this was never done solely on ethnic grounds. However, he goes on to state that ‘given the close correlation between ethnicity and political support for ZAPU in Matabeleland’...‘this fine distinction was doubtless lost on victims’ (Phimister 2008: 210). Indeed, others have argued that the economic marginalisation of Matabeleland and the Gukurahundi were ethnically rather than politically motivated. Some of the strongest pronouncements on this have been produced by groups calling for the secession of Mthwakazi (Matabeleland South, Matabeleland North and the Midlands) from the rest of Zimbabwe such as Umhlahlo we Sizwe sika Mthwakazi, the Mthwakazi People’s Convention and the Mthwakazi Liberation Front. For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011b), calls for an independent Matabeleland can be understood as ‘a response to realities and perceptions of exclusion, marginalisation and confinement to second class citizenship of Ndebele-speaking people that began in 1980’. Indeed, an article by the Mthwakazi People’s Convention posted on the Inkundla²³ website states:

²³ The target audience of Inkundla website appears to be ‘Mthwakazi people’ in the diaspora. The website states that Inkundla was launched at a time when ‘it was very hard to get information for those in diaspora’ and to provide a ‘networking tool for many homesick Mthwakazi children’ and to ‘allow

What development can Mugabe point to that his government has done in Matabeleland and Ndebele-speaking parts of the Midlands, if these provinces are part of Zimbabwe, in 25 years of his tragic and sorry rule?...No, uMthwakazi is not blind Mr Mugabe. From the enforced starvation of Gukurahundi in the 1980s to the enforced thirst of 2005, we can clearly see your evil political hand against uMthwakazi. (Mthwakazi People's Convention 2005)

Apart from economic marginalisation and the persecution experienced during the Gukurahundi period, calls for the secession of Matabeleland and the Midlands have emerged as a response to Shona triumphalism and hegemony (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012a), the widespread use of the language of the dominant *ethnie* on television and radio programmes and in the naming of basic commodities in Zimbabwe indicates that the country is being turned into an ethnocracy. Similarly, Ndlovu (2009: 135) argues that 'the Shona language is gradually... assuming the role of *de facto* official language of Zimbabwe.' Reacting to media reports that lectures at the National University of Science and Technology in Bulawayo had been conducted in Shona, the Mthwakazi Liberation Front issued a press statement that the use of Shona in place of English, the official language of business and education in Zimbabwe, is 'further evidence of the existence of a secret grand programme of Shonalising all facets of the Mthwakazi nation' (Magagula 2011). For the Mthwakazi Liberation Front and other groups calling for the secession of Matabeleland, the 'Shonalisation' of Zimbabwe is an important reason for restoring the Mthwakazi state.

While Ndebele particularism has its antecedents in the pre-colonial and colonial eras (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a), the government's failure to build a united nation and the violence it unleashed on the Matabeleland and Midlands regions in the early 1980s is thought to have played an important role in strengthening Ndebele consciousness and affiliation in the post-colonial period (Alexander et al. 2000; Huyse 2003; Lindgren 2005; Masunungure 2006; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009a; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009b).

Mthwakazians to continue to maintain their culture and tradition' (see www.inkundla.net).

Summary

In this chapter I have described aspects of the ‘vast argumentative texture’ (Laclau 1993) the interview talk both derived from and contributed to. Given that the argumentative texture out of which people construct their reality *is* so vast, it was necessary for me to be selective about which aspects of this texture to describe. Three debates occurring in the public realm during the period in which I conducted the interviews were discussed to situate the interviews temporally. The chapter started by taking debates concerning the uprisings occurring in North Africa and the Middle East in 2011 as a point of departure for exploring competing constructions of Zimbabwe. This was followed by a discussion of the way in which a speech about immigration delivered by David Cameron in April 2011 built on previous constructions of migrants as a problem and a threat to the cohesion of communities. The final part of the chapter took as its starting point a series of statements made by politicians in Zimbabwe in June and July 2011 denouncing the claim that the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe is marginalised. I explored the way in which those who participated in the debate reproduced and contested representations of Matabeleland residents, and Ndebele speakers in particular, as the long-suffering victims of discrimination and persecution.

Of the three debates discussed in this chapter, the first about Zimbabwe resonates most strongly with the interview accounts presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. It was not possible to map the range of subject positions, constructions of Zimbabwe, arguments concerning whether Britain has a problem with racism, and linguistic resources for talking about place attachments available to the men and women I interviewed. Selecting three debates occurring at the time the interviews were conducted was deemed a useful device for situating the interview talk in a broader discursive context, and providing a sense of some the subject positions and linguistic resources available to the men and women I interviewed.

Having provided an introduction to the study and outlined its conceptual framework (Chapters One and Two), described the research process and

situated the interview talk temporally (Chapters Three and Four), the following three chapters will present my readings of the interview accounts.

~ 5 ~

Subjects

Since I have undertaken to reveal myself absolutely to the public, nothing about me must remain hidden or obscure. I must remain incessantly beneath his gaze, so that he may follow me in all the extravagances of my heart and into every corner of my life. Indeed, he must never lose sight of me for a single instant, for if he finds the slightest gap in my story, the smallest hiatus, he may wonder what I was doing at that moment and accuse me of refusing to tell the whole truth.

-Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1782/1985)

The focus of this chapter is the way in which the life history interviews I conducted with UK residents from Zimbabwe in 2011 were a site for the discursive construction of subjects. The discursive approach to identity posits that our exposure to multiple discourses encourages varied and fluctuating identities (Alvesson 2002). This conceptualisation of identity as the unfinished product of discourse owes a great deal to Foucault's genealogy of the subject (Barker and Galasinski 2001). Foucault explored the way in which the subject is constituted as an effect of power/knowledge regimes rather than a stable universal entity (Mansfield 2000). However, while Foucault's work paved the way for discourse analytic studies of identity, it did not provide an adequate account of the mechanisms by which individuals identify or do not identify with the subject positions made available to them (Henriques et al. 1984; Hall 1996). While some have turned to the unconscious in an effort to understand the reasons subjects identify or do not identify with the positions they are summoned to occupy (see Henriques et al. 1984; Hall 1996; Mamma

1995; Frosh et al. 2003; Gough 2004), others have directed their attention to the interactional context in which people position themselves in discourse (see Wetherell 1998). Positioning theory argues that it is not only culturally available discourses which offer us positions from which to speak but those with whom we are interacting (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). The importance of the interactional context is also stressed by the synthetic approach which argues that while individuals are positioned by discourse, it is accountability rather than 'discourse' *per se* which fuels the take up of subject positions (Wetherell 1998: 394). This chapter builds on the work of those who have turned to the interactional context in an effort to understand the process by which individuals identify or do not identify with the subject positions made available to them (see Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999; Wetherell 1998) by exploring the way in which those who took part in the interviews took up subject positions in an occasioned way.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the men and women I interviewed were asked to tell me the story of their life with the hope that these accounts would provide an insight into migration in the context of social transformation. During the process of conducting the interviews however, it became increasingly apparent that while moving to the UK was an experience they all shared, the extent to which they were willing to afford this experience any significance in their life story, and therefore the extent to which they were willing to be defined by it, varied considerably. It also became clear that not all of the men and women I interviewed were willing to accept the way I framed our interactions as a means for me to obtain the information I required to write a thesis. In this chapter I will discuss how, apart from challenging my positioning of them as disinterested and compliant research participants by framing our interactions in alternative ways, some of the interviewees undermined the way I positioned myself as a researcher.

Another dimension of the life stories I found compelling was their highly mediated nature. This chapter will explore how interviewees employed well-established narrative templates and took up culturally available subject

positions in the process of producing an account of their life. Drawing on a selection of short interview extracts, the first part of this chapter explores the way in which when people talk about their lives they recapitulate established narrative forms (Elliot 2005); they are fabricated into the social order because it is virtually impossible to speak outside of discourses (Foucault 1979); and they engage in a dynamic process of positioning themselves, positioning each other, and rejecting, ignoring and accepting the positions made available to them (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). The second part of the chapter presents two case studies which provide a more detailed discussion of the way in which the life history interviews I conducted were a site for the recapitulation of established narrative forms and the negotiation of subject positions. It also explores the way in which the interviewees constructed themselves as subjects narratively by producing life stories which focused on particular periods in their lives.

Part one: The take-up and negotiation of subject positions

The construction of narratives and subjects within discourse

We all have unique experiential histories but the way we narrate them recapitulates cultural frames of reference (Atkinson and Silverman 1997). Producing an account of one's life may be characterised as a speech experience which is shaped and developed in continuous interaction with others' utterances (Bakhtin 1986). There are a range of established narrative forms that people may turn to in order to make sense of their experience and communicate that experience to others (Elliot 2005). For instance, McAdams (2005) demonstrates that one of the major narratives around which Americans organise their lives is the redemption narrative; they talk about their life as a positive trajectory from negative beginnings. By employing culturally available frameworks to structure their experiential history, narrators take up culturally designated subjectivities (Smith and Watson 1996:9).

During the process of conducting the interviews it was Zweli who drew my attention to the dialogical nature of autobiographical storytelling (Smith and

Watson 1996). Zweli, who was very reflexive about how he was narrating his life experiences, suggested that he was inspired by Rousseau's (1782/1985) *The Confessions* which he had recently re-read. Rather than focus on a particular aspect of his life such as his career or faith, Rousseau (1782/1985) sought to provide a comprehensive and truthful exposition of his entire life (Mansfield 2002). By describing his 'crimes' and ruminating on how particular incidents have made him the person that he is, Rousseau's autobiography exemplifies the modern secular confessional mode of constituting the self as subject (Gutman 1998; Spengemann 1998). Reflecting on the way Rousseau (1782/1985) exposes all his faults, Zweli told me that he intended to produce a complete and honest account of his life as this is what would make his life story 'relevant'. Zweli employed the confessional mode of constituting the self as subject by revealing past 'indiscretions' and discussing the way in which particular incidents have shaped him as a person. For instance, he confessed to stealing food from the school tuck shop and talked about the way his perception of human beings was altered by a humiliating incident at school in which a statement he made about a sexual encounter with his girlfriend was read out in assembly as punishment for being caught with her. Zweli's life story, more than any other, demonstrated to me that our speech assimilates, in more or less creative ways, the utterances of others (Bakhtin 1986).

While the obvious nature in which Zweli employed a culturally available narrative template was unique amongst the ten men and women I interviewed, all of them constructed their life stories within discourse. This is because discourse governs what it is possible to say and the kind of person one can be within a particular historical context (Foucault 1979). The rest of this section will present a reading of how two of the interviewees, Tsungi and Samantha, were fabricated into the social order (Foucault 1979) when they spoke about their lives.

During the interview Tsungi constructed herself as a hardworking, responsible and determined person. Early in her narrative she explained that she got pregnant when she was in high school which led many to conclude that she

had ‘completely failed’ and would ‘never become anything’. ‘Fortunately’ her mother ‘coped with it very, very well’ and with her support, Tsungi completed her GCSEs, went to college and found a job. Later she studied part-time which enabled her to progress in her career. Tsungi explained that when she moved to the UK in the early 2000s in the context of Zimbabwe’s worsening political and economic situation, she had to work hard to build a career for herself whilst providing for her children and parents. Unable to secure a job in the sector she had worked in prior to moving to the UK, she studied for an access to university course and a degree whilst working night shifts. Tsungi stressed that she refused to claim benefits as she has not grown up in this culture so she was not going to start now. She lamented the ‘dependency on the welfare system’ in Britain and argued that it has produced a lot of people who are ‘beyond helpless because they think someone else is going to sort out their problem for them’. Tsungi ended her life story by stating that although she and her children miss Zimbabwe, they have taken full advantage of the opportunities available to them in the UK and as a result, they have achieved a lot. Neo-liberal rhetoric with its stress on personal responsibility and maximising opportunities (Evans and Sewell 2013) appears to be a powerful mediating force in Tsungi’s account. The neo-liberal ideology which extols entrepreneurial citizens who seek opportunities and are self-reliant has had diffuse but powerful effects on the global social imaginary since the end of the 20th century (Jensen and Levi 2013). Portraying herself as a hardworking and self-sufficient UK citizen appears to have been particularly important for Tsungi in order to counter negative representations of migrants as people in search of ‘handouts’:

T: when you’re foreign and doing well people think you are having handouts. It doesn’t matter where you are in the world, people think, ‘Oh you come here and you’re in England, you must be having a handout, that is why you are driving your car,’ whereas you’re not, ok. I’ve never, I’ve been brought up in a culture where you try and work hard and give as much, and that’s the principle that we’ve grown up with.

Related to the autonomous, calculating, self-reliant subject of neo-liberalism is the active, freely-choosing, self-monitoring subject of post-feminism (Gill 2008; McRobbie 2009). At the heart of both is the tendency to render one’s life knowable and meaningful through a narrative of free choice and

autonomy, however constrained one might actually be (Gill 2007). Samantha's life story illustrates how important it is in the neo-liberal and post-feminist era for young women to describe their lives in terms of deliberative choices (Gill 2008). The career path she has taken was presented as personally selected on the basis that 'if you push yourself you will achieve it, there is nothing standing in your way'. She explained that her mother had aspirations for her to become a doctor but this was rejected on the basis that she has no 'passion' for medicine. Her mother's pleas for her to get married and have children as soon as possible have also gone unheeded as she needs to 'know what real love is', not just get married 'for the sake of it'. She did, however, suggest that while she would like to delay motherhood until she is 30, due to the pressure she is receiving from her mother, she will probably have a child when she is 25.

Another feature of the post-feminist sensibility is the notion of being oneself and pleasing oneself (Gill 2007) and echoes of this could be found in Samantha's account of how she has been on a 'quest to find [her]self' since she ended her former relationship a few months before the interview. She explained that this has involved 'concentrating on me, what do I actually like' because when you are in a relationship 'you don't get to actually find out who you are'. She described how she enjoys going out and meeting new people and whereas in the past she felt the need to 'show respect and be kind and don't talk until you're spoken to, if a guy comes flutter your eyes and whatever', now she has 'no shame'. Samantha characterised the process of discovering 'the real me' as an enjoyable experience.

Positioning within the interview

So far I have explored how some of the men and women I interviewed employed culturally designated narrative templates and took up available subject positions in the process of producing a story of their life. However, it is not only discourse which provides subject positions for speakers to take up; those present when the narrative is produced may also offer the narrator particular positions from which to speak (Davies and Harre 1999). One

speaker positions another (and simultaneously positions him/herself) by producing a storyline and implicitly or explicitly giving the other person a part in that story (Davies and Harre 1999; Van Langenhove and Harre 1999). The invitation to take up a particular subject position is not always accepted however; in some cases the speaker does not realise he/she has been offered a part in a story, while in other cases he/she resists being positioned in this way (Davies and Harre 1999).

The advertisement I used to identify people from Zimbabwe who would be willing to tell me their life story suggested that I expected people to speak *as* migrants (see Appendix B). Illustrating Harding's (2006:1) point that 'the research strategy and the interview process create specific subject positions for interviewees to take up, which they in turn variously negotiate, modify and, possibly, refuse', some of the men and women I interviewed appeared to recognise and accept my request for them to adopt a migrant subject position by detailing the circumstances that informed their decision to leave Zimbabwe, comparing life in the UK to life in Zimbabwe, and talking about their place attachments. Other interviewees either did not realise that my 'imagined research subjects' (Holstein and Gubrium 1995; Rosenblatt 2001) were migrants, or they recognised but rejected my attempt to position them in this way. This culminated in a diverse collection of life stories including those which focused on particular life experiences, and those which appeared to provide a more holistic overview of the interviewee's life from childhood until the present.

Apart from assuming that the people I met would speak as migrants, I took it for granted that the men and women I interviewed would accept my framing of our interaction as a research encounter and my positioning of myself as a researcher. This assumption was soon challenged, however, as the first person I interviewed positioned himself as an eligible bachelor and positioned me as a potential matchmaker and partner. During the process of talking about his life, Jacob suggested that he is keen to get married but 'the culture here makes it difficult to find someone'. He described the qualities he has to offer ('I'm so caring and loving...I can give 100%') and the type of woman he is looking

for (a ‘simple person’ who ‘enjoys life’ and does not spend time ‘arguing for nothing’). As the interview progressed it became increasingly apparent that he regarded the interview as an opportunity to find such a person:

J: They [his cousins] are always mocking me, always. I say ‘No I will do it.’ [get married] I know I will do it one day [...] Do you have friends yourself?

L: Yes but I can’t think of anyone who is single.

J: You never know, you know most people will say ‘I’ve got my boyfriend, my partner but ah we are having problems.’ Those people like that are valuable to me.

Jacob positioned me as a matchmaker again later in the interview:

J: What you do is, when you go back, when you see these girls just keep my face in your mind. I’ll keep in touch with you, we are good friends from today. Just imagine, then say to them ‘I’ve got a friend of mine, do you want to meet him?’ Then I will say ‘When? I’m available.’

L: I’ll bear it in mind.

At the end of the interview he suggested that we meet again, positioning me on this occasion as a potential partner:

J: You have got your partner, I know you have got your partner, I respect that, just as friends, then we will see how..I will just come to London and we will meet, just for drinks and then you will see if the chemistry is there.

People engaged in interaction do not always have a shared perspective of what ‘this sort of occasion’ is (Davies and Harre 1999), and judging by accounts in the literature, it is not uncommon for interviewees to frame the research encounter as a sociable one (see Arendell 1997; Vähäsantanen and Saarinen 2013). As Alldred and Gillies (2002) point out, being flirted with during the research process feels uncomfortable and disorientating because it undermines the professional role.

My interview with Patson also challenged my framing of the interview as a research encounter. Patson positioned himself as a political activist from the outset by suggesting that we meet in London on the day he was due to give a speech at an event organised to raise awareness about destitution amongst asylum seekers in the UK. We met a few weeks later and as I switched on my

tape recorder and placed it between us, he made a joke which underlined the politically sensitive nature of what he was about to say:

P: What are you going to do with this one? [the tape recorder]. Do you work for the Robert Mugabe regime? [laughter] I'm joking! [laughter] I'm joking!

Patson's life story chronicled a lifetime of political activism from becoming a member of the trade union in his first job, to his present day efforts to raise awareness about human rights violations in Zimbabwe and the plight of asylum seekers in the UK. He described how as a consequence of his trade unionism and involvement with the MDC party in Zimbabwe, he was dismissed from several jobs, imprisoned and eventually had to flee the country as his life was in danger. After providing an account of his experience of applying for asylum in Britain, Patson talked about his political and civil society activism and his efforts to help Zimbabwean asylum seekers. He concluded his life story by saying that he is settled in the UK and would like to apply for naturalisation, but while there are destitute Zimbabweans not eating, he cannot afford to naturalise.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Patson told me to use his actual name so that other people could verify his story. Until this point it had not occurred to me that the men and women I interviewed may have an imagined audience in mind as they sat and talked to me about their lives. Patson's argument that retaining all identifying information is crucial for enabling others to determine the facticity of his account suggests that he expected his life story to contribute to prevailing understandings of the treatment of political opponents in Zimbabwe and asylum seekers in the UK. As Alvesson (2002) points out, researchers tend to regard the interview as a knowledge-pursuing project in which interviewees are eager, or at least willing, to share their experiences and knowledge for the benefit of the interviewer, however interviewees may be politically motivated actors who have an interest in how socially significant issues are represented.

Also highlighting the dynamic process in which interviewers and interviewees position themselves and each other during the interview was Zweli's repeated attempts to undermine my positioning of myself as an impartial researcher. At the start of the second interview, Zweli told me that he had been thinking about our previous meeting and was concerned that he came across as 'someone who just wanted to carry on with their story' without asking me questions in return. He proceeded to ask me about 'my background' and why I was interested in 'Zimbabwean stories'. Later in the interview he turned the gaze on me again by asking whether I am religious:

Z: Do I like religion? I think..probably it is good but on a cynical view most people really don't look in-depth at what religion is and it's contribution [...] That's the other thing I reflected that I never, before I fully exposed myself, one of the things I didn't ask you is 'Are you religious? Before I actually offend you.

L: But it shouldn't really matter whether I'm religious or not, you should be able to express your own thoughts about religion, you know, without worrying about whether or not it is going to offend me.

Z: I know but that's the thing, I didn't ask you 'Are you religious?' Then if I said what I actually thought about religion.

In response to Zweli's question I suggest that whether or not I am religious should be of no concern to him. My deflection of his question and my argument that he should speak freely about religion without worrying about whether he is causing offence indicates to Zweli that I expect him to interact with me as an impartial researcher, not as a person with thoughts and feelings.

Zweli went on to state that having heard about his past 'indiscretions', I have probably formed opinions about his character. In response, I reassert my position as a neutral researcher by insisting that the purpose of the interviews is not to form judgements about interviewees:

Z: I consider myself as liberal but probably looking at some of the indiscretions I described during my boarding school you will be thinking, 'Even if you are liberal you will be transgressing on other people's lives and you are trampling on other people's feelings' -

L: -But I'm not here to judge you.

Z: No I know that.

L: I'm not here to say 'That's correct behaviour, that's incorrect,' I'm just interested in your life story.

Despite my efforts to disentangle the role of the interviewer from the act of making value judgements, Zweli is all too aware that listening to him reveal his 'indiscretions' gave me the opportunity to judge him. Indeed, the act of listening to a person talk about his/her experiences, thoughts and emotions while saying very little about him/herself in return puts the listener in a privileged position vis-à-vis the speaker. As Foucault (1976/1998: 61-62) points out:

The confession is a ritual ... that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile.

The exchange continued with me suggesting that one thing I do need to consider is how my 'identity' is implicated in the interview process:

L: I mean that is something I have to reflect on, about how when I come and meet people they don't see me as, I've got an identity-

Z: -You've got feelings. That is what I wanted to say, that because of that I didn't want to just say some things to the point of offending.

L: I mean I've got an identity in that I'm British, I'm white, I'm a woman so that will affect the interaction. Like you were saying, if I was Zimbabwean perhaps it would have been a different conversation.

Zweli's positioning of me as someone who has feelings undermines my efforts to 'do' neutrality (Rapley 2001) in the interview. I implicitly reject his positioning of me as a person with feelings by repositioning myself as an impartial researcher, albeit one with 'an identity' which affects the interview interaction. This repeated positioning of myself as a neutral researcher may be understood perhaps as an indication of the power of the vessel-of-answers model of the research subject (Gubrium and Holstein 1995). This conventional perspective of the research subject as a passive repository of information cautions researchers that interviewer and question neutrality is

key to obtaining accurate information from interviewees (Gubrium and Holstein 1995).

Summary

Part one of this chapter began with a discussion of the way in which narrators turn to established narrative forms to make sense of their experience and communicate that experience to others (Elliot 2005). I discussed the way in which this was made apparent to me by Zweli who, employing *The Confessions* (Rousseau 1782/1985) as a narrative template, produced an account containing revelations of his past ‘indiscretions’ and reflections on the way particular experiences have shaped him as a person. Next, the life stories of Tsungi and Samantha were used to illustrate the notion that narratives and subjects are constituted within discourse. I explored the way in which Tsungi positioned herself as a neo-liberal subject by employing neo-liberal rhetoric concerning hard work, personal responsibility and maximising opportunities. This was followed by a discussion of how Samantha took up a post-feminist subject position by emphasising her autonomy and stressing the importance of being oneself and pleasing oneself. I went on to explore how the interviews were not only an occasion for the take up of culturally available subject positions, but a site in which speakers positioned themselves and each other. I started by discussing how some of the men and women I interviewed challenged my positioning of them as interviewees by redefining the interaction as a social occasion and an opportunity to raise awareness about ‘gross human rights violations’ in Zimbabwe and the plight of asylum seekers in the UK. This was followed by a discussion of Zweli’s efforts to undermine my positioning of myself as an impartial researcher by drawing attention to my capacity to judge others and be offended during the interviews.

Part Two of this chapter will explore these features of the interview talk in more depth by providing a detailed discussion of the life stories of two interviewees, Steve and Sarah. Case studies are useful for theoretical

exemplification (McAdams and West 1997) and these accounts were chosen on the basis that they demonstrate most powerfully the argument that speakers may construct themselves as subjects narratively by structuring their life story in a particular way (Elliott 2005).

Part Two: Case studies

Memoirs of an exiled white Zimbabwean farmer: Steve

Steve's life story started with a brief overview of the first 30 years of his life before focusing on the events which led to his departure from his farm in the early 2000s. He brought his life story to a close at the point at which he left his farm and moved to the UK in the context of the harassment and killing of those who owned and worked on commercial farms in Zimbabwe. The structure of his life story makes it more akin to a memoir rather than an autobiography since the former tends to focus on a portion of a life (usually an obsessive or troubled one), a pathological experience, or an experience of victimhood (Nuttall 1998: 80). Indeed, in this section I will discuss how Steve's life story builds on a particular genre of memoirs, produced by white Zimbabweans since the start of the 21st century, which centres on personal experiences of the economic crisis and the land occupations in Zimbabwe (see for example Buckle 2001; Wiles 2005; Rogers 2010; Freeth 2011).

Despite differences in their tone and quality, there is enough overlap in memoirs produced by white Zimbabweans since their plight became international news in 2000 for them to be grouped together as the latest version of Zimbabwean 'white writing' (Pilossof 2009; Simoes da Silva 2011; Law 2016). One feature of these memoirs is their 'disconcerting silences' (Pilossof 2012; Law 2016). Pilossof (2012) points to the way in which these writers criticise the government's land reform programme without acknowledging that land and poverty were pressing concerns for a large proportion of the population. Furthermore, these writers go to great lengths to demonstrate how hard farmers like them worked to create their own success, neglecting to mention the hard work performed by their black

farm workers, and the considerable support white farmers received from the Rhodesian government (Pilossof 2012). Law (2016) focuses on elisions concerning the liberation war, specifically the failure of many of these writers to contextualise their own personal understandings and experiences of the conflict. She notes how many of these authors write about this period from the perspective of their childhood selves which allows them to avoid discussing, even briefly, why the war was being waged.

Playing out alongside their ‘disconcerting silences’ are their continuations with colonial forms of writing (Pilossof 2012; Primorac 2010). Pilossof (2012) problematises the manner in which Africa is treated as a homogenous entity by a number of these writers, as indicated by their use of the term ‘Africa’ when referring specifically to Zimbabwe. ‘Africans’ are often denied individuality or agency, and in some cases they are reduced to stereotypes which have their origins in the colonial era (Primorac 2010).

Another prominent feature of this genre of memoirs is their preoccupation with questions of belonging and identity (Harris 2005; Pilossof 2009; Simoes da Silva 2011; Law 2016). Following President Mugabe’s denouncement of reconciliation and the international media’s portrayal of white Zimbabweans as victims of/in their ‘homeland’, many writers have constructed white Zimbabwean identity through a discourse of victimhood (Harris 2005; Simoes da Silva 2011; Pilossof 2012). As an illustration of the overriding narrative of victimhood in this genre of writing, Pilossof (2012: note 82) points to the inclusion of a poem in Buckle’s (2001) memoir *African Tears* which opens, ‘White Africans don’t need a yellow star/for you to know just who they are’. Similarly, in his memoir *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, Godwin (2006: 266) draws a parallel between ‘the white in Africa’ to the ‘Jew everywhere –on sufferance, watching warily, waiting for the next great tidal swell of hostility’. This ‘seemingly harmless narrative move’ has been criticised by Simoes da Silva (2011: np) for absolving white Zimbabweans of any responsibility for their complicity in the creation of the present status quo by suggesting that they are ‘*only* victims, rather than victims now but also perpetrators in the not too distant past’.

Apart from their preoccupation with identity, many of these memoirs ruminate on the loss of belonging and the distress of exilic longing (Simoes da Silva 2011). This sense of feeling weighted to 'Africa' by their memories, families, homes and belongings, despite no longer having a place they can call home is referred to by Pilosof (2009) as the 'unbearable whiteness of being'. Having described some of the features of the white Zimbabwean memoir genre, I will now discuss how Steve appeared to use these memoirs as a narrative template for his life story.

The discursive production of an exiled white Zimbabwean farmer

Steve emailed me in response to an advert I placed in *The Zimbabwean* newspaper, introducing himself as 'a white Zimbabwean ex-farmer of British descent, who has lived in UK since 200X following the land invasions'. We met a few weeks later in the town in England in which he lived at the time of the interview. He opened his life story with the following words:

S: I was born in what was Southern Rhodesia in 196X. My parents had a farm in Africa which had belonged to my father's family. My father was born in Africa and his mother came from Britain [...] she went to Africa in the 1920s [...] My dad's father was an American who went to seek his fortune and ended up staying in Africa. They bought property, they owned a lot of property and they did very well.

Steve staged a claim to his Africaness (Simoes da Silva 2011) from the outset by narrating how he and his family had lived in Africa for decades. He went on to describe how racial segregation and a conflict 'we referred to' as the 'Bush War'²⁴ formed the backdrop to his entire childhood. The narrative continued with an account of independence and its immediate aftermath:

S: 1980 came and many of our family and friends left the country because they couldn't live, they thought they couldn't live under a ..black majority

²⁴ 'Bush War' was the referent used by the Rhodesian government and their supporters to describe the civil war that took place between the Rhodesian security forces and people they called 'terrorists' from the mid-1960s until 1979, while those they were fighting against referred to themselves as 'nationalists' waging a 'liberation war'. Thus, Steve's statement positions him as part of the collectivity who supported the Rhodesian government's cause (at the time at least), and simultaneously acknowledges that people with different political affiliations had an alternative set of terms for describing the war and its protagonists.

rule government but our family decided to stay and we didn't want to give up what we had and we thought we would adapt to the new situation and see what that would bring. And ...it went from that, I mean it wasn't always rosy after independence but it was better than we thought it would be. We were reassured, I mean the Mugabe government reassured white people and told them not to leave, promised us....that our land would be left alone, we believed it.

The way in which Steve talks about his family's decision to remain in the country following independence appears to be orientated to persuading his immediate/imagined audience that his family could not have anticipated the events which precipitated their decision to leave their farm because they were progressive people who trusted the new government's reassurances that white people could keep their land.

Steve builds on this notion that his family could not have predicted that the state would seize land from white farmers a little later in his life story:

S: [in the late 80s and early 90s] life was quite good to be honest, economically the country was doing quite well. We had put up with a lot of anti-white rhetoric but most people ignored it, they thought it was all... rhetoric really.. and didn't believe that they would take people's property without compensation, no one thought that, at heart.

Before starting his more detailed narrative of the events leading to his departure from Zimbabwe, Steve built further on this notion that his family could not have foreseen 'what happened later':

S: we thought we were very secure and had done quite well. And I would also like to think that attitudes had started to change amongst...especially in my generation and downwards. The older generation still clung to..I think they had slightly more racist views and I'm not claiming that we had none but..I think our relationship with our.. black countrymen was, I know it was getting better, it was definitely improving and that's what makes what happened later for me, I find it quite a betrayal is how I felt, yeah.

This account of racialised relations in Zimbabwe getting better lends further weight to his earlier point that his family could not have predicted that one day he and his father would feel compelled to leave their farm in the context of (mainly white-owned) commercial farms being occupied, seized by force and claimed by the state; the implication being that this made the experience all the more shocking and traumatic.

The beginning of Steve's more detailed narrative of the events leading to his departure from his farm and Zimbabwe was marked by the following statement:

S: the first..serious.. warning shot I suppose you'd like to call it was in late '97. Um, it's what's known in Zimbabwe as Black Friday in which the currency collapsed overnight, the stock exchange was devalued by half.

He went on to state that in the context of growing dissatisfaction amongst 'ordinary people', President Mugabe 'designated a whole batch of land' in an effort to 'regain some of his popularity' he had lost by ruining the economy. This framing of the land reform programme as a set of policies motivated entirely by concerns about 'ebbing popularity' is common in the memoirs of white Zimbabweans (Pilossof 2012).

The 'next defining moment' after the designation lists was the constitutional referendum in April 2000 which, 'to the government's shock', 'went against them'. According to Steve, this was of great significance to the white population of Zimbabwe:

S: we were jubilant because the majority of the white population also voted 'no' and we felt vindicated. We at long last started to feel that we were part of the country, you know and we were on the same side, for once, as the right side. Because we all knew that what had happened previous to independence with racial discrimination, we all knew inherently that it was wrong and I do think people accepted afterwards that a mistake had been made, that's how I think.

Echoing the preoccupation with belonging in the white Zimbabwean memoir genre (Harris 2005; Pilossof 2009; Simoes da Silva 2011; Law 2016), Steve identifies the constitutional referendum in 2000 as a 'defining moment' for the white population as they finally started to feel as if they were 'part of the country'. His concession that 'what had happened previous to independence with racial discrimination' was 'wrong' illustrates the way in which in the post-colonial moment of post-1980 Zimbabwe, foregrounding an awareness of the inequities of the society one is recounting is intrinsic to the narratorial posture (Simoes da Silva 2005).

Steve spent a significant amount of time describing the build-up to the 2002 presidential election in Zimbabwe. He argued that the ‘government made ..doubly sure’ that they stayed in power by sending ‘gangs of thugs’ to intimidate farm populations and party officials asking farmers for funds as a ‘subtle form of intimidation’. Steve described how, in the context of growing anti-white rhetoric and increasing levels of propaganda on television, he began to think, ‘this is how... genocide can happen’. Around this time a family friend was murdered, although the incident was ‘passed off by the police and by the government as a burglary gone wrong.’ He went on state:

S: in the meantime there were countless murders of black opposition people that have, to this day probably haven’t all been discovered and counted because the world’s press are more interested in...more high profile people [...] the murder of a white farmer counts on their news a lot more than an arbitrary black person and that’s how it is, that’s unfortunate.

Here, as before, Steve appears to be orientating to the way in which, in the post-colonial moment of post-1980 Zimbabwe, ‘stories of self are constrained by a heightened awareness of the privilege- now in effect coded as a burden of whiteness’ (Simones da Silva 2005:476). This narratorial posture was adopted again later when he provided an account of the reaction of white Zimbabweans to the Abuja Agreement²⁵:

S: the next thing that happened was um the African Union of countries convened a conference in Nigeria [...] in which Mugabe’s government agreed that the farm invasions would stop, that it would be done in a transparent manner, with the help of the international community to fund the compensation [...] and we thought well this is a good start [...] because even the most hardcore white Zimbabwean knew that..the white people owned a lot of the best land and were prepared for the eventuality that....but we thought we’d be compensated for it basically.

He went on to describe how, despite the Abuja Agreement and the fact that his farm was not listed for acquisition, part of his land was occupied. Steve and his father carried on farming because ‘things in Africa take a long time, the law is slow, we thought perhaps after a while they will get sick of it or sense

²⁵ The Abuja Agreement on Zimbabwe was signed in Abuja, Nigeria on 6th September 2001. The agreement recognised that ‘land is at the core of the crisis in Zimbabwe’ and that ‘a programme of land reform is, therefore, crucial to the resolution of the problem’ (Tendi 2010a:97).

will prevail and they will be moved off, you know'. This framing of Africa as a homogenous entity²⁶ represents one of the defining feature of the white Zimbabwean memoir genre (Philosof 2009).

During what Steve referred as the 'lead up to the final lead up', his uncle was instructed by the political commissar of the district to leave his farm within 60 hours and a number of his friends were imprisoned for 'breaching their evictions orders'. These incidents, which occurred when Steve was in the UK visiting his sister, acted as 'a turning point' and he decided that when he got back to Zimbabwe he would prepare to leave his farm 'at his own pace'. He spent around nine months 'planning for the end'; packing, selling off equipment and livestock, and calculating retrenchment packages for his staff. Steve ended his life story by stating that he moved to the UK in [month] 200X and a month later his farm was finally listed:

S: they only did ours after we'd left, I think it took them a while to realise we'd left, because I never told any of my workers that I was leaving the country, they actually all thought we were going to live in the capital...and I let them think that because.....Yeah I think that's all really.

The way in which Steve produced a more detailed narrative of the years leading up to his departure from his farm, and ended his life story at the point of departure, imbued this experience with great significance as narratives impose meaning on events and experiences not only through explicit evaluation, but also via the act of structuring them into a story (Elliott 2005).

The remainder of the first interview, and the entire duration of the second followed a conventional question and answer format. During these exchanges, Steve consolidated further the exiled white Zimbabwean farmer identity he had constructed for himself in the process of producing his life story. In response to my first question concerning his experience of living in

²⁶ This is not the first or last time Steve uses the term 'Africa' in this way. Later in the interview, when explaining his decision not to follow in the footsteps of other Zimbabwean farmers and move to Mozambique, Malawi or Zambia, he stated, 'I thought to myself I had had enough of Africa for a while, I did, I didn't want any more of that. I mean it's very rewarding and very beautiful in one way, and it can spoil you. But then there's the other side to it which, when I'd left I'd had enough of'.

the UK, he stated that he had been ‘very well accepted’. Indeed, some people seemed to regard him as a returnee to Britain:

S: It surprised me when people would say to me, ‘so you’ve come back then’ and I’d be like...you can’t come back if you’ve never...But everyone presumed that because I have a, well my surname is an English surname so there was instant acceptance for me. It would probably be different for other people who have had to leave their own countries.

Apart from disavowing the notion that he has returned to Britain, Steve constructed himself as an exile by aligning himself with other people who have been forced to ‘leave their own countries’. Later in the interview I asked him whether he could imagine going back to Zimbabwe if the political situation changed. He replied that he does not think that it will go back to where he wants it to be so the best he can hope for is compensation (for improvements to the land). He went on to position himself as an exile by describing his reasons for moving to the UK:

S: I thought, ‘I’m going there for five years, I want British citizenship and I want the protection of a Western country’. Out there I felt we had lost all protection and rights because we were assumed to be the wrong colour, which is ironic given the history.

Like others before him, Steve constructs white Zimbabwean identity through a discourse of victimhood (see Harris 2005; Simoes da Silva 2011; Pilosoff 2012) by suggesting that white Zimbabweans are people who have lost all protection and rights because of their ‘colour’.

Elsewhere, Steve constructed an exiled white Zimbabwean farmer identity by comparing himself to those remained in Zimbabwe:

S: Ya it [leaving his farm and Zimbabwe] was seen as, I hope not cowardly because actually someone else said to me that what I did was very brave, which I think was too, to change my entire way of living and to challenge everything I knew and go to do something completely different. Sometimes I think I had more guts than them to be honest because I’m afraid a lot of people I still am in contact with have told me about those people that have remained, they exist as a shadow of their former selves in this sort of twilight world of wishful thinking that perhaps things will come back to what they were. They won’t, it’s almost ten years since this has all kicked off.

Illustrating the point that an important dimension of the construction of identities is the process of drawing boundaries between oneself and others (Hall 1996), Steve constructs himself as more courageous than those who remained in Zimbabwe. His portrayal of those who have stayed in Zimbabwe as people who exist in a 'sort of twilight world of wishful thinking that perhaps things will come back to what they were' resonates with Kalaora's (2011) discussion of how white commercial farmers who have remained on their farms have been portrayed as mad by those who have left.

Building on the white Zimbabwean memoir genre's concern with exilic loss (Simoes da Silva 2011), Steve spoke at length about his sadness of being away from home and how his move to the UK was accompanied by a loss of status:

S: I felt like I had taken a step down the rung to be honest, you are suddenly a little fish in a great big pond whereas, you know, we had been a big fish in a small pond is how I look at it. I think it was a drop in status, I do because..you know there we were the land barons. I know that might, I don't want it to sound...boastful or anything but that's how.. your position in society was there. Your dealings with banks and with companies and with people you met, it put you on a par with...well in society we, the farmers in Zimbabwe, were the sort of landed gentry is the equivalent I can use to here, that is how it was.

The 'drop in status' Steve experienced when he left his farm and became an exile in Britain is described with metaphorical flourish as taking 'a step down the rung'. The imagery he uses of suddenly becoming 'a little fish in a great big pond' after being 'a big fish in a little pond' helps him convey the diminution of his relative privilege when he moved from Zimbabwe to Britain. His expressed concern that his description of (commercial) farmers as 'the land barons' of Zimbabwe may sound 'boastful' illustrates the way in which speech acts are orientated towards presenting oneself in a morally adequate light (Rapley 2001).

Steve talked further about the loss of status that accompanied his move to Britain when I asked him whether his sense of who he is has ever been called into question by somebody else, whether in Zimbabwe the UK:

S: Gosh I don't know really.... I still feel I am who I am from there but no one here knows that, that's the trouble [laughing] [...] my house [in the UK] is on the edge of a field [...] and the farmer [...] saw my father standing on the edge of his field [...] and he quite um haughtily wanted to know what he was doing there and um my dad was also quite friendly and my dad ended up telling him that he had come from Zimbabwe and had farmed there. I felt like going out and saying, 'Have you any idea? We are not just some..tramps walking along the hedgerow.' I felt like saying, 'We own several thousand more acres than you do.' But actually, or do we? I hope that doesn't sound too arrogant either because I like to think Zimbabweans are fairly down to earth...Yes our farms defined us.

In response to my question concerning whether his identity has ever been challenged by others, Steve suggests that he still feels like the person he was in Zimbabwe but unfortunately no one in the UK recognises him as such. Thus, people in the UK challenge his sense of who he is by failing to relate to him as someone who would be the equivalent of 'landed gentry' in Zimbabwe. Indeed, he tells a story of a farmer asking his father what he is doing on his land to illustrate this problem. The accounting work that occurs in interviews (Rapley 2001) is illustrated further by Steve's stated concern that he sounds arrogant, as he likes to think that 'Zimbabweans are fairly down to earth'.

Summary

In this section I explored how Steve marked his experience of being compelled to leave his farm as an extremely important moment in his life by structuring his life story in particular way. Apart from producing a more detailed narrative of the years leading up to his departure from his farm, he imbued this experience with great significance by ending his life story at the point at which he left Zimbabwe. I went on to discuss how the exiled white Zimbabwean farmer identity that emerged from his life story was consolidated further when he responded to questions I asked. Building on the white Zimbabwean memoir genre, Steve's talk across both interviews contained reflections on belonging and exilic loss, and constructed white Zimbabwean identity through a discourse of victimhood.

Memoirs of a traumatic childhood: Sarah

I interviewed Sarah on three occasions in the city in which she has lived since she moved to the UK from Zimbabwe around 30 years ago. Her life story may be described as a trauma narrative as it details traumatic childhood experiences, interspersed with reflections on the long term impact these experiences have had on her life, and the ‘coping strategies’ she has employed. Traditionally used to refer to a bodily wound, the word ‘trauma’ has increasingly come to be associated with a damaged psyche caused by a distressing experience (Luckhurst 2003; Robson 2004). The availability of narrative frameworks for producing personal accounts of traumatic experiences, and publics who are prepared to believe these accounts, varies by cultural context (Leydesdorff et al. 1999). For instance, at various times and in different locations, accounts of sexual assault have been ‘absolutely prohibited, categorized as mad or untrue, or rendered inconceivable’ (Martín Alcoff and Gray-Rosendale 1996: 203). In the last few decades, testimonies of violence from genocide to interfamilial abuse have become more audible/visible in the public sphere (Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín 2013). For Luckhurst (2003), a new kind of subject, defined by their experience of trauma, emerged in advanced economies of the West in the 1990s. This subject position was brought into being by a conjuncture of discourses from a variety of professional, political and cultural sources (Luckhurst 2003). One important site for the production of traumatised subjects has been the memoir genre where there has been a ‘boom’ in trauma narratives (Gilmore 2001).

Finding an expressive outlet for traumatic experiences has long been cited as therapeutic by psychiatrists (Gilmore 2001). Illustrative of the notion that verbalising suffering is key to recovery is Freud and Breuer’s (1893/1991) advancement of the ‘talking cure’ and Jung’s (1959/1990) argument that the healing of trauma only begins when the traumatised person is able to transform traumatic events into a coherent narrative (Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín 2013). The idea that individuals need to ‘let go’ of their private troubles by sharing them with others is also deeply embedded in popular culture in the West due to the pervasive influence of the therapeutic ethos (Furedi 2004;

Rimke and Brock 2012). Therapeutics has acquired a powerful influence as a source of meaning in contemporary society, particularly for making sense of who we are (Furedi 2004).

Despite the widely held assumption that talking or writing about traumatic experiences provides a means of recovery, such experiences are often framed as unrepresentable in some crucial way (Gilmore 2001). By exceeding the mind's capacity to assimilate or understand them, traumatic experiences seem beyond language (Robson 2004: 12). For instance, Langer (1991:61) refers to Holocaust oral testimony as

living commentary on the limits of autobiographical narrative, when the theme is such unprecedented atrocity...The issue is not merely the unshareability of the experience but also the witness's exasperated sense of a failure of communication.

Particular experiences may also seem unspeakable because they are disavowed in particular contexts (Robson 2004). Countering historical mutings and the erasure of violence by bearing witness to experiences that others have attempted to hide or deny can be a means of converting pain into social cause (Haaken 1994; Martín Alcoff and Gray-Rosendale 1996). Within the sexual violence survivors' movement, 'speaking out' is regarded as a means of educating society about sexual violence and misogyny, and a way for people to make the transition from victim to survivor (Martín Alcoff and Gray-Rosendale 1996). People who have survived large-scale organised violence have also stressed that it is imperative to describe what one has experienced to raise awareness about the atrocities committed. A report on the Gukurahundi, compiled by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and the Legal Resources Foundation, states that its aim is to

break the silence surrounding this phase in the nation's history, by allowing approximately one thousand people who have approached the report compilers in the last year, a chance to tell the stories they want told. (CCJP 1999: 14)

In the process of telling their story, survivors of violent acts often strive to inhabit a collective subject position in order to bear witness for those who are unable to do so (Pohlman 2008). By speaking/writing in the first person plural

and interweaving individual experiences with those of the collective, narrators attempt to provide a collective testimony (Robson 2004).

The rest of this section will explore the way in which the interviews I conducted with Sarah provided a site for the narrative construction of a traumatised subject. I will also discuss how her use of frames of reference from psychology and psychiatry served to position her as a subject of therapeutic culture.

The discursive construction of a traumatised subject

The structure of Sarah's life story was broadly chronological, although her narrative was interspersed with reflections on her relationship with her mother and the personal/collective suffering caused by the Gukurahundi. Once she reached a particular point in her life story when she was 13 years old, narrative gave way almost entirely to ruminations on her mother, the Gukurahundi, the way her childhood experiences continue to affect her today, and the 'coping strategies' she has employed. I made two attempts to encourage Sarah to continue her narrative beyond aged 13 and on both occasions she recapitulated previously narrated experiences and produced further reflections on her relationship with her mother, the impact of her traumatic childhood and the Gukurahundi.

Sarah opened her life story with a short description of the first few years of her life:

S: Well I was born in [the 1970s] in [Matabeleland] and then, to my understanding, I was born to a young mum, my mother was young when she gave birth to me, so she couldn't look after me, so I ended up in an extended family situation umm... hence my living in the countryside, I was sent to grandparents, my granddad, who I miss dearly, every day I think about him.

She interrupted her narrative to explain to me 'the mother thing':

S: I never bonded with her obviously because she left me when I was young, I think apparently I was only nine months old with one tooth [laughter] [...] Umm even when I met my birth mother, we couldn't bond, it was, I was 14, I was too old, you know I was all grown up [...] But I think in fairness as well there was neglect, once I was here as well, I think she neglected me.

Sarah's description of her relationship with her mother demonstrates how modern subjects often talk about themselves and their relationships with others through 'psy' discourses (Rimke and Brock 2012). Her account of how she has not bonded with her mother because she was left with extended family when she was a baby contains reverberations of attachment theory²⁷ (see Bowlby 1969). More generally, the notion that a child's early emotional experience has an important bearing on their psychological wellbeing as an adult is an underpinning assumption of emotional determinism (Furedi 2004). Given that, within therapeutic culture, emotional damage in childhood is regarded as a predictor of emotional problems in adulthood (Furedi 2004), Sarah's account of how her mother left her when she was a baby can be heard (at least by those who are also subjects of therapeutic culture) as an indication that she has been emotionally scarred by this experience. In the context of her trauma narrative, this account of how she was left by her mother as a baby may be heard as her first traumatic experience.

Returning to her life story, she described her memories of the Gukurahundi:

S: one day we got up in our compound and suddenly we had to flee, we had to run. All I remember is just noises everywhere, my ears still ring, yeah, I can't explain what it was from but my ears ring...and when they say it is psychological now I understand because I thought it was something, I thought it was a medical issue. But yeah we woke up and there was banging sounds, I don't know if it was grenades or whatever that was, there were different noises, people shouting and yelling, people running away, you know being grabbed left, right and centre. It was a proper, proper war zone and I was a child, I must have been what five, six when all this was going on. Didn't understand a thing.

Sarah builds further on her earlier construction of herself as a traumatised subject by suggesting that her experience of the Gukurahundi continues to affect her emotionally to this day. She does so by explaining that she suffers from ringing in her ears which has been diagnosed as a psychological rather than a medical condition. By speaking in the first person plural ('we got up in our compound and suddenly we had to flee'), Sarah's traumatic experience is 'tightly interwoven with that of the collective' (Robson 2004: 158).

²⁷ This theory posits that if a child is separated from his/her mother for an extended period, he/she is likely to enter into a state of 'detachment' (Bowlby 1969).

Reflecting on the collective suffering of Gukurahundi survivors, she stated:

S: No one has grieved, it's been 20 years, and we haven't grieved anything or even consoled each other. It's almost like we are all going to die with pain, aching hearts.

Continuing her narrative, Sarah described how she and her cousins were taken to town by her aunt (referred to here as Auntie D) and whilst they were there, her grandfather returned to the compound and was killed by fifth brigade soldiers. She described the emotional impact of her grandfather's death in the following terms:

S: Up to today, this is the first time I can actually talk about it, to that extent. The rest we guess, I guess, but haven't got the courage to talk to somebody and say, you know, 'What day was it?' It's almost like, what's the word? You try to forget, but it's not going away [...] Sometimes it's the first thing in the morning as I get up. I don't know if it's the grievingbut it's almost like, his image is just always there, I see this man, I'm even trying to see his face, remember I was a child, I can't picture this thing. And then the recalling of them juking him, I see that, and I try to guess which road they would have taken him from our compound, would they have gone round the cows like that or would they have gone the other way, just trying to make sense....of it.

Given that trauma has been framed as difficult to verbalise and unrepresentable in some crucial way (Gilmore 2001), Sarah's account of how she has been unable to talk about her grandfather's death serves to position this as a traumatic experience. Her description of how the imagery of her grandfather's murder does not go away, despite her efforts to forget, can be heard as a disclosure of how his death affects her day-to-day life as an adult.

Sarah continued her narrative by describing how Auntie D was unable to keep the family together and she was sent to live with her mother's husband (referred to here as Mr N). She stated that she is not sure how long she lived with Mr N and his extended family but she has 'wonderful memories' of the time she spent there. When Sarah's mother and Mr N separated, her mother arranged for her to go and live with relatives. She described how she has awful memories of living in this household as 'there was abuse that went on, physical abuse, sexual abuse'. After providing a sense of day-to-day life in this household, Sarah recounted a particular incident in which she was beaten by her aunt. She described how when the wounds on her back re-opened at

school the next day, her teachers and her father were made aware of the physical abuse she had been suffering:

S: So Mrs X, our first aider, lovely English lady, dealt with me there and then, cleaned it up and gave me pain killers, I remember they were in an envelope and I was hiding them. Can you imagine this level of abuse is going on in this country and no one has got power to do anything about it? It is there!..and no one has power to do anything. It's only now that people will talk about it, even the incest abuse, they always seem to be underneath, almost like it doesn't happen. Totally, totally rubbish, of course it happens! People need to be brave and talk about it and put a stop to it.

Sarah argues that talking about sexual abuse is a means of putting a stop to it as it is the hidden nature of such abuse which makes it seem as if it does not happen at all. This echoes the survivors' movement mission to encourage survivors' disclosures of their traumas and 'break the silence' that surrounds sexualised violence (Martín Alcoff and Gray-Rosendale 1996).

Sarah went on to explain that she got pregnant at 13 years old:

S: But unfortunately, while I was there, this is where the natural birth mother comes in.....through the abuse, I was 13 by then, so 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, yeah you're talking of four years of the same cycle just going on, on a daily basis. And I fell pregnant... at 13.....So again...I ran away...I ran away... because not only was I a pregnant child but I was an abused pregnant child, and I was still getting beaten up whilst I was pregnant.

This marks the end of her chronological narrative. She went on to describe the long term emotional impact of what she endured as a child:

S: I studied psychology, just to correct me, just to correct me because I knew I was messed up, psychologically, emotionally, I knew I was messed up. I did a one year course in psychology just so I can understand just what is going on rather than going to counselling. Why not counselling? Because I was ashamed of myself. Literally I was so ashamed of being me because almost everything about me is negative, there's nothing positive about me and I think she, the wicked mother, instilled some of those ideas in my mind. [...] obviously now I've got children of my own and there's a lot of things I've had to reverse, child neglect and all these things, I corrected that myself.

Here Sarah reproduces a central premise of the self-help genre that individuals can understand and correct the self by using the knowledge and expertise of professionals acting at a distance (Rimke 2000). Her reference to reversal ('now I've got children of my own and there's a lot of things I've had to reverse') reproduces the idea that victims of interfamilial abuse and neglect are at risk of replicating such patterns of behaviour with their own children unless they take steps to 'break the cycle' (see Alexander 2014). According to Furedi (2004: 29), 'the belief that abuse begets trauma which in turn leads to abuse has acquired the status of a truism'.

Later in the interview, Sarah talked about another strategy she has employed to deal with the long-term emotional impact of the traumatic experiences she has endured: she has avoided remembering the date her father and grandfather died in order 'to keep the memories alive':

S: My memory is daddy passed away the night before Princess Di passed away. What date was it? I can't remember. So it's almost like a protective measure, I block things out. I can't even remember the day or the month granddad disappeared, or the year, I don't want to remember! That's why it's fresh, it's like it's yesterday. Is that a coping mechanism that I've adopted to keep the memories alive?

As Sarah's use of the terms 'protective measure' and 'coping mechanism' illustrate, trauma narratives are 'overtly didactic, owing much to therapeutic and motivational discourses' (Douglas 2010: 117).

Expanding on how she copes with the emotional impact of her traumatic childhood, Sarah described how talking to her children helps. Building on this notion that talk is therapeutic, she suggested that sharing stories could help Gukurahundi survivors:

S: I actually got the idea of starting a group, like a support group for the Gukurahundi, for people to share stories and counsel each other, maybe that might get somebody going. That's why I appreciate what you are doing, because it's a start, to talk about it. This is where we need to move forward, we need to make it public, for everybody else to know what has gone on and the aftermath of that.

In her account of how she has considered setting up a support group for Gukurahundi survivors, the act of sharing stories is framed as both therapeutic and a potential catalyst for political action ('maybe that might get somebody going'). She goes on to self-reflectively frame the very process she is engaged in (talking about her experiences in a research interview) as a political act as it is helping to raise awareness about the Gukurahundi and the impact it has had on individuals and communities ('it's a start, to talk about it. This is where we need to move forward, we need to make it public').

Sarah argued that Zimbabwe will not be 'at peace' until Gukurahundi survivors are given the opportunity to bear witness to what happened:

S: These things need to be told, not just swept under the carpet, like the people we lost meant nothing. Even your worst enemy you tell, you know, 'He died a horrible death.' It's so inhumane to just leave it like this, it would be a travesty to just leave it like this. That country will not heal. That country will not be at peace until this problem has been resolved.

This account of how Zimbabwe will not 'heal' until Gukurahundi survivors are given the opportunity to talk publicly about their experiences illustrates Furedi's (2004) point that the language of therapeutics is increasingly being applied to collectivities as well as individuals. The way in which Sarah talked about the Gukurahundi and ethnicised relations in Zimbabwe in this and subsequent interviews served to position her as a subject of discourses which construct Ndebele people as the long-suffering victims of persecution and marginalisation (see Chapter Four). While it is not possible to explore this in detail here, the following quote gives an indication of her take up of this subject position:

S: Why is the Gukurahundi being side-lined? He [President Mugabe] went there to kill and he killed. That is the ethnic cleansing of another group of people.

After Sarah had talked for some time about the Gukurahundi and her family, I made an attempt to encourage her to talk about her life beyond age 13. She responded to my question with a brief response before returning to talk about her family:

L: So you came [to the UK] when you were 14?

S: Yeah. Him [Sarah's brother], he was born in [the 1970s] in [city in the UK] and he lived with her [Sarah's mother]...I think for a couple of years, while [Mr N] came back [to Zimbabwe].

She went on to describe the years she lived with Mr N, thereby declining my implicit request for her to talk about her life since she moved to the UK. Later in the interview, I made a further attempt to encourage her to continue her narrative:

L: So you said you ran away at 13. Could you tell me more about that?

S: I went to [Auntie D], remember I said I met [Auntie D] after school?

This narrative continued with an account of how difficult it was for her to see Auntie D and her father whilst she was living with the relatives her mother had arranged for her to live with. She also returned to her inability to move on from what she experienced as a child:

S: So I'm a lucky human being that I came through it, unscathed is debatable isn't it [...] It would be nice if there was just a little dot remaining rather than a whole area. It would be nice to think, 'Oh that happened many years ago' but at the moment it feels like yesterday.... It's like time stood still for me. I don't know whether it's because I was a child when I experienced these things, my mind hasn't moved on.

When we brought the interview to a close as the memory on my tape recorder was full, Sarah was recounting stories about atrocities committed by fifth brigade soldiers that she had heard/read about:

S: Why would you burn an old woman in her hut? In fact, there was another old lady, they burnt her son alive in the hut....they locked him and others in the hut and set it alight while she was watching.

By incorporating the experiences of others into her life story, Sarah attempted to move beyond the articulation of individual trauma to bear witness to collective suffering. After the interview I was keen to meet her again as the life story she produced seemed incomplete as it focused on the first 13 years of her life. I hoped that during our second meeting I would be able to obtain 'the rest' of her life story and ask her some follow-up questions. When we met, however, our initial conversation soon drifted into Sarah's thoughts about the Gukurahundi and the marginalisation of Matabeleland and I found it difficult to interject. I came away from the second interview feeling as if I had

not done enough to encourage her to ‘continue’ her life story. I later reflected that my reluctance to interrupt Sarah with prompts and questions may have stemmed from the way I had positioned her, which was related to the way in which she had positioned herself. During our first meeting Sarah described herself as someone whose day-to-day life is affected by childhood experiences of loss, isolation, neglect and abuse. She told me that she saw the interview as an opportunity to ‘get things off her chest’²⁸ and raise awareness about a period in Zimbabwe’s history that has been deliberately shrouded in silence. Perhaps her framing of the interview as a chance to achieve certain personal and political goals coupled with the nature of what she had told me about her childhood weighed heavily on me during our second meeting. Or perhaps my failure to interrupt Sarah and give her more direction as to what I would like her to talk about in the second interview reflected my inability to take control during the interview. As Wang and Yan (2012) point out, while interviewers may try and control and constrain interviewees in order to achieve their goals, their dominance is often countered.

The opening of Sarah’s first interview gives a sense of my struggle to take and hold the floor during our interactions:

L: So I’m asking people to tell me about their life-

S: -Yeah

L: From which ever point-

S: -Point yeah

L: -You are comfortable starting from. I won’t interrupt too much, I’ll let you talk and once you’ve finished-

S: -Oh that’s fine

L: -I may ask some questions.

S: Yeah, yeah that’s absolutely fine, you can ask questions.

At the time of the interview, I regarded Sarah’s interruptions as an indication of her eagerness to start the process of telling me her life story rather than an attempt to exert control over the encounter. In some cases overlapping can be

²⁸ I gave Sarah the contact details of counselling services in her area just in case she felt she would benefit from talking to a counsellor about her experiences.

a show of enthusiastic participation rather than a dominating attempt to steal the floor (Tannen 1984). Similarly, at the time of the second and third interview I regarded the way in which she directed our initial catch-up conversations to the Gukurahundi and the political situation in Zimbabwe before I had an opportunity to outline what I would like her to explore in the interview as a reflection of her determination to ‘get things off her chest’ and raise awareness about the persecution and neglect of people from Matabeleland. However, the two are not mutually exclusive; perhaps her passion for making others aware of the suffering caused by the fifth brigade soldiers, and her emotional need to talk about her experiences led her to try and set the agenda from the outset and resist my efforts to encourage her to talk about other areas of her life.

After our second meeting I was unsure whether or not to ask Sarah to meet me again. I was keen to hear more about her life since she moved to UK but I did not want to pressurise her into ‘continuing’ her narrative beyond age 13. On the other hand, Sarah had been very assertive in our interactions so perhaps I was underestimating her ability to directly or indirectly refuse to talk about her life if prompted. I decided that I would ask her if she was willing to meet me again, but I would make her aware of what I hoped to cover during the interview from the outset. The third interview started in the same way as the second but I took a more active role by making it clear that I had questions to ask. Her account of her later teenage years and adult life built on her previous construction of herself as a traumatised subject by describing further experiences of victimisation including neglect by her mother, racism, and domestic violence. She did, however, describe her life at the time of the interview as ‘peaceful’.

Summary

By foregrounding distressing childhood experiences in her life story and talking at length about the long term impact these experiences have had on her life, Sarah positioned herself as someone who is defined by her traumatic childhood. Like other subjects of therapy culture, she used the language of psychology and psychiatry to make sense of her experiences (Furedi 2004;

Rimke and Brock 2012). However, by speaking in the first person plural and incorporating eye-witness accounts of atrocities committed by fifth brigade soldiers into her life story, Sarah strived to move beyond her personal experiences of the Gukurahundi and provide a collective testimony.

Summary

As discussed at the start of this chapter, when I first embarked on life history interviews with UK residents from Zimbabwe, I imagined that they would provide an insight into migration in the context of social transformation. This assumption was soon challenged however by men and women who rejected my positioning of them as migrants and disinterested research participants, and undermined the way I positioned myself as an impartial researcher. Interviewees who produced highly mediated and ‘incomplete’ stories of their lives also challenged my assumptions and made me re-evaluate what life stories actually are. Drawing on extracts from the interviews for illustrative purposes, the first part of the chapter explored how when people talk about their lives they recapitulate established narrative forms (Elliot 2005); they are fabricated into the social order because it is virtually impossible to speak outside of discourses (Foucault 1979); and they engage in a dynamic process of positioning themselves, positioning each other, and rejecting, ignoring and accepting the positions made available to them (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999).

Part two presented two case studies which enabled a more detailed discussion of the way in which the life history interviews I conducted were a site for the recapitulation of established narrative forms and positioning. I started by exploring how Steve used the white Zimbabwean memoir genre as a narrative template for producing a life story of an exiled white Zimbabwean farmer. This was followed by a discussion of the way in which Sarah constructed herself as a traumatised subject. Focusing on two life stories in depth also enabled an exploration of the process by which identities may be constructed narratively. Both Steve and Sarah imbued particular life experiences with meaning by structuring their life story in particular way. By providing a more

detailed narrative of the years preceding his departure from his farm, and ending his life story at the point he left Zimbabwe, Steve marked this event as an extremely important moment in his life. Similarly, Sarah was able to convey the significance and lasting impact of her traumatic childhood experiences not only via explicit evaluation, but through the production of a narrative which focused on the first 13 years of her life.

This chapter builds on and contributes to literature which explores the discursive construction of subjects in talk. It is acknowledged that subjects are brought into being through actions as well as words (Butler 1990; see also Aly 2015) however this research, being based solely on audio-recorded interviews, focuses on their constitution via linguistic practice.

~ 6 ~

Places

We're haemorrhaging as a nation
Take a leaf out of the Zim-dream
And its texture will be a nightmare

Our hopes ooze down sewer drains
Falling like the Zim-dollar
Crumbling into a fist-full of dust [...]
-Stanley Mupfudza (2009)

Britain is not a racist country [...] I'm sure racism still has a hold in places [...]
But it's hard to say, even by the widest stretch of the imagination, that racism is
one of this country's big problems.

-Clarissa Tan (2013)

This chapter explores interviewees' talk about Zimbabwe and Britain. More specifically, I discuss the way in which a number of the men and women I interviewed constructed Zimbabwe as a country in crisis and Britain as a place where racism is/is not a significant problem. I chose to focus on interviewees' representations of Zimbabwe as country in crisis, and the UK as somewhere which does/does not have a significant problem with racism not only because they were the most common modes of talking about particular places²⁹ across all the interviews, but because this rich and nuanced talk

²⁹ Some of the interviewees did talk about Britain and Zimbabwe in alternative ways, for example the UK was described as a place where a sense of community is lacking and a place where people have freedom of expression, however these representations were not well developed enough to produce detailed discourse analytic readings of particular interviewees' accounts or prevalent enough to explore patterns of language use across the interviews.

illustrates theoretical arguments concerning the discursive construction of places.

Building on the work of those who have explored the way in which constructions of places may be orientated to the achievement of particular social and interactional goals (see Durrheim and Dixon 2001; Wallwork and Dixon 2004; Garner 2013; Di Masso et al. 2014), my readings of the interview accounts attends to the action-orientated nature of the interviewees' constructions of Zimbabwe and Britain. I discuss the way in which the interviewees produced constructions of Zimbabwe which attributed blame for the country's economic decline, and talk about racism in Britain which was orientated to maintaining a positive self-identity and minimising the significance of racism as a problem.

Inspired by cultural geographers who have explored the way in which representations of place invest those places with meaning by appropriating other representations (see Daniels 1992; McGreevy 1992), the discourse analytic readings presented in this chapter consider the intertextual nature of this talk. My interpretation of interviewees' constructions of Zimbabwe and Britain was also influenced by the work of discursive psychologists who have explored the reproduction and contestation of place meanings in interaction. Discursive psychologists argue that constructions of places may perform a range of social actions such as attributing blame, justifying, derogating, excusing and excluding (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Di Masso et al. 2011). Indeed, empirical research has demonstrated that constructions of places have been used to perform a variety of actions such as justifying fox-hunting in Britain (Wallwork and Dixon 2004); legitimising the exclusion of black people from beaches in South Africa (Durrheim and Dixon 2001); and opposing the opening of an asylum processing centre in the south-west of England (Garner 2013). Discourse analytic research has also explored how talk about place attachments may be orientated to the achievement of interactional goals (Di Masso et al. 2014).

The first part of this chapter will explore constructions of Zimbabwe as a country in crisis and decline. This will be followed by a discussion of the way in which interviewees talked about Britain as a place where racism is/is not a significant problem.

Part one: Zimbabwe as a country in crisis

A common thread running through the interviews was the way in which Zimbabwe has deteriorated over the years. In some cases interviewees made it quite clear who they thought was to blame for the country's economic decline, while in others, responsibility for the crisis could be inferred from their account of Zimbabwe's changing fate.

Description is central to the process of attributing blame as causal relations are constructed as versions are produced (Edwards and Potter 1992). Even direct attributional statements such as 'it was his fault' tend to be accompanied by detailed descriptions which make the blaming credible and sensible (Edwards and Potter 1992). More commonly people produce situated descriptions which contain attributional inferences and address issues of accountability (Edwards and Potter 1992). Considering description as an arena for doing attribution means attending to how the description is made to appear factual (Edwards and Potter 1992). One technique for making descriptions appear factual, commonly employed in attribution work, is the invocation of consensus (Edwards and Potter 1992). The way in which consensus is invoked as a warrant for truth is illustrated by the following extract from an article in *The Star* newspaper (DiManno 2010):

The government blames a nation's misery on international sanctions and chronic droughts. The world blames Zimbabwe's woes on President Robert Mugabe, his Zanu-PF thugocracy, endemic corruption and the catastrophe of land redistribution.

Another way in which a report is constructed to make it seem less like an artful construction and more like an accurate description is through the use of impersonal language (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984; Potter 1996). The following

extract from an article posted on the *New Zimbabwe* website (Chogugudza 2006) demonstrates how grammatical impersonality is used by speakers/writers to make an account seem objective:

This paper tries to explain in some limited detail how the concepts of Greed and Opportunism have significantly led to the death of a nation state in Zimbabwe.

Speakers/writers also construct descriptions as factual by emphasising their category entitlements (Potter 1996). Emphasising category membership to work up the facticity of a description rests on the premise that certain categories of people are more knowledgeable about a specific domain simply by being a member of that category (Potter 1996). This is illustrated by the opening words of a lecture by Dr Alex Magaisa, presented on the *New Zimbabwe* website (Magaisa 2006):

When Zimbabweans say “Zvakapressa” they are describing the terrible state of their circumstances but at the same time this Shonglish word reveals a certain creative quality about the people, which helps them to cope during hard times [...] Having been brought up in Zimbabwean society, I am familiar with the way in which we sometimes make fun of our own hardships.

Those who attribute blame to others do so at the risk of having their version of events discounted as an account produced by someone who has a stake in the issue (Edwards and Potters 1992). One way in which speakers/writers manage this risk is by producing an ostensibly disinterested factual report which makes inferences about blame (Edwards and Potter 1992). Speakers/writers may also attempt to head off potential criticisms that they have ‘an axe to grind’ or ‘an ingrained set of prejudices’ by presenting a counter interest to ‘inoculate’ against such interpretations (Potter 1996).

Having outlined some of the rhetorical strategies people employ to work up the facticity of their descriptions in order to make their attributions of blame seem credible, the rest of this section will explore the way in which a number of the men and women I interviewed produced attribution-orientated constructions of Zimbabwe.

Attribution-orientated constructions of Zimbabwe

I will start by discussing narratives of crisis and decline which unequivocally attributed blame. The first extract comes from Mary's interview:

M: From 1980 until aboutI can say 1985 things were quite OK, we were happy but then our Prime Minister, Mugabe, was greedy, he wanted everything for himself and his party and problems started. So we have a lot of problems because of greediness actually. And this is the reason why most of us we are here now. We ran away from Mugabe because if you don't support his party then you are in trouble and we're not supporting him because we didn't like the way he was running things.

Mary takes up a position in the public debate concerning who is to responsible for Zimbabwe's crisis (see Chapter Four) by stating that the problems the country has experienced in recent years can be attributed to President Mugabe, and more specifically, his greed. Mary constructs a causal chain from the President's greed, to the deterioration of the country, to a lack of support for the President and his party, to the forced migration of those who fear/ suffer persecution because they do not support the ruling party. Thus, this narrative of crisis and decline in Zimbabwe not only attributes blame for the county's deterioration, but accounts for the presence of Zimbabweans in the UK.

The second extract comes from later in Mary's interview when her husband Fred had joined us:

F: We thought that with the coming in of independence.....Mugabe declared that he would keep everything as it was or it would get better, he started free education for everybody and that is why eventually we had the best, Zimbabwe had the most educated people than any other country in Africa [...] But he couldn't afford free education so eventually he made a u-turn because he couldn't afford it...Free medical attention, you can't do that! [...]But ah poor man, he lost his vision. Then of course, as you know, Lord Acton's statement, power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely. That's Lord Acton, it's a famous statement. These people are corrupted by power.

L: So can you describe how you felt when he (Robert Mugabe) first came in?

M: When he first came in we thought things were going to be OK-

F: -There was some hope, that's why in fact I came back to the country. We thought there was some hope but it didn't take time before, especially those of us who were outside the country, we could see that things are not going that way.

M: Yeah it didn't long before things went-

F: No it didn't take long. So by '84, '85 we were having shortages. ..They love power, huge armies, iron tanks and jets and so on. What we always said was, 'To fight who?' You only need an army of about 50,000 well trained young men, 50,000 was enough because really I can't see-

M: -It was a beautiful country, a very beautiful country and we had everything that we wanted, anything that you wanted you could get it, but things just started deteriorating.

Fred attributes Zimbabwe's economic decline to misgovernance. Although this is one of the main competing explanations for the crisis in Zimbabwe (Freeman 2005), Fred presents Robert Mugabe in a more favourable light than many by suggesting that the decisions he made soon after he became prime minister were well-intentioned, albeit misguided i.e. he introduced free education and health care for all which 'he couldn't afford'. In contrast to those who argue that Mugabe has always put his own desires for power and wealth before the needs of Zimbabweans (see Meredith 2002; Lessing 2003; Compagnon 2010), Fred suggests that while he came to power with the intention of delivering on his promise that 'he would keep everything as it was or it would get better', over the years he 'lost his vision' and became 'corrupted by power'. He and Mary co-constructed Zimbabwe as a country which, at the moment of independence, was full of promise but due to the failings of Mugabe and his party soon deteriorated. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2012b: 316) review of academic and journalistic accounts of the crisis in Zimbabwe suggests that this sentiment is a common one: 'Mugabe emerges in most of the recent literature as this larger-than-life political figure who was midwife to the birth of the nation before becoming its undertaker'.

A narrative of crisis and decline in which the ruling party features as the key protagonist was also produced by Jacob:

J: things were good for a time, when they [ZANU-PF] took over, things were good, then problems started. What they did was, they wanted to give

these ex-combatants who were complaining that they fought the war and got nothing, so there were these gratuities of \$50,000. They didn't budget for this money, they just gave them. The economy, it just went down on its knees straight away. It affected everybody.

Like others before him (see Bond and Manyanya 2003; Taylor and Williams 2002), Jacob identifies the government's ill-conceived decision to pay gratuities to ex-combatants as the catalyst of Zimbabwe's economic decline. To convey how sudden and dramatic the economic collapse was he uses the metaphor of the economy going down on its knees. Others have employed the terms 'plunge' (Bond and Manyanya 2003) and 'free fall' (Taylor and Williams 2002) with similar effect.

The government's decision to pay gratuities to war veterans was also singled out by Steve as the precipitating cause of Zimbabwe's economic crisis:

S: the first, I think the first..serious.. .warning shot I suppose you'd like to call it was in late '97. Um, its what's known in Zimbabwe as Black Friday in which the currency collapsed overnight, the stock exchange was devalued by half and this all resulted because the government made a promise to pay out gratuities and pensions to people who had said they had fought in the war of liberation. [...] So the government committed to pay and the country couldn't afford it and that's what caused the economic collapse.

Tsungi also reproduced prevailing constructions of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe as the responsibility of the government, and more specifically President Mugabe:

T: just before 2000 what happened was that Mugabe went into a war in DRC³⁰, which hadn't been sanctioned by the rest of the region...that became a long drawn out war which began to.....eat into the economic coffers of the country.

T: the government blamed the International Monetary Fund for some prescription that they had been given, but you see in Zimbabwe we didn't have ignorant politicians, almost all of those politicians, half had gone to Harvard, Oxford, with a string of seven degrees, masters, PhDs and all of that. They were not naïve, they were not ignorant, but when they spoke to the people they said, 'Oh it's this IMF prescription, we've been forced into this,' and those of us who could think were saying, 'Wait a minute you guys, the calibre of you men, you couldn't have been hoodwinked by someone who flew in from London and said "This is right for you."' Besides, to our recollection you're the ones that flew to London, they

³⁰ Democratic Republic of Congo

didn't come here. You're the ones that borrowed this money and you've embezzled the money, you haven't paid it back, we don't know why you haven't paid it back but the country is now in debt and it continues to go into debt'.

In the process of identifying the government of Zimbabwe as culpable for the country's economic decline, Tsungi undermines an explanation for the crisis often offered by the ruling party and their supporters: the International Monetary Fund forced the government to borrow money (Freeman 2014). She does so by constructing government ministers in Zimbabwe as far from naïve. Tsungi works up the credibility of this counter argument by suggesting that this is not merely her view but the collective view of those who can think critically ('those of us who could think').

A narrative of crisis and decline in which President Mugabe features as the principal architect of the country's crisis was also produced by Patson:

P: I was born in the Smith era, I used to eat ice cream, I used to have everything, I went to school when schools were free. I came into the Mugabe era and this Mugabe era, things started getting dearer... So the development that Mugabe did is, when we got the independence everything went on well because there was so much money injected into the country by the donors, by other countries because we just got our independence but how was the money used? Let alone in the early 1990s when ESAP was put in place, the Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme in 1991, it meant that um more companies were going to be privatised [L: Mhm] closed down and this angered so many people which led to the rise of the workers [L: Mhm] [...] But God knows.....the MDC was formed, on the backdrop that they wanted to help the people, and they were led by the people... So to us as a country, to us as a country, MDC was seen to be a saviour against what was happening in Zimbabwe from 1994 when the effects of ESAP were found.

Patson works up the facticity of his version of events by implying that there is consensus in Zimbabwe regarding who is to blame for the crisis. He does so by suggesting that when the MDC party was formed, *all* Zimbabweans were hopeful that it would save them from the consequences of ill-conceived economic policies ('to us as a country MDC was seen to be a saviour against what was happening in Zimbabwe'). His narrative continues as follows:

P: Come 2000, Mugabe saw that he has lost his grip on the people, 1999 people had started complaining about the land [L: Mhm]... But now when he saw he lost the grip he had to let the people into, he saw that people

were angered because they didn't have the land.. he let those people loose into the farms, destroying the infrastructure that we had...So from there it made it hard for the general population to get the food and all those things and it was not the sanctions, it was not the sanctions, although that is what the people tried to portray.

By framing President Mugabe's refusal to stop people occupying commercial farms at the start of the 21st century as a desperate attempt to regain his 'grip on the people', Patson reproduces a well-established narrative concerning the land occupations (Freeman 2014; Freeman 2005). According to this version of events, in the context of the government's defeat in the February 2000 constitutional referendum, Mugabe presided over commercial farms being occupied and seized by people claiming that the land was rightfully theirs (see for example Younge 2000; Meredith 2002; Mlambo 2003; Blair 2002; Wiles 2005; Godwin 2006). This account contrasts starkly with the President's portrayal of the land occupations as peaceful demonstrations by ex-combatants 'demonstrating their greatest disappointment that there was this No vote' (Robert Mugabe quoted in Blair 2002: 75).

Patson goes on to state that as a consequence of the farm occupations, the general population found it hard to get food. At this point he undermines an alternative explanation for shortages in Zimbabwe: 'the sanctions'. The imposition of arms embargos, travel bans and financial sanctions on Zimbabwe by a number of countries including the United States and the United Kingdom has been identified as one of the main causes of the economic crisis by the ruling party and their supporters (Freeman 2005; Freeman 2014). Within this narrative of Zimbabwe being under threat from Western imperialism, economic sanctions feature as one of the main instruments of neo-liberal regime change (see Wafawarova 2011; Tahoso 2011). The extent to which the crisis in Zimbabwe is attributable to economic sanctions and 'the West' was an extremely pertinent question during the period in which I conducted the interviews as the government launched the National Anti-Sanctions Petition in March 2011 demanding an end to 'illegal economic sanctions' with a target of obtaining at least 2,000,000 signatures (Razemba 2011; Bell 2011). Thus, by stating that 'it was not the sanctions',

Patson is taking up a particular position in the debate concerning who is responsible for Zimbabwe's economic crisis.

The rest of this section will explore constructions of Zimbabwe which made inferences about who is responsible for the country's demise, rather than directly attributing blame. The first extract comes from an interview I conducted with Eugene:

E: my mum used to work as a domestic [in Rhodesia]. I would rather prefer to have that old life. [...] This white family she was working for, they used to buy her almost everything. She never bought food, they gave her everything. But now even a teacher can't buy herself shoes [...] So even when things were not as good during the white man's time, if I could reverse it I would rather prefer that time. Everybody was working and managing, now everybody is struggling so what's the benefit?

Given that ZANU-PF have been in power since independence in 1980, Eugene's account of how life in Rhodesia was preferable to life in Zimbabwe can be heard as an attribution-orientated description which makes inferences about who is culpable for the declining standards of living in the country.

Zweli also indirectly attended to the question of who is to blame for 'the way things are' in Zimbabwe:

Z: In the last eight years, after the invasions I totally changed, I became interested in the way things are and I went back to the history [...] some tend to take the position that they are in this predicament because of whites in Zimbabwe. If whites had moved the other way, if blacks had moved the other way, if there was a reconciliation, what would have happened? Would reconciliation have worked? Sometimes I look at it and think probably it was inevitable because we had created the way in which it had worked for one class. Black people were not happy but to actually have a full scale rebellion, certain norms and cultural taboos were established. Whether white people were actually willing to give that up I don't know. Whether blacks were actually able to see it.. Every time I say this to, especially to a black Zimbabwean colleague, we talk about this all the time, this is always the subject. [...] it's difficult to make a black Zimbabwean say, if you were white and you had a maid and all this cheap labour, would you give it up? Most people would say, 'Oh my conscious wouldn't have allowed it.' But I say 'But look we live in Europe where you have rich interests..' There are many examples, look at the [Rupert] Murdoch [phone hacking] case, they had all the advantages, could they have changed their ethics? They could but that is how the norms had been established. I'm not trying to apologise for white Zimbabweans, for what happened.

Zweli's account of how he has been trying to make sense of 'the way things are' in Zimbabwe addresses the extent to which white Zimbabweans are responsible for 'the predicament' the country is in. This question has been posed by others such as Bourne (2011: 248) who asks, 'how far did the white community, following independence in 1980, bear responsibility for the events which led to collapse in the first decade of the twenty first century?' Bourne (2011: 248), like others before him (see for example Alexander 2004), argues that some white people in Zimbabwe 'acted as though they could continue with the privileged lifestyle and attitudes of the former regime, without fully understanding the huge political change that had come with independence.' In the account above, this perspective features as the reported words of Zweli's colleague. Zweli does not discount this argument and deny that white Zimbabweans have done little to relinquish their privileges; rather he excuses their behaviour by suggesting that most people would have acted in the same way as it is difficult to change. He does so through his reported response to his colleague ('if you were white and you had a maid and all this cheap labour, would you give it up?'), and through his evaluation of the Rupert Murdoch phone hacking case ('could they have changed their ethics? They could but that is how the norms had been established'). Zweli tries to ensure that he is not held accountable for excusing the behaviour of white Zimbabweans by denying that he is 'trying to apologise for white Zimbabweans' and by 'doing' uncertainty ('Sometimes I look at it and think' and 'Whether white people were actually willing to give that up I don't know'). The way in which Zweli managed his own accountability in the process of producing an attribution-orientated construction of Zimbabwe illustrates the 'attributional work done by attribution talk' (Edwards and Potter 1992: 126).

Zweli's account continued as follows:

Z: Seeing Mugabe's perspective as well, it's probably the first time I've said his name because I didn't want to say his name in the interview. Why I don't want to is because it tends to make it look like it clouds my perspective but being from the same country I feel that the troubles of the 80s, the Gukurahundi, it emboldened him. He realised 'OK the whites care

about their commercial lot, if their pockets are OK I can mess these guys up and they wouldn't care.' What makes white sympathy run low is when he started challenging white commercial interests.

Continuing his discussion of the culpability of white Zimbabweans, Zweli suggests that the failure of white Zimbabweans to do anything to stop the Gukurahundi atrocities³¹ emboldened President Mugabe as it made him realise that he could 'mess' people up without reproach. He works up the facticity of this account by invoking a category entitlement ('being from the same country').

Summary

This section of the chapter has explored the way in which the men and women I interviewed produced intertextual and attribution-orientated constructions of Zimbabwe. The notion that making descriptions appear factual is key to ensuring that charges of blame will be accepted as credible and sensible (Edwards and Potter 1992) was taken as a theoretical starting point. The interviewees used a number of commonly employed rhetorical strategies to make their descriptions of Zimbabwe appear less like artful constructions and more like accurate descriptions (see Edwards and Potter 1992; Potter 1996). These included: using impersonal language to make their accounts appear objective; suggesting that there is consensus regarding who is to blame for the Zimbabwe's economic decline; undermining alternative explanations for the crisis; and producing seemingly disinterested accounts which make inferences about who is responsible for the deterioration of living standards in the country.

By situating these attribution-orientated descriptions within public debates concerning who is responsible for Zimbabwe's crisis, my readings of the interview accounts also explored the way in which interviewees' utterances form a link in a complexly organized chain of other utterances (Bakhtin 1986).

³¹ Zweli's implicit point that white Zimbabweans did little to raise awareness about the atrocities being committed by the fifth brigade army has been expressed by others such as Freeth (2011: 26) who states that, 'For most of the white community it was the beginning of a head-in-the-sand mentality. It was better to keep a low profile and not dig too deep'.

Part two: Racism in Britain

Whether racism is a significant issue in Britain was explored in a number of the interviews I conducted. Talk about racism featured in interviewees' life stories and in their responses to questions I asked. This section provides a discursive reading of this talk by exploring the way in which it was orientated to two communicative goals: the maintenance of a positive self-identity and the minimisation of racism via relativisation and universalisation.

Discourse analytic researchers have identified a range of rhetorical strategies employed in talk and text to minimise the significance of racism as a feature of everyday life. One way in which speakers/writers undermine the significance of racism as a problem in a particular place is by claiming that it is a universal phenomenon. By arguing that racism exists everywhere, speakers/writers hope to dissociate a place from the stigma of racism. Ethnic Dutch people interviewed by Verkeyten (2005) accounted for discrimination against ethnic minorities in the Netherlands in this way, arguing that discrimination can be found everywhere as it is an intrinsic part of human nature. Similarly, Greek people interviewed by Condor et al (2006) used exemplary tales of Albanian people in Greece displaying prejudice towards each other to lend weight to their argument that racism is something that can be found within all groups of people.

A related strategy for minimising the seriousness of racism in a particular place is relativisation whereby speakers/writers suggest that racism is a far greater problem elsewhere, or was more of an issue the past. This is illustrated by Condor et al's (2006) study of the way in which Greek people talked about the settlement of Albanian refugees in Greece. Some of those interviewed minimised the significance of racism as a problem by pointing out that unlike other European countries, Greece does not have organisations opposed to foreigners or members of parliament representing far right political parties.

Speakers/writers may attempt to defend themselves against charges of racism by launching a counter attack against those who make accusations of racism for exaggerating, being oversensitive, and wrongly vilifying others (see Verkuyten 1998). If accusations of racism are repeatedly framed as a threat to in-group solidarity and as an attempt to stifle 'honest' debate, the act of making accusations can come to be regarded as a serious social infraction (van Dijk 1992; Augoustinos and Every 2007). Indeed, research indicates that accusations of racism are often made tentatively and are orientated towards possible counter attack (see Goodman 2010; Goodman and Burke 2010; Riggs and Due 2010; Kirkwood et al. 2013). For instance, Goodman (2010) and Goodman and Burke (2010) demonstrate that when discussing immigration and asylum in the UK, speakers defending asylum seekers attempted to distance themselves from the subject position of someone who makes accusations of racism by opposing the statements of others without explicitly referring to them as racist. This is also illustrated by Riggs and Due (2010) who focus on allegations of racism against four contestants of the reality television programme *Celebrity Big Brother* for their behaviour towards another contestant, Shilpa Shetty. Riggs and Due point out that at stake was not only the identities of the four individuals accused, but the collective identity of Britain as a country which promotes inclusivity and discourages racism. Drawing on extracts from televised interviews with the four housemates in question, Riggs and Due demonstrate that the host of the show positioned herself as an intermediary and avoided making overt accusations of racism by utilising 'distance footing'; that is, attributing accusations to third parties such as the press, the British public and people in India.

A study by Kirkwood et al. (2013) provides further illustration of this point that if the act of making an accusation of racism is a serious social infraction, speakers/writers tend to distance themselves from the subject position of someone who accuses others of being racist. Asylum seekers interviewed by Kirkwood et al. downplayed the seriousness of incidents of violence they had experienced in the UK. One way in which they did so was to deny that the

incidents were racist by providing alternative explanations for the perpetrators' behaviour such as they were just bored. Speakers also presented the perpetrators as a minority who were acting beyond the bounds of normal behaviour, thus avoiding a negative evaluation of the host society as a whole.

Apart from trying to negotiate the taboo against making accusations of racism, those asked about racism may also engage in rhetorical work to ensure that this talk does not undermine other communicative goals such as presenting a positive self-identity. Colic-Peisker (2005) argues that one of the ways the Bosnian refugees she interviewed in Australia sought to differentiate themselves from refugees who came from 'third-world countries' was to deny that they had experienced prejudice and discrimination. She suggests that since Bosnians read themselves into Australia's dominant whiteness, they avoided saying anything that would call into question the identity they had created for themselves as 'insiders'.

Having outlined some of the rhetorical strategies speakers employ to minimise the significance of racism as an issue, the following section will explore the way in which some of the men and women I interviewed talked about racism in Britain.

Maintaining a positive self-identity whilst talking about racism

The first extract I will discuss comes from an interview I conducted with Jacob. In the process of producing a narrative of his life, and as part of longer account of how life in Britain differs from life in Zimbabwe, Jacob argued that racism is an issue in the UK:

J: But here now, what I have learnt here, I want to be honest-

L: Mhm yeah be open about Britain. Say what you like! [laughing]

J: The only thing, I want to be 100% honest here [L: Yeah] there are some elements of racism, it is there big time [L: Of course] People will say 'no, no, no', it's here big time [L: Of course] For instance.. you know...some girls here, you'll find that some girls, you say 'Oh this is a nice girl this one, we could get along, I want to go out with this one'. Someone said for

instance, she said 'My dad was saying,' she's British obviously, 'my dad was saying you know what, I should try these black guys now' and she said 'For me, I can't go with a black guy, no.' It's a good example. Even some places, you know, some places, even like where I am on placement, it is a good example, you are given mentors, I had to complain, I had to complain, even someone was saying 'Oh you're being neglected really' [...] Ahh forget some praise of course, you can't be promoted, that's for sure, tutors who know their job, juniors who know their job are struggling to get promoted. For me I don't mind, I'm just commenting [L: Yeah] I don't particularly care about those things. But racism is there [...] I've got another good example, you see it's like sometimes we have to work, you know, someone will, because we are black they can't even ask you, if you've got someone who doesn't even know who will refer them back to you and they say 'Oh sorry I didn't even ask you.' You see they just look at your skin and look down upon you [L: Yeah] they just think because of this skin you don't know nothing, you are so daft, you are ignorant, you are empty [L: Mhm]. It's not the facts anyway, we are just human beings. Some people are so nice but people are not the same... That kind of life, you know, at times it makes you feel, at times some people they will treat you really, and you will feel 'ah, I wish I could go back'. ..That's how some people make you feel, really. Like some people will talk...people will talk..in front of you, you know some things, bad things, you know 'oh these black blah, blah, blah' [L: OK]. People will say that. I've settled really, when you make friends and this and that you just feel, it's not so bad, I've settled.

The discursive process in which selves are located in conversation (Davies and Harre 1990) is particularly apparent in this extract. During the interview I heard Jacob's statement, 'But here now, what I have learnt here, I want to be honest' as a warning that he was about to say something negative about Britain which, as a British person, may make me uncomfortable; I dismiss this by telling him to say what he likes about Britain. He goes on to state, 'I want to be 100% honest here, there are some elements of racism [in the UK] '. During the interview I clearly felt the stress he was placing on wanting to be honest positioned me as someone who would be shocked and uncomfortable to hear that racism exists in Britain as I resisted this positioning by stating 'Of course'. I responded to Jacob as if his utterances were directed solely at me but talk can be orientated to imagined as well as actual audiences (Billig 1987). His talk may have been more rhetorical than I treated it the interview; orientated less towards convincing me personally that racism exists in Britain, and more towards countering the denials and minimisations of the seriousness of racism that are repeatedly reproduced in the public realm (van Dijk 1992; Bonilla-Silva 2010). Furthermore, Jacob's display of hesitancy when he started to produce his account of 'what [he has] learnt here' may have been

orientated to the apparent taboo against making accusations of racism which means that such accusations are produced in a tentative way (see van Dijk 1992; Goodman 2010; Goodman and Burke 2010; Riggs and Due 2010; Kirkwood et al. 2013).

Jacob produces an ambivalent account of how his experiences of racism in Britain have affected him; he claims that these experiences do not trouble him a great deal ('For me I don't mind, I'm just commenting' and 'it's not so bad') but sits uncomfortably with his account of sometimes wishing he could go back to Zimbabwe due to the way he is treated in the UK. This ambivalence appears to stem from a dilemma he is trying to manage: how to talk persuasively about the prevalence of racism in the UK whilst maintaining a positive self-identity. Jacob draws on personal experiences of racism to lend support to his argument that racism is here 'big time', but he tries to ensure that this testimony does not threaten the positive self-identity he has constructed for himself as a carefree person by including statements which suggest that he is not too troubled by these experiences.

Later in the interview I asked Jacob about challenges and difficulties he has faced in Britain and referred to his earlier account of racism:

L: What have been the main challenges and difficulties you've faced here? I know you've spoken about racism you've experienced.

J: Yeah because there was a time when I was still down there, when I didn't have a job for a short time, life was a bit difficult for me you know?... This thing of racism, it's not everywhere anyway and it's not everybody. There are few people, the majority are not. But there are a few people who still feel...anyone this colour is.. daft, they don't know anything. And the sad thing is we are so..down, down, down, they look down, down upon us, you see? That's for real.

Despite his earlier insistence that racism is here 'big time', at this point in the interview he places parameters on the pervasiveness of racism in Britain: it is not everywhere and the majority of people are not racist. Variability within accounts is of great interest to discourse analysts as it enables them to explore the way in which talk is highly occasioned and orientated to action (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Wetherell 1998). Jacob's

previous utterances concerning the prevalence of racism in the UK were produced in the course of his uninterrupted life story while the account above was formulated in response to a question I asked. This is significant as my question not only positions him as someone whose life in the UK is beset with difficulties and challenges which undermines the carefree persona he had constructed for himself in the interview, but invites him to produce a negative account of life in Britain.

I went on to ask Jacob how he has dealt with racism in the UK:

L: So how have you dealt with these difficulties?

J: Like which ones, like here? [L: Yes] You know I should say, I'm likeable. I think I would say 99% of people I meet they like me, not pretend, genuinely. I'm so lucky, I'm likeable, so most people they like me and wherever I go I'm always laughing. I'm that type of person, I'm kind of care free. I'm that type of person...most of the things I take them for fun. I try to look at it like a game and pass through, if you take it seriously you can't live, you wouldn't survive [...] At the end of the day some people will come to you and, I remember there was one incident at uni, this was a bad one this one, if I had complained it would have been a big thing but I thought 'I don't want to create this tension'. I went to see my personal tutor, this lady. So I came, I had an appointment to see her. Unfortunately she was in a meeting, she was supposed to come 15 or 20 minutes, she didn't leave a message. So I went to the reception and asked to see her and the receptionist was phoning the office, they share the office, three of four of them. She said, 'Don't worry you can go up there, room number so-and-so. Sometimes they are chatting and they don't pick their phones up'. I went and knocked this door and one of these lecturers came and was like, 'What do you want? What are you doing here? Does it look like she is here? Where is she, can you see her?' It took me two weeks, it really affected me, big time. I said 'Ahhh, this is unfair, what wrong have I done?' Someone said 'Oh you should go and complain'. For me, that's why I say, that's how I get away with it, I get things off my mind, it's like I ignore them.

When asked about the way he has dealt with racism in the UK, Jacob states that he is lucky because most people like him; the implication of this is that racism constitutes individual-level hatred and his likeable persona has to some degree acted as a defence against this. Responding to my question more directly, he suggests that he is a carefree person who tries not to take things too seriously. He then describes an incident at university which affected him so badly that it took him two weeks to recover from. As before, Jacob appears

to be trying to balance talking about racism in the UK with conviction, with constructing a positive self-identity for himself as a carefree person.

Extracts from my interview with Samantha provide further illustration of how talk about racism may be orientated to maintaining a positive self-identity. Samantha identified racism as a potential challenge associated with living in the UK although she suggested that this was not something she has been exposed to personally:

L: Have you experienced any challenges living in Britain?

S: Um.....probably the hardest time was when I had no job and I was waiting for the JSA³² [...] But that's it, I'm a very easy going person, I'm like, 'If it doesn't kill you it makes you stronger.' I actually welcome challenges but when it's stuff that is so crucial like your rent, you do not want to be out on the streets so that's the only thing that really knocked me back [...] I don't think I have actually faced any like...even the whole racism thing, I've never, ever had anyone come up and say, like I say maybe it's because of my stature and my height, never. My mum actually had someone pour water on her while they were driving by, this was in [city in the west of England]. I was like 'Oh!' I've never, friends have had things chucked at them, even my mixed race friend, my best friend. I'm like maybe God is watching out for me because I might just trip, if someone does something to me, you have the right to defend yourself. Like I say I'm a Christian, 100% so I feel like God is watching out for me. Like I remember the other day I went to work on a Saturday, just to finish a project I was doing and I finished at ten in the evening and one of the guys was like, 'We'll drop you off at home.' And I was like 'No that's OK.' They were like, 'No, no we will because you can't be walking home.' So he dropped me off at home and then I found out that day they were having a BNP thing in town and all these guys were kicking stuff. I was like 'Wow, imagine that!'

Samantha suggests that unlike friends and family members, she has not been subject to racism in the UK. She accounts for this in two ways: firstly, she suggests that this may be due to her stature and her height; secondly, she argues that God is protecting her. A narrative of narrowly missing an encounter with British National Party (BNP) supporters is produced to lend weight to her implicit point that it is noteworthy that she has not been subject to racist incidents despite the potential.

Samantha portrays herself as a strong person who gains further strength from

³² Jobseeker's Allowance

challenging experiences. To ensure that she is not regarded as an actual or potential victim of racism, she states that she has never experienced racism in the UK but if a stranger did say something offensive or throw something at her, she would retaliate.

Later in the interview I asked Samantha if people ever ask her whether she would like to go back to Zimbabwe:

L: Do people ever ask you whether you would like to go back to Zimbabwe?

S: Yeah people used to ask me but not that much anymore. In a way it would be sort of rude, sort of like you're not welcome here, you need to go back. I think now you don't get people asking you whether you are going to go back. I can't even remember when someone has asked me that. Probably my work mates because in [two counties in the west of England] they are very...they are very out there. Especially this guy I work with, he's so, he's like, 'Not to be racist or anything..' Everything that comes out of his mouth. You're like 'Go on..' [laughing] You're preparing yourself to hear the worst thing in the world. It's not too offensive but it's rude in a way depending on where they are coming from, 'When are you going to go back?' What you don't want me here? I think most people know that no matter what you do you'll never be British. Even if you change yourself, I feel like this country will never make me feel welcome, ever. They always point it out that you are not part of, not to be rude or anything. Like when they've got a terrorist or something they'll be like 'He's British BUT...he's Nigerian.' I don't even care to be honest, it's only a country isn't it. The guy who tells you 'I'm not being racist,' he'll be like 'Britain is so this, it's so that.' I'm like 'It's a country, you're lucky you were born here fair enough but you could've easily been born of different parents.' I love him, I really do, it makes my job interesting because he's always got the craziest stuff coming out of his head.

In response to my question concerning whether people ever ask her whether she would like to go back to Zimbabwe, Samantha states that while she cannot recall ever being asked this question, she is most likely to have been asked by one of her work colleagues as people from the area of England in which she lives are very 'out there'. One particular colleague, who frequently prefaces his statements with the words 'Not to be racist or anything', is identified as especially 'out there'. 'Not to be racist or anything' is a disclaimer, a discursive move orientated to denying the plausible inference that what one has said, or is about to say, is racist (van Dijk 1984). Indeed, Samantha states that when her work colleague utters these words she prepares

to hear 'the worst thing in the world'.

Returning to the question of whether people ever ask her whether she would like to return to Zimbabwe, Samantha states that no matter what they do, people who have migrated to the UK will never be considered British and will never be made to feel welcome. She elaborates that British people 'always point it out that you are not part of, not to be rude or anything.' The disclaimer 'not to be rude or anything', which positions me as someone who is implicated in the othering practices she describes, may be orientated to maintaining a friendly interview interaction. Alternatively, it can be heard as a move to maintain a positive self-identity (i.e. not rude).

My follow up question concerns the way in which Samantha responds to this work colleague:

L: Do you discuss with him what he's talking about or just let him talk?

S: I do, if I'm bored at work I'll be like 'Hey,' and he'll say the rudest things. Like the other day he brought in a mop, a black mop and he was like 'Is that your hair?' I was thinking, 'You know I should sue him.' But with him everyone knows he's special, he's crazy, you could never be offended by him. I would never take anything he says seriously, I used to before, I used to be offended like 'Wow, I can't believe someone just said that.' But you can't keep saying 'Wow,' after a while you get used to it don't you? Especially with him, you would be wasting time trying to raise a complaint. He doesn't mean it in a spiteful way, if it was I would definitely, but with him it's just something he wanted to say.

Samantha works up her positioning of this man as inoffensive by suggesting that 'everyone' knows that he is crazy. Elaborating on why her work colleague's actions cannot be deemed offensive, she states that 'he doesn't mean it in a spiteful way' (this is an example of a type of denial referred to by van Dijk (1992) as 'intention-denial'). As before, Samantha makes it clear that she would not allow herself to be a victim of racism by stating that if the things this work colleague said or done were 'spiteful' she would take action by 'raising a complaint'.

After a further exchange concerning the behaviour of this work colleague, I ask Samantha how others have responded to this man:

L: So has anyone in your work place said they find his comments inappropriate or offensive?

S: For other stuff but not racial stuff, people complain about him about other stuff. But he's going to be retiring in like two years so we've gotta make the most of him now. If I was still there I would definitely miss him, he makes it so much more interesting because everyone else is boring. Like I said I've never experienced any racism, if you wanna call this racism then that's probably the most I've experienced but I would not label him a racist, he's just who he is. There are some people out there who actually make you feel that way. He's saying it not to make me feel a certain way. There are people who go out of your way to make you feel less of a person, he's not, he's just saying what's on his mind. He's just, he read something in the newspaper and he's like 'Oh guess what?' He'll be like, he races dogs and...uh, his dog is called Don't Tell Jane, Jane's his partner's name. So he says 'My bitch Jane' And I'll be like 'Which one?' [laughing] So we'll be like joking around like that. If someone has some strong views against you, you can tell, he wouldn't be having a laugh with you. We talk about other stuff, probably about once every two weeks he'll be like 'Oh guess what?' And you're like 'OK, awkward.' It's just awkward, he doesn't mean it in a spiteful way.

Samantha makes the point that she likes having this man at work to stress that she is not troubled by his comments. To ensure that her account does not call into question her earlier point that she has not been exposed to racism in the UK she asserts that she does not consider this man a racist ('Like I said I've never experienced any racism, if you wanna call this racism then that's probably the most I've experienced but I would not label him a racist'). Elaborating on why she does not consider this man a racist, she states that he does not intend to make her feel 'less of a person'. To further her case that this work colleague is not a racist she provides an example of how they 'joke around' together; according to Samantha, someone with 'strong views against you' 'wouldn't be having a laugh with you.' This example of how she and this work colleague 'joke around' also enables her to demonstrate that she is not a powerless victim in her interaction with this man.

The minimisation of racism as a problem in the UK

The second part of my discussion of the ways in which Britain was constructed as a place where racism is/is not a problem during the interviews explores instances of interviewees minimising and relativising racism in the

UK. The first exchange I discuss comes from an interview I conducted with Eugene. Near the end of the interview I asked him to tell me about his first impressions of the UK:

L: What were your first impressions when you first arrived in Britain?

E: You know I came at the wrong time...winter [laughter]. Yeah I came at the wrong time. In general I realised, especially coming after witnessing a lot of atrocities, I found it here more comfortable. Like for example I applied for college and they replied to me, something I had been struggling with. The only thing here that really troubled me was winter, otherwise most of the things were alright.

In response to my question about his first impressions of Britain, Eugene talks about arriving at the 'wrong time' (winter). This could be heard as a faithful account of his first impressions; after all, feeling hot or cold is often one of the first embodied experiences one has when one arrives in a new country. Indeed, such reports are a common feature of narratives of arrival as this extract from the memoir *The Last Resort* by Douglas Rogers illustrates: 'Exiting the aircraft, I was smacked square on the face by the bright fist of an African sun' (Rogers 2010: 17-18). However, as research by Chamberlain (2005) indicates, talk about the weather can be orientated to action (see also Coupland and Ylance 2006). UK residents from Barbados told Chamberlain that when they first arrived, the only negative thing they were willing to say about life in Britain in letters home was that the weather was bad as they did not want to worry their relatives. To say that the weather is bad is to say something negative but rather innocuous about a country. Thus, including complaints about the weather in letters home helped the Barbadian migrants give the impression that they were providing a balanced and honest account of their life in the UK. Like those interviewed by Chamberlain, Eugene may be using his reported dislike of the weather to give the impression of balance whilst ensuring that this negative evaluation of Britain does not call into question his account of how life in the UK is relatively trouble-free compared to life in Zimbabwe. I went on to ask him whether there is anything else, besides the weather, which he dislikes about living in Britain:

L: Anything else you dislike about living in Britain?

E: No not really. Sometimes people go into minor things, you know, minor things like racism and so on. In Zimbabwe I was suffering from tribalism, I was experiencing tribalism so no matter where you go in the world you always have these things but for me it has not been a problem. I know people are different, I know people are different but.. it's not a bother for me.

Eugene identifies racism as something that others may deem a negative aspect of living in Britain although he trivialises this as a 'minor' thing. By pointing to the existence of tribalism in Zimbabwe, Eugene denies that racism is a particular problem in Britain.

The exchange proceeded as follows:

L: When you say it's not a bother do you mean you haven't experienced it or you have but it's not something you see as-

E: -I have but I don't focus on it. Why somebody is doing that you may never know, what is making them do that...At times you see someone being nasty, maybe they have their own issues, you know. Sometimes I watch some Christian channels, there is an America preacher, a young preacher, his name is John Austin. John Austin was saying he went to a bank and he was in a queue and the lady was very unfriendly to customers and when he got there he asked her what was the problem, he said 'Can we pray?' And they prayed and after that the lady told him at home her son was not well. So if he hadn't talked to her he wouldn't have known what the reason was. So if you see people acting very strangely you have to think of so many things, you hold back and see whether, there could be so many issues.. maybe somebody is ill at home, lost a relative or maybe somebody is being abused at home.

L: How about overt racism, have you had any experiences of that?

E: No. Personally I would say most British people are accommodating but you will find at times that even if they are accommodating some of us who come here we abuse the system.

Eugene states that although he has experienced racism in the UK, he does not focus on it as 'why somebody is doing that you may never know'. To illustrate this argument he produces a narrative about the preacher John Austin before concluding that one should 'hold back' when someone is 'nasty' as people may have other reasons for acting in this way. The argument that one should not jump to conclusions could be heard as a further attempt to minimise the significance of racism in the UK. Given that those who make accusations of racism are at risk of being deemed over-sensitive (van Dijk 1992), this may also be regarded as an attempt by Eugene to position himself

as someone who is unwilling to accuse others of racism without being sure of their intentions.

In response to my question regarding whether he has experienced ‘overt racism’ in the UK, Eugene states that this is not something he has experienced adding that most British people are ‘accommodating’. His suggestion that ‘some of us who come here we abuse the system’ may be heard as an exoneration of British people who are not ‘accommodating’. North African migrants living in the suburbs of Paris interviewed by Lamont et al. (2002) also engaged in this practice of justifying negative actions towards migrants (see also Verkuyten 2005). Some of the men they interviewed suggested that they have never encountered racism because they live a ‘tranquil’ life and go straight from their workplace to their home, the implication being that those who experience racism only have themselves to blame for making themselves conspicuous. Some went further and suggested that migrants who are aggressive and destructive *make* French people racist. Like the North African migrants interviewed by Lamont et al. (2002), Eugene implicitly suggests that the negative reaction migrants receive in Britain is justified on account of their unreasonable behaviour (some abuse the system).

Like Eugene, Fred raised the issue of racism in response to a question I asked concerning his first impressions when he arrived in Britain:

L: When you arrived in Britain was it as you expected or different than you expected? Anything surprising?

F: Here?

L: Yeah.

F: No...life in [country Y in Europe where Fred lived in for a number of years] is the same thing as life in England, isn’t it? There was nothing that I, I mean if it was a question of discrimination, it never bothered me anyway because we were so used to it, this name calling. Even in [country X], children would say ‘xxxxx, xxxxx’ that’s ‘black man, black man.’ It never bothered me. I firmly believe that people are...universally the same, white, black, green, yellow, people are universally the same. There are usually good people in every community, lots of good people. I would like to believe that in any community 98, 97, 95% are good people. So...I’d already grown to that situation.

Fred suggests that although there was nothing that he personally found surprising when he arrived in Britain, discrimination in the form of racialised name calling is something that one could potentially find surprising about life in the UK. However, he then goes on to universalise racialised name calling by suggesting that this was something he was used to by the time he had moved to the UK. His point that the majority of people in every community are good implicitly frames racialised name calling as a rare occurrence, albeit a universal one.

Unclear if Fred has told me that he has experienced racism in Britain or not, my follow up question requests a more personal response:

L: So have you experienced racism in Britain?

F: In Britain? No, I've never had any. People say so but I always say, 'Tell me in what way?' I don't think there is any, I've never been denied access to this or that because of my colour. No. We are treated the same. At the time of voting when I was going round, there were these placards there for the BNP³³. So you know this person hates..but personally I don't think I have experienced anything like that, I don't think so.

Fred defines racism as being denied access to something due to the colour of one's skin, a structural conceptualisation of racism (Doane 2006). On the basis of this definition, he states that he has not experienced racism in Britain and doubts whether it exists at all. He suggests that while racism does not exist in the UK, racialised hatred does, as indicated by the BNP placards in his area. His display of uncertainty regarding whether he has personally encountered racialised hatred (two uses of 'I don't think') gives the impression that if he *has* encountered this then it has not affected him to the extent that it is memorable. This mirrors his earlier insistence that racialised name calling does not bother him.

Further examples of relativised constructions of racism can be found in Zweli's life story. In this first extract, he compares racism in Britain in the contemporary era to racism in the past:

³³ British National Party

Z: Anyway so I came here and I started nursing, very uneventful really [...] actually that was the first place where I found racism, from patients, because I hadn't found it anywhere, college, the lecturers, fellow students, pubs, restaurants, travelling but obviously on that one -to-one in the hospital that's when I found it [...] But um....I've never had a proper perspective of it, only from like West Indian colleagues who were born here, 'Oh it used to be like "no Irish, no dogs".' These are the things I hear but um.... I haven't lived them so to me my relationship with it is the same relationship I've had with... apartheid back home, I just happened to be born when it was ending and lived with people who had the scars from it. Here as well, yes it probably still exists but I don't feel it's in my face all the time.

Zweli produces a relativised construction of racism in Britain by suggesting that although it 'probably still exists', it is not in his face all the time. This invokes notions of racism becoming more subtle over time (see for example Balibar 1991; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995).

Later in the interview, Zweli compared racism in Britain to racism in Zimbabwe:

Z: When you come to the UK that's how the vista opens. [In Zimbabwe] There are no white beggars, tramps, there are no poor white people..even coloureds, rarely. So it's an eye opener when you see working class white people [in the UK]. White people in Zimbabwe tend to be in management because they are in the minority. In your head you know black people do the work so when you come to the UK and you realise white people actually work [...] So you realise OK it's a white country. White people talk to you politely, OK you can have a few incidents here and there but it's totally different.

Zweli uses the relative presence of poor white people in Zimbabwe and Britain to help him convey the extent to which social privilege is racialised in Zimbabwe. The salience of racism as an issue in the UK is minimised through comparison with Zimbabwe ('OK you can have a few incidents here and there but it's totally different').

Summary

Starting from the assumption that representations of places have interactional as well as social effects (Di Masso et al. 2014), this section of the chapter has

explored the way in which the men and women I interviewed orientated to two communicative goals in the process of talking about racism in Britain: the maintenance of a positive self-identity and the minimisation of racism via relativisation and universalisation. I started by exploring the different ways in which interviewees sought to maintain a positive identity whilst identifying racism as a feature of life in the UK. For Jacob this involved drawing on personal experiences of racism to validate his claim that racism exists in Britain whilst trying to ensure that his testimony did not undermine the positive self-identity he had created for himself as a carefree person. For Samantha, this entailed identifying racism as a potential challenge associated with living in the UK whilst making sure she was not regarded as a victim of racism by stressing that this is not something she has experienced personally. She also sought to maintain a positive self-identity by making it clear that if she was subject to racism, she would take action by retaliating or raising a formal complaint.

The discussion then moved on to the ways in which the interviewees minimised the significance of racism as an issue in the UK. One way in which interviewees denied that the UK has a particular problem with racism was to point out that discrimination exists everywhere (universalising). Speakers also denied that racism is an endemic feature of British society by suggesting that the majority of people in the UK are ‘good people’ or ‘accommodating’. A further strategy employed by interviewees to minimise the seriousness of racism as an issue in Britain was to compare it to racism in the past or elsewhere (relativising).

Summary

This chapter has explored the way in which interviewees talked about Zimbabwe and Britain. My readings of the interview accounts attended to the way in which interviewees’ utterances concerning the crisis in Zimbabwe and the extent to which Britain has a problem with racism were filled with the echoes and reverberations of preceding utterances (Bakhtin 1986). Part one

explored engagements with prevailing arguments concerning who is responsible for the crisis in Zimbabwe, while part two explored instances in which interviewees' talk appeared to have dialogic overtones of arguments that racism does not exist in the UK and those who accuse others of racism are guilty of wrongfully vilifying others. Studies such as this which explore the reproduction and contestation of representations of place at the micro-level provide an insight into how stability and change in place meanings are produced over time.

Building on the work of those who have explored the way in which constructions of place can be orientated to the achievement of particular social and interactional goals (see Durrheim and Dixon 2001; Wallwork and Dixon 2004; Garner 2013; Di Masso et al. 2014), my readings of the interview accounts also attended to the action-orientation of interviewees' constructions of Zimbabwe and Britain. I discussed the way in which interviewees produced constructions of Zimbabwe which attributed blame for the country's economic decline, and talk about racism in Britain which was orientated to maintaining a positive self-identity and minimising the significance of racism as a problem in the UK.

Place attachments

He ran away from home
where, he thought, all pain
began.
He went to another country
Where he discovered
The pain of leaving home.
- Charles Mungoshi (2009)

It was a nightmare city that I lived in for a year; endless miles of
heavy, damp, dead buildings on a dead, sour earth, inhabited by pale,
misshapen sunless creatures under a low sky of grey vapour.
Then, one evening, walking across a park, the light welded
buildings, trees and scarlet buses into something familiar and
beautiful, and I knew myself to be at home.
- Doris Lessing (1957)

This chapter explores the way in which four of the men and women I interviewed talked about their relationships with current and former places of residence. As discussed in Chapter Two, articulations of place attachment can be heard/read as discursive constructions rather than expressions of emotional affinities with places (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Taylor 2001; Di Masso et al. 2014). This involves exploring how in the process of talking about their relationships with particular places, speakers become part of a public dialogue (Dixon and Durrheim 2000) in which modes of representing place attachments are reproduced and contested. One commonly employed trope for talking about belonging is the root metaphor which suggests that people, like plants, are rooted to a particular place (Malkki 1992). The term ‘uprooting’ which conjures up an image of a plant being wrenched from the soil, suggests that migration is an emotional upheaval, while ‘putting down roots’ connotes settlement. A related mode of representing belonging is the

born-and-bred narrative (Taylor 2005b). Like the root metaphor, this narrative naturalises the relationship between people and places by suggesting that birth and long-term residence in a particular place constitutes the basis of belonging.

Apart from reproducing prevailing tropes and narratives for talking about place attachments, speakers may also negotiate the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2011) relating to their current or former places of residence. Central to all political projects of belonging is the construction and maintenance of boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, however the requisites of belonging vary considerably, resulting in a politics of belonging which is time/space specific (Yuval-Davis 2011).

When exploring the construction of place attachments in talk, it is important to consider the way in which such relationships are constituted within particular interactional contexts. This means exploring the manner in which the ‘varying ways of discursively locating the self may fulfil varying social and rhetorical functions’ (Dixon and Durrheim 2000: 33). One such function is the construction of identity, as discursively constructing a place and positioning oneself in relation to it provides considerable scope for identity work (Taylor 2003).

As discussed in Chapter Three, most of the men and women I interviewed rejected the migrant subject position my research created for them by foregrounding other aspects of their life such as their political activism, career, or experiences of state-sponsored violence. As a result, most of the talk concerning place attachments discussed in this chapter was produced in response to questions I asked the interviewees. Focusing on the accounts of the four men and women who talked most extensively about their (dis)connections to past and present places of residence, this chapter explores the way in which the interviews were a site for the discursive construction of relationships to places.

Zweli

I met Zweli at his local library and after a brief discussion about the research, he started his life story. After a while we decided to leave the library as its soundscape was making our talk stilted. Zweli suggested we go to nearby park so the rest of the interview and the subsequent interview took place there. The park was familiar to Zweli; later in the interview he told me that he liked to go there to watch the sun set and reflect, and that these ‘sunset reflections’ are his ‘attachment’ to the area in which he lives. Despite suggesting that he is attached to his local area, he talked about being reluctant to ‘put down roots’ in England where he had lived since the late 1990s:

Z: I’m very apprehensive of, reluctant to purchase a house in England because I feel like if I put down those kind of roots I will be saying I’m not going [back to Zimbabwe]. But um..being here for such a long time, I’m even finding it difficult to actually change from indefinite to citizenship and say I’m a citizen. My elder brother, as soon as his citizenship came ah he kissed it, he loved it and said, ‘Me, I’m not going back to Africa.’ And this is the guy who had been to war! [L: Yeah] you see so he had been to war to change this country and when we talk he gets pained, ‘Why would you want to tie your fortunes with such a failing institution like Zimbabwe?’ Then I tell him that Zimbabwe is failing, the institution is the people, but the place is not failing [L: No], the people are failing but there could be other generations, every country has its own record of failure.

Zweli equates purchasing a house with putting down roots, which in turn connotes settlement. His account of finding it difficult to put down roots, and the reported conversations he has with his brother, serve to position him as someone who is loyal to Zimbabwe and refuses to give up hope that the country will change for the better.

I asked him to tell me more about his reluctance to put down roots the second time we met:

L: And you described how [...] you’ve been trying to make roots here but you’ve been finding it difficult. Again, if you could just sort of elaborate on that.

Z: [...] I have a nostalgia for Zimbabwe that I find difficult to beat. Yet um...when a white person says to me, ‘Are you from Zimbabwe?’ Unless I have had a conversation with them, sometimes I just keep quiet, I find it

difficult because to me I am from a place where we persecuted white people. You know the way the news is like, news shows people beating farmers, burning their homes but where I am from there is barely a single farm [laughing]

L: Yeah, so you don't want to be identified-

Z: -You know but collective, there's nothing I can do because it's a collective, the identification is collective and I am part of the collective responsibility of what happens and...it does affect me, how am I perceived, being from there, it does affect me, how am I perceived? If I am from a country where people could persecute others like that where there was not a, I don't think the law was properly established to say 'OK guys, you give it to us on this day'. To me it was a humiliation really but I'm not the only one.. because whether I'm with my wife, let's say we are invited somewhere and we come into a room, one thing is, in England people always ask, 'Where are you from?' That's the first thing people ask you, 'Where are you from?' And I, I feel the pain when I look at my wife, even friends, you know, people know that as soon as they say 'Zimbabwe,' the next thing is 'Land invasion', that kind of thing [...] a shrink here would say I'm being evasive and trying to shake responsibility but that's another thing that I think makes Zimbabweans want to identify themselves the way they do, that 'I'm from Matabeleland', 'I'm from Mashonaland' that kind of thing [L: Rather than Zimbabwe] yeah rather than Zimbabwe. Before Zimbabwe was called Zimbabwe it used to be Rhodesia. Before it was Rhodesia it was a divided into different kingdoms but the only people who had a king and a structure were the Ndebeles. So after that obviously it was painful because Zimbabwe is a Shona word and the country has been called, one group has had the monopoly to decide the flag, the identity of the country. Even news, like internet news, radio stations and stuff Zimbabwe is presented as a Shona entity and has nothing to share yet I am profoundly aware that I could never pick a blade of English grass and kiss it..in terms of patriotism [L: Mhm] I could not be so patriotic but to you, you know Southampton you can look at it [L: Mhm] you were born there..what can I say? Your relationship with the place, you know, if someone burnt down something, they burnt down the city there or there were riots in Southampton, you see you would go to the public square and vent your frustrations, you know what I mean? [L: Mhm] But um in England when there is a march or a protest..even if I turned up, when there are marches and things, they normally petition us in the high street, so I take these petitions and read and I've been once to Hyde Park [...] But um I always feel like an outsider, I'm outside of something, you know... I would feel ridiculous to be as passionate as to cry for a violation of an English principle, you know? [L: OK] Yet eventually I will have to adopt it as my home which I probably have done.

In response to my request for him to tell me more about the difficulty he is having putting down roots in England, Zweli characterises his relationship with Zimbabwe as ambivalent and his connection with England as emotionally detached. He starts by stating that he has a nostalgia for Zimbabwe that he finds 'difficult to beat', however he goes

on to suggest that this relationship is complicated by concerns about the way in which Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans are perceived by others; he states that when a white person asks him where he is from, he finds it difficult to respond that he is from Zimbabwe as Zimbabwe is ‘a place where we have persecuted white people’. This description of Zimbabwe may be understood in terms of its ‘action orientation’ (Potter 1996); Zweli describes Zimbabwe as place where white people have been persecuted to work up his account of the pain and humiliation he has to endure every time a white person asks him where he is from. This characterisation of Zimbabwe as ‘a place where we have persecuted white people’ may also be heard as ironic in the sense that this is the overriding impression one might have of Zimbabwe if one’s only contact with the country was via the ‘news [which] shows people beating farmers, burning their homes’. When Zweli states, ‘you know the way the news is like’, perhaps he is signalling to his immediate and/or imagined audience that he is aligning himself with those who have criticised the Western media coverage of the expropriation of land in Zimbabwe for being disproportionate, ahistorical and for narrowly focusing on the plight of white farmers at the expense of the thousands of black farm workers and their families who lost their homes, livelihoods, and in some cases their lives (see for example Younge 2000; Lessing 2003; Willems 2005; GAPWUZ 2009; Pilosof 2009; Tendi 2010b).

Apart from the concerns he has about how Zimbabwe is perceived by others, Zweli suggests that the way in which the country is presented as ‘a Shona entity’ has also complicated his relationship with Zimbabwe. His point that ‘one group has had the monopoly to decide the flag, the identity of the country’ evokes arguments of Shona cultural imperialism mobilised by political activists, media commentators and academics in debates concerning the extent to which the Matabeleland region is marginalised (see Chapter Four). For example, in an article posted on the Solidarity Peace Trust website in 2011, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) states:

African nationalism as the medium of implementation of the idea of Zimbabwe became deeply interpellated by ethnicity from its birth despite some pretensions of unity by the early nationalists...Beginning with the naming, Shona histories, symbols and heroes were increasingly elevated into anchorages of the imagined nation.

Apart from describing the nature of his relationship with Zimbabwe, Zweli talks about his sentiments towards England. By stating that he would never kiss a blade of English grass or decry the violation of an English principle, Zweli is suggesting that he would never feel the sort of love or loyalty to the nation that moves people to engage in such performances of patriotism. The comparison Zweli draws between the emotionally detached relationship he has with England and the strong sentiments he presumes I have for Southampton (the city I was born in) invokes the born-and-bred narrative (Taylor 2005b). This mode of talking about belonging confers an apparent logic on the notion that belonging is an attribute of birth and long-term residence in a particular place (Taylor 2005b).

Later in the interview, I asked him to tell me more about his experience of being asked where he is from:

L: You mentioned how people always ask you where you are from.

Z: That, yeah, that's one profound thing you can say about, it makes it awkward. Here I can really bear my soul to you and say sometimes I have lied [L: Really] yeah I have just not had the courage to say, especially if there's four or five white faces, I've never had the courage to say, 'I'm from Zimbabwe.' I will just say.. I will say 'I'm from South Africa.' Then I realise 'Ah they have apartheid and Aids and all these problems.'

L: What are you, what are you concerned-

Z: -They will judge me, 'You farm grabber and invader.' [L: OK] It's reverse racism, you see? So white South Africans, there's a time when white South Africans didn't want to be known to have been from South Africa because of apartheid, the intransigence, you know? [L: Yep] It's the same thing [L: OK] [...] I remember we were in a bar [...] we normally go there and play soccer games, then this guy said, 'Where are you from?' We were playing on the table, four of us. So he looked straight into my eyes so I was the one in charge of giving the answer and I looked at them, none of them answered so I was the one in charge of giving the answer and I said 'South Africa' [laughing]. So we carried on then the other guy said to me 'I don't approve of that kind of lie.' I said to him, 'If you didn't want me to lie why didn't you speak up?' He said 'Because he didn't ask me.' So I kept quiet. Then the other day when we had the same group again I said to him,

‘I regret having said that.’ I did, I regretted it because this lie, I’ve always said it when I’m with my wife because my wife has never castigated me for it, instead she has shown a bit of relief [laughing] [...] I don’t know why but when you have such upheavals it saps at your dignity and it makes people resort to these things. But ever since I did that lie, now I, like you see I responded to your thing [advert], I changed, I don’t know why but I reached a point where I don’t do it anymore.

Zweli builds here on his earlier account of finding the experience of being asked where he is from difficult due to concerns about how he will be perceived. To demonstrate the extent of his fear of being judged, he states that he has sometimes lied rather than say he is from Zimbabwe. This is marked as a confession (‘Here I can really bare my soul to you’), which is followed by an expression of remorse (‘I regretted it’), a justification for lying in this way (‘when you have such upheavals it saps at your dignity’), and an account of how he no longer engages in this practice. He points to his response to my advertisement (see Appendix B) as evidence that he no longer avoids self-identifying as someone from Zimbabwe (‘like you see I responded to your thing, I changed’). This illustrates the accounting work that occurs in interviews, the way in which speech acts are orientated to presenting oneself in a morally adequate light (Rapley 2001).

This exchange about Zweli’s experience of being asked where he is from continued as follows:

L: So people ask-

Z: -Everybody and, ‘Mugabe, what’s wrong with that man?’

L: Really? So they start talking to you about politics?

Z: About Mugabe [...] The problem is that as soon as you mention you are from Zimbabwe people say ‘Mugabe.’ Then when they have said that, if there is more time the conversation grows and you know the conversation just changes and you find you are having to, because the person when he talks about Mugabe, he demeans Zimbabweans, he says, ‘The man is this old.’ But people don’t understand that the man is a big intricate system, the repressive system is so intricate that you can’t just, people think why don’t you do like Egypt and turn up on the street? The way the people phrase the thing when they say ‘Mugabe,’ they phrase it like that then what happens is the thing flips and now you are defending Zimbabwe. Then in the process you find that you are being put in a position where now you are defending Mugabe. If you say ‘South Africa,’ most people what they do, ‘Ohh white people, ohh apartheid, we are so sorry.’ But these other countries, people say ‘Where are you from?’ Then I say ‘Zimbabwe.’ Then they will go on and on and on.

Zweli expands on why he finds the experience of being asked where he is from 'awkward': he states that when he replies that he is from Zimbabwe the enquirer invariably starts talking about President Mugabe (in distinction from politics) and this puts him in the position of having to defend Zimbabweans. He suggests that the reason he is put in this position is that those who ask him where he is from tend to have a limited understanding of the political situation in Zimbabwe; they do not understand that the President is part of a big, intricate and repressive system so they cannot understand why Zimbabweans do not 'do like Egypt and turn up on the street'. Zweli is referring here to the mass demonstrations that took place in Egypt in early 2011 which resulted in President Mubarak's resignation. As discussed in Chapter Four, the interviews took place in the context of the Arab Spring which sparked debates amongst Zimbabweans as to whether a similar revolution might occur in Zimbabwe. Zweli is clearly aligning himself here with those who took the position that a mass uprising could not take place in Zimbabwe because, as one commentator put it, it is unrealistic to expect 'a traumatized, over-policed and bitten-down Zimbabwean population trapped in extreme fear of a bloodthirsty regime to gather in millions demanding Mugabe's resignation' (Chingosho 2011).

Zweli talked further about his relationships with Zimbabwe and England when I asked him what the term 'home' means to him:

L: I've been asking people about ah...where they consider their home
[Z: Home] their concept of home-

Z: -Home, yeah so my concept of home is ah-

L: -Sorry, and what makes that place home to them.....Which is quite a hard question because it's quite [Z: I know it], it's quite [Z: I know it] difficult to pinpoint isn't it?

Z: The difference between, everyone knows it, the difference between the person who describes it is just I think a matter of eh.....how one arranges their words and-

L: -Mm being able to express it-

Z: -How flowery the language sounds but eh.....You know I would first bounce off a reflection on you and then describe it. Like you said when you moved from Southampton, after you arrived in London and unpacked your things maybe after a weekend you went back to Southampton-

L: -Yeah everything is familiar-

Z: -You saw that then you went back to London so London is home from home. If I open the gate of family home in Zimbabwe and come out I know...I know how that house was built [L: Mhm] how the town is [L: Mhm] and who lives there, who has died there [L: Mhm] that kind of thing. So..the single word probably, like you say familiarity. Another thing is...besides familiarity is predictability, I know so-and-so, I know his history...there are no surprises [L: No] [...] So my whole existence was encompassed in the place of being there [L: Mhm]. So when I've then moved to Britain, it's an uprooting. Now um my whole body language is eh..I can't be myself..It's um...its um just an outward appearance, there's no grounded rooting, even mental, some people would say spiritual but I'm not spiritual [L: No] but mental, when I walk..like I said I come to the bench and watch the sun set, I like that, it's my attachment to [area in the city in England he lives in]. But as for living in [area in city] here, I didn't even see the park and how it came about, I found the things the way they are [L: Mmm] you know I have no connection with the people except that probably our council taxes pay for us, pay for the services [L: Mhm][...]The knowledge that the sky wouldn't be the limit here if I, even if I said I wanted to pursue the best job [L: Mm], I couldn't possibly be an MP, I wasn't born in the place, there are restrictions to what I can aspire to and what I can't. Even if I acquired naturalisation there are certain things I cannot overcome [...] That's my perception of why I call Zimbabwe home and England home from home [L: Mhm] because now I have the ability to call it home from home because I have adopted most of the things including the language.

The way in which the interview is a site of dominance and resistance (Scheurich 1997) is particularly tangible in this extract. Zweli interrupts as I formulate a question about home and I refuse to relinquish control by allowing him to take the floor. On two occasions he rejects my framing of the question as 'hard', and instead of taking these two statements as a cue to let him respond, I continue to formulate my question ('Which is quite a hard question because its quite [Z: I know it], its quite [Z: I know it] difficult to pinpoint isn't it?'). His point that 'everyone knows' what makes a place feel like a home continues to challenge my framing of the question as difficult.

Zweli's account of what the term 'home' means to him starts with a distinction between a 'home' and a 'home from home' using the places I have lived for illustrative purposes: he suggests that Southampton is my home and London is my home from home. It seems as if this distinction is co-constructed; my point that a visit to Southampton after I had moved to London would have been accompanied by the feeling that 'everything is familiar' is heard as confirmation that I regard

Southampton as home. What I did not tell Zweli is that I actually found Southampton's familiarity disconcerting and I felt more at home in London (this remains the case at the time of writing). My reluctance to question his assumptions about my place attachments may be explained perhaps by the influence of the consensus model, a model of research relationships which dominates research practice and places a strong emphasis on developing and maintaining rapport (Knowles 2006).

Building on his account of why he calls Zimbabwe home, Zweli suggests that since his move to England, which he describes as an 'uprooting', he can no longer 'be [him]self'. As his use of the term 'uprooting' suggests, 'people are often thought of, and think of themselves, as being rooted in place and as deriving their identity from that rootedness' (Malkki 1992:27). One of the effects of the root metaphor is the pathologisation of displacement (Malkki 1992) and we can see this in Zweli's account of how being out of place has led to a loss of identity. The pathologisation of displacement as an effect of the root metaphor is also illustrated by the following extract from Alexandra Fuller's autobiography *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (Fuller 2002: 153-154):

In Rhodesia, we are born and then the umbilical cord of each child is sewn straight from the mother onto the ground, where it takes root and grows. Pulling away from the ground causes death by suffocation, starvation. That's what the people of this land believe.

Zweli's use of the root metaphor is consistent with his repeated reproduction of the born-and-bred narrative as both naturalise the relationship between particular people and places. For instance, he invoked the born-and-bred narrative when he described how he encourages his daughter to regard England as her home:

Z: I speak English more than I speak any other language here because my wife is Ndebele and I'm not Ndebele [...] We speak to her [their daughter] in English both of us, she doesn't know any of our languages...So that's why I call it home from home. I'm trying to give her an identity, I don't want her to have a...she hasn't migrated, she's never seen Zimbabwe [L: No] so I don't want her to then have these lofty ideas of some African...you know.

L: So you don't really talk to her about Zimbabwe?

Z: I do, everything, what it's like [L: OK], that I was born there but unlike other people I'm not saying, 'That is your home.' It is my home. I tell her 'Your home is here in England, you were born here and you are being raised here.' So I'm equipping her with the mindset to be able to start and run and compete with her colleagues in a country she's born in and been raised rather than to have some lofty ideas that, you know, you can have lofty ambitions that I will go back to Africa where there is good land [L: Mhm] and then when she gets there and finds all the dictatorship and killings that may be happening at that time when she goes, you know, her expectations will spectacularly crash.

Zweli describes how he has instilled in his daughter the notion that birth in England constitutes an authentic claim of belonging, a central premise of the born-and-bred narrative (Taylor 2005b), to equip her with an identity and a mindset that will stand her in good stead for the future. The confidence and contentment he suggests his daughter will develop from living in the place of her birth and having an uncomplicated singular identity can be compared to the ambiguous identity and perpetual sense of unease he attributes to Zimbabweans who have migrated:

Z: Zimbabweans who have migrated, both black and white, I see a lot of ambiguity about who they are [L: Mmm], are they still Zimbabwean or British? [L: Yeah]...Most are neither here nor there [L: No], you know.

L: Like many migrants I should imagine.

Z: I know. Migration, I studied migration and geography...Now when I'm giving you my answers I feel the vagueness of the studies I used to study [L: Mmm] and think, 'These immigrants, couldn't they just make up their minds and say what they are.' Now it's me.

L: No I'm not doing that kind of study. I'm not trying to put you in a box, it's not like a survey-

Z: I know, I know but I'm just telling you [L: Yeah] that when I'm talking to you I do feel like you know I'm neither here nor there, that's the state of migration, of displacement, you are sitting on a floating island, that kind of thing.. there is no solidity, that kind of thing. It's difficult to place it with words but it's a feeling that...probably like someone with cancer, I don't know how many times it happens a day that they think, 'I have cancer,' 'by the way I have cancer.' It's like that, 'by the way I'm an immigrant, by the way I'm an immigrant.' So yeah every time I see something that is new to me, the sharpness that I'm an immigrant comes, a new experience, a novel experience, it keeps in mind that 'OK I'm an immigrant, OK I'm an immigrant.' So that, 'I'm an immigrant,' it's a constant thing that's just there [L: Mmm], I do everything and get on, but 'I'm an immigrant,' you know [L: Mhm].

This extract illustrates the dynamic process in which participants in a conversation position themselves and others, and resist and take up the

positions made available to them by the other speaker (Davies and Harre 1990). Zweli appears to hear my response to his point that most Zimbabweans who have migrated are ‘neither nor there’ (‘like many migrants I should imagine’) as an attempt to position myself as someone who is knowledgeable about migration as he replies that he knows that this ambiguity is not unique to Zimbabweans, and asserts his own academically derived knowledge of the subject (‘I know. Migration, I studied migration and geography’). He goes on to suggest that when he studied migration he used to wonder why migrants ‘couldn’t just make up their minds and say what they are’ but now he is ‘one of them’. I hear this as a suggestion that I too might expect migrants to ‘just make up their minds and say what they are’, and deny this by stating that I am not doing the ‘kind of study’ which puts people in boxes. Zweli interrupts as I elaborate on my methodological approach to direct the conversation back to his experience of being a migrant.

Zweli compares ‘the state of migration’ to ‘sitting on a floating island’. This metaphor helps him convey the lack of ‘solidity’ and the sense of feeling ‘neither here nor there’ which he associates with displacement. However, a metaphor does not reflect some underlying similarity antecedently existing; rather it creates the similarity (Black 1955; Lakoff and Johnsen 1980/2003). This metaphor of sitting on a floating island, which gives meaning to the state of migration, is likely to resonate with some³⁴ but certainly not all migrants.

Zweli’s point that every time he sees something new in the UK he is reminded that he is a migrant builds on his earlier construction of home as a place where everything is familiar and predictable. This notion that encounters with the unfamiliar serve to remind migrants that they are out of place echoes literary and poetic accounts of exile such as NoViolet Bulawayo’s poem ‘Diaspora’ (Bulawayo 2009):

³⁴ Zweli’s metaphor for ‘the state of migration’ would seemingly resonate with poet Tinshe Mushakavanhu who describes the impact of his move from Zimbabwe to Wales in the following terms: ‘once I left Zimbabwe, I could not dream to write like the old me. I belonged neither here nor there...living in exile, I ceased to be myself and my life therefore became a negotiated existence’ (Mushakavanhu 2009: 151).

we perch like lost doves
on frosted branches
of alien tress whose names
we don't know
lands far away from home,
we are the strange fruit.
[...]

Summary

Through a combination of narratives and reflective statements, Zweli constructed an ambivalent relationship with Zimbabwe and an emotionally remote connection to England. He suggested that his attachment to Zimbabwe has been complicated by concerns about the way in which it is perceived by others, and by his sense of being excluded from the narrative of the nation. An emotionally remote relationship with England was constructed through talk about a reluctance to put down roots and an account of how he does not imagine he will ever feel patriotic about England. In the process of constructing his relationships with Zimbabwe and England in this way, Zweli evoked the born-and-bred narrative and the root metaphor, both of which naturalise the relationship between particular people and places. The root metaphor was also employed by Zweli to help him characterise 'the state of migration' as a dislocated existence, as one of the effects of this metaphor is that displacement is rendered a pathological experience.

Samantha

Samantha texted me in July 2011 and suggested we meet in city A where she was planning to spend a long weekend. At the time of the interview she lived in city B, but visited a former place of residence, city A, on a regular basis. For Samantha, her weekend in city A was a homecoming:

L: Where would you say is home?

S: Home..to be honest with you even if my mum didn't live in [area of city A], home for me is [area of city A], period. I can live in [city B], I can live in [city C], I have lived in [city C] for a year. Home, when I plan to move back to [city A] I'm going to find a place in [area of city A], [district X of city A] side, that's where I have memories, school memories. It just...it just brings me back. That is home for me. At the moment that's the home I know. Even

if my mum is not living there I could see myself being there. I don't mind travelling two or three hours to a job and coming back to [area of city A] because I know this is home, whatever happens this is my home yeah.

L: What would you say makes it feel like home?

S: Memories. I remember my mum used to say like your best memories are in school and she was definitely right because like I only went to like that school for like a year and a half then A-levels, so it was only three or four years but those are like memories that are just..In [city B] no matter how long I stay there for I don't feel I belong [...] Whenever I come into [city A] I'm like 'Yeah I get to go home!' That's my home. Sometimes I can say [city B] but...the only person that is there for me in [city B] is my best friend who lives there but..you know she's got her own life as well, her own boyfriend and all that stuff. I used to have a boyfriend and we lived in [city B] but he's moved away so it's like I can't really call it home [L: No]. I'm just there because I've got a job but it's not home [L: No].

L: So home is where your family and friends are?

S: Exactly, exactly. My aunt lives in [district in city A] which is in [area of city A] as well, literally one bus ride away and whatever, if I'm upset she'll be like 'Come home.' If she says 'Come home' I know what she means, I'm going to go home, get some food and everything, then I can go back home to my mum. Yeah that's just home. I can't, I don't feel like I can call [area in Zimbabwe] home...I was too young number one, number two there is no one there for me anymore, everyone has grown up and left and all that stuff.

Samantha states that home is the area of city A where she lived for approximately four years as a teenager. At the start of this extract, she ensures that her immediate/imagined audience do not make the assumption that she regards this area as her home simply because her mother lives there by stating that she would consider this place her home irrespective of her mother's presence. Rather, Samantha suggests that her relationship with the area is based on happy memories of the time she has spent there. Later, however, she suggests that the presence or absence of significant others *is* an important dimension of her relationships with places of residence ('he's moved away so it's like I can't really call it home' and 'I don't feel like I can call [area in Zimbabwe] home [...] there is no one there for me anymore').

Samantha talked further about her place attachments when I asked her whether she feels a part of Zimbabwe:

L: So your sense of feeling a part of Zimbabwe, you don't really feel-

S: -Well I feel Zimbabwean in [district X of city A], you know. That's where the Zimbabwean people that I know all live. Even now my friend, he lives in Harare, he actually works in my sister's husband's company and he's like, 'Oh are you going to come to Harare?' And I'm like... 'For what though?' I'll feel like a tourist, I'll be like another tourist. It's like you telling me I'm going to go to Hong Kong, 'Oh.. I'll go yeah,' but I don't feel [L: No] belonging at all. But home is [area of city A]. I just get so happy when I think about [area in city A]. Unfortunately the crime rate is a bit high but you know as long as you stay away from those kind of people you're fine. I only lived there for like five years but I still feel like that's my home.

Samantha's response to my question regarding whether she feels 'a part of Zimbabwe' ('Well I feel Zimbabwean in [district X of city A]') may be heard perhaps as a counter to the territorialisation of national and cultural identities (Malkki 1992). With respect to Zimbabwe as a geographical space, she states that she does not 'feel belonging at all'. To help her communicate the absence of belonging, she makes the point that if she visited Zimbabwe she would feel like a tourist. When she states that she *still* regards city A as her home despite the fact that she *only* lived there for five years, she appears to be responding to the central premise of the born-and-bred narrative that it is birth and long term residence that constitutes the basis of belonging (Taylor 2005b). This suggests that the born-and-bred narrative (Taylor 2005b) is so taken-for-granted as a mode of talking about belonging that Samantha has little choice but to engage with it.

I went on to ask her whether she feels any connection to the United States where she lived for approximately four years before moving the UK:

L: How about America, do you feel any connection to America?

S: No, I think it's because um.. I didn't really get to go out that often. I do have, I keep in touch with a few friends but they are not my kind, you know I was telling you I'm a new person now and they don't gel well into that, they're too conservative [...] America..I feel like it was a little stint, you know I lived there for like three or four years [L: Yeah]. Did it, done it, moving on [L: Yeah].

Reproducing her earlier conceptualisation of belonging as an individualistic phenomenon which emerges from the experiences one has and the memories one creates within a place, Samantha states that she does not feel any connection to America because she did not go out very often during the time that she spent there.

Samantha told me that she envisages herself living elsewhere in the future, perhaps South Africa:

S: I don't know, if it was up to me I would probably wait until I was 30 [to have a child] but because of her [Samantha's mother] I will probably wait until 25, when I've got a good job because children are expensive, everything is just so expensive. Plus I'd wanna like move to South Africa or something [L: Really] yeah because I think, especially now, especially Cape Town it's more Western than anything so it wouldn't be a drastic change[...] Cape Town, it's very much like being around here, that's how it is. It's actually got much better now so if ever I was to move back it would probably be to South Africa, Cape Town yeah... I would like to go to Zim but it's just too much. Like driving is crazy, you hear about accidents every other week.[...] In Zimbabwe at the moment I think it's safe if you're in the right areas but why should you have to worry about that? You want to be free.

L: So you can't, so you can't see yourself saying in Britain, you can see yourself moving?

S: I actually do. I just feel like, I don't know..there isn't much to do, number one. Number two...it's just..it's so tiny, everyone is like on one island. I can understand why so many people are trying to leave now. I heard like Brits in Spain have created their own community, they want their own laws now, I can understand them because there are a lot of people here and there are always more people coming in. You can't really complain because you yourself came here didn't you? [laughing] Britain is smaller than Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe has less than ten million people and this country has seven times that in that little island. I don't know, it's OK [...]yeah I would prefer probably to um to live in South Africa and go to Zimbabwe quite a lot [L: Yeah]. I can actually see myself doing that. They've got like Sandton which is like Canary Wharf, exactly like Canary Wharf so I'd be like 'That's my home right there'.

In the process of accounting for her desire to leave the UK in the future, Samantha reproduces an argument mobilised to justify restrictions on immigration, the notion that Britain is overcrowded (Humphries 2002), but immediately marks her adoption of this subject position as problematic ('You can't really complain because you yourself came here didn't you?'). Samantha's identification of Cape Town and Sandton as suitable future homes demonstrates the way in which locating oneself in place does important identity work for the speaker (Taylor 2003). Places are imaginatively constituted through language in ways that carry implications for 'who we are' (Dixon and Durrheim 2000), so by stating that she would like to live in Cape Town, which she describes as Western, and by associating herself with Sandton, which she compares to one of London's financial districts, Samantha is suggesting that she is the kind of person who belongs in Cape Town and Sandton.

Summary

In the process of talking about her relationships with past, present and imagined future places of residence, Samantha suggested that place attachment is an individualistic phenomenon which may or may not develop depending upon the nature of one's experience of residing in that place. This contrasts with the widely held notion that it is birth and long-term residence which constitutes the basis of belonging, referred to by Taylor (2005b) as the born-and-bred-narrative. Despite Samantha's formulation of a conceptualisation of place attachment which acts as a counter to the born-and-bred narrative, her account still bears the trace of it (she explained that she still regards city A as her home despite the fact that she only lived there for five years).

Steve

I interviewed Steve on two occasions in the town in which he has lived since arriving in Britain in the early 2000s. During the interviews, and in our email correspondence before and after the interviews, Steve made numerous references to home. He did not name this place but it was clear that he was not referring to the UK or somewhere in the UK. During the first interview he talked about how he has struggled to come to terms with the fact that his father is buried 'here' rather than 'at home':

that his S: sadly my father got cancer and.....he didn't live for very long after being diagnosed so he died two years ago when he was 70 so....And that was a thing I never, ever contemplated happening, I know people's parents do die but I had never contemplated that he would die here [L: No]. I hadn't thought of that, my brain hadn't gone there [L: Mhm] and I found it...I struggled with that aspect of, the fact that he's buried here, that's what I [L: Mmm] I found it hard to accept that. I would have preferred to... you know, that it would be at home.

Steve's account of finding it hard to accept father is buried in the UK helps him convey the strong relationship he and his family have with the place he calls home, as place of burial can serve as an expression of belonging (Malkki 1992).

As Malkki (1992: 27) points out, ‘in death, too, native or national soils are important’.

Later in the interview, Steve talked about how he coped with his estrangement from his home when he moved to the UK:

S: I thought when I first came here..I gave myself a limit, I thought five years, that’s what I thought, that’s how I coped, I thought, ‘I’m going there for five years..I want British citizenship and I want the protection of a Western country’ that’s how I felt. [...] I actually did think the status quo would have changed within five years judging by what I had seen [L: Mhm] but I didn’t realise the lengths and the extent they would go to hold on to power [...] So my five years is stretched a little longer.

This narrative of how, when he first arrived in Britain, he told himself that he would stay for a maximum of five years as a way of coping with the situation constructs being away from home as a traumatic experience. Steve’s account of leaving Zimbabwe because white Zimbabweans had ‘lost all protection and rights’ implicitly identifies the ZANU-PF government as responsible for his separation from his home and the pain this has caused him.

The second time we met, Steve talked about how he yearns for home but realises he is lucky he is not there:

S: I go through long periods of yearning and then every now and then something will just bring me back to reality [L: Mm]. Like for instance, well I read the Zimbabwean news every day on the websites, so I read about what’s happening there so that keeps me in the loop as it were and I realise that things have not changed for the better, I’m lucky I’m not there. So in a way I have to sort of count my blessings that I am out of it and just leading a normal life. Every now and again I go onto Google Earth [L: Mmm] and I look at the farm [L: Mm] and I don’t know why I do it because every time I do it I get angry, upset, in fact right now I could feel myself getting, if I wanted to, quite emotional over it. The last couple of days I looked on Google Earth, looked at the farm and I follow all the tracks and paths and the river [L: Mm] and I’m looking at it from a mile up but I know it like the back of my hand. I can see individual trees in the middle of big fields which I know and yet I can also see evidence of...where..squatters are now living because the photograph has been taken in the last I don’t know couple of years I would think and I can identify grass huts and little homesteads that have sprung up all around the farm and it fills me with anger [L: Mm] [...] And then when I analyse that I think to myself well the people that are in those huts that are dotted over various fields of our land..are not the ones that instigated or voluntarily went there [L: Mmm]. They would have been instructed by..higher up..members of

ZANU-PF to go and settle on those farms [...]the people that sent them to do that are the ones that must be made accountable.

Steve's narrative of periodically using the Google Maps website to look at the farm paints a picture of someone who finds being estranged from his home an extremely painful experience. ZANU-PF are clearly identified as accountable for the fact that people are living on his land, and perhaps, by implication, for the sadness and anger this causes him.

During the second interview I asked Steve what makes Zimbabwe feel like home:

L: In the last interview you referred to Zimbabwe as home on a number of occasions [S: Yes] What would you say makes Zimbabwe feel like home? I know it's quite difficult to um..put in to words why a place feels like home.

S: When I think of it I think mainly it's just length of time that I lived there, I guess that is..unless I live to be a 100 I will have always lived more there than I will have lived elsewhere. But um I also think a big thing of that is...home is..more to me is..if it belongs to you [L: Mmm]. I live here, I don't own a home..so I find that quite difficult [...] That I think is one of the reasons and also that I'd only ever lived in one..house really [L: Mmm] or on one property. Home is where all my family were [L: Mmm] and my friends and if I think of it all of my grandparents are buried there..let alone my mother. So there's a lot of sense of what makes home [L: Mmm] the people we employed..the pets you've had, the places you've been, the places you know..the smells and the sights, the schools you've been to. I don't know if that's the answer. You know [L: Mmm] when I first came here I would deliberately not say, 'I'm going home,' at lunchtime. I couldn't bring myself to say that [L: Mmm]. I remember I would say 'I'm going to my house,' in distinction from 'I'm going home' [L: Mmm]. Whereas I now find myself x years on, there are occasions when it does slip out, I just say 'I'm just popping home quickly.' And then I think to myself, 'Oh I guess it is my home to some extent.'

Steve starts by providing an unsentimental account of why Zimbabwe feels like home by citing length of residence and home ownership, but he goes on to suggest that the place he regards as his home represents 'the accumulation of many relationships and much history' (Fullilove 1996: 1519). On some occasions he appears to be talking about the family farm rather than, or perhaps in addition to, Zimbabwe ('home is..more to me is..if it belongs to you'). His narrative of deliberately avoiding the word 'home' when referring to his house in Britain does work for him, it helps him communicate the depth of his emotional attachment to the farm in Zimbabwe and the emotionally

detached relationship he has with his house in Britain. In response to the way in which the farm and Zimbabwe appear to be blurred in his account, I asked Steve whether his sense of Zimbabwe as home is tied to the farm. My question may have contained echoes of Mcdermott-Hughes's (2012) argument that white people in Zimbabwe forged a sense of belonging through their connection with the landscape.³⁵

L: So your sense of um home in Zimbabwe is very much tied to the farm?

S: It is for me, yes.

L: So the possibility of going to live in, for instance Harare, it wouldn't feel like home in the same way?

S: No it wouldn't. I've thought of that [L: Mm] as well. I mean in the time I've lived in England I could have easily gone back [L: Mm]. I could've visited people I know who live in Harare, I could go to Bulawayo or Mutare, one of these other cities which are quite, I quite like parts of, all of those places in their own right, I still like them. But I would hate to have to sit there knowing that I don't want to see what they've done to my farm [L: Mm] and knowing that I effectively have no rights to what is my own property [L: Mm].

Once again Steve attempts to communicate the depth of his emotional attachment to the farm, in this case by stating that he does not even wish to visit Zimbabwe as being in the country and knowing that he has no rights to his own property would be too painful.

The way in which he talks about his relationship with Zimbabwe, and more specifically the farm, contrasts starkly with the way in which he talks about his connection with Britain and the town in which he lives:

L: Do you feel that you have any connection to Britain? Obviously your mother was British so you've got that connection but do you feel like you've got some sort of connection to Britain or perhaps to [the town in England Steve lives in]?

S: Um it's taken quite a long time, living in this village [L: Mm] to be befriend people to the extent that I would knock on the door and expect a cup of tea [L: Mm] [...] I quite like [town], I'm familiar with it now, I know where stuff is. I do sort of feel it's my local town [L: Mhm] um I

³⁵ Since I had read *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape, and the Problem of Belonging* (Mcdermott-Hughes 2012) at some point before I interviewed Steve, what I took from the book formed part of the 'considerable conscious and unconscious baggage' (Scheurich 1997: 73) I carried with me to the interview.

have written to our M.P for certain issues, I've had an answer. I do sort of feel part of it, I make sure I vote in the elections [L: Yeah], I have my British passport [L: Mm]...We swore allegiance to the queen, we could choose whether we wanted to or not and we deliberately chose to swear allegiance to the queen [L: Mm] um so I do feel, I didn't do that lightly [L: No] or for nothing, I didn't just do it because it was a laugh. Um..so yes I do feel that connection and you know what if I ever did go back to live in Zimbabwe I would not relinquish my British passport [L: No] I would not. So I feel it is quite an important link, yes.

Steve's use of the hedge 'quite' in the statement 'I quite like [town]' suggests that the connotations of the word 'like' are too strong to describe the regard he has for the town in which he lives. Similarly, his use of the hedge 'sort of' in the statement 'I do sort of feel part of it [the town]' suggests that he does feel some degree of belonging, but to say that he feels a part of the town is an exaggeration, as would saying that his link with Britain is important. However, he ensures that his account of the way in which he feels about Britain and the town in which he lives does not call into question his status as a good citizen by pointing out that he votes in elections, has written to his M.P and swore allegiance to the queen. By positioning himself in this way, Steve is negotiating the politics of belonging in Britain which identifies 'people who share common ideals and (exemplary) patterns of behaviour' (Anderson 2013: 2) as those who belong.

To further explore his relationship with the UK, I asked him how he felt when he returned from his recent holiday:

L: So when you came back from your holiday recently was there that sense of 'Oh I'm back' -

S: -Home, I suppose [L: Yeah], if I can use that word [L: Mm]. Yes I suppose to some extent ya, no there was. I didn't want to come back [laughter] I could have stayed in Corfu. If I won the Euro millions I know where I'm going to go and live! [laughter].

Steve's response to my question regarding how he felt when he arrived back in the UK builds on his earlier construction of his relationship with Britain as emotionally remote. Hedges ('I suppose' and 'to some extent') are used, as before, to lessen the impact of his statements regarding his sense of feeling at home in the UK. By adding that he did not want to come back and would live

in Corfu if money was no object, he ensures that his immediate/ imagined audience are in no doubt that he is a reluctant UK resident.

Summary

In the process of positioning himself in relation to current and former places of residence, Steve constructed himself as emotionally attached to the farm/Zimbabwe and a reluctant UK resident. A combination of statements, narratives and rhetorical devices were used to help him convey the depth of his attachment to the farm/Zimbabwe and the emotionally remote relationship he has with Britain. When asked to explain why Zimbabwe feels like home, Steve started by citing length of residence and home ownership but went on to produce a more sentimental account. During the process of constructing his relationship with Britain as emotionally detached, Steve negotiated the politics of belonging by positioning himself as a good UK citizen.

Fred

I met Fred through his wife Mary, whom I interviewed in April 2011. During the interview, which took place in the kitchen of their home, Mary asked him to come in from the garden so she could check a date with him, and when he got up to leave, she asked him to stay. Fred's participation in Mary's interview has enabled me to explore variations in how he talked about his place attachments in different interactional contexts as when I returned to interview him a few months later, Mary was not present. In both interviews Fred talked about his desire to be buried in Zimbabwe. The first time he talked about this was when Mary initiated a conversation about the possibility of returning to Zimbabwe soon after he had come to sit with us:

M: No you sit down [laughter].

F: No... I still have lots to do in the garden.

[Talk about the garden]

M: [To Fred] Yeah I was trying to, you know life history it is not easy for me.

F: Forgotten your life? [Laughter]

M: Yeah I wish I'd written something down..... I don't know, I was saying to her that you don't want to go back home but I want to go back home but things are not easy there.

F: No I don't want to go back home [L: No] I want to go back home a dead man, ya. [Laughter]

M: Yeah but you see, you need, we need money to take the body there.

F: No I will be alright before that, I will know I'm dying [M: Mmmmmmm]³⁶ [laughter]. If I get ill the doctor will tell me, 'Listen you've got a few weeks to go, a few months to live' and so on. No I think.....people who die, apart from accidents and so on, they know actually they are on the verge of dying [M: Mmmmmmm]. Some of them don't want to face it but they know it. Accidents, heart attack or something like that..you can't avoid those things but just being normal and you feel your age, you are now getting old and it is ebbing, life is ebbing slowly.

L: Another man I interviewed, his father died here, he came here with his father [M: Yeah] and his father died here, and he said he found it very difficult to bury his father here. He said he'd never imagined that his father would be buried in Britain [...]

M: Yeah I've seen some people taking the bodies back home but it's so expensive mmm.

F: But even ah....burials too are very expensive here [L: Mmm] It's almost the same as taking the body home.....two or three thousand pounds [L: Mhm].. Burials are never cheaper than that, unless you have a pauper's burial, you know.

M: Me I don't mind a pauper's burial, here, if I'm here, instead of people taking the body back home.

L: Do people ever have the body cremated and then take the ashes?

M: In our culture it's not very popular, yeah.

L: Cremations are not popular?

F and M: No

L: It's a sobering thought isn't it? [Laughing] Hopefully it will be many years before you have to think about that.

F: No, we need to talk about those things now. [Laughter]

M: No, we should.

³⁶ Mary's verbal utterances marked 'Mmmmmmm' were a high-pitched extended sound. I heard them as an expression of disagreement; she seemed to be questioning Fred's point that he will know when he is dying and his later point that people know when they are on the verge of dying.

F: We should. [Laughter]

M: I don't know, if I die here I will be buried here [L: Mhm] I don't want to go back home. Where are they going to bury me? Because the cemeteries they are really full and they are opening new grounds somewhere very far from, we've got a farm and he wants to go to the farm [L: OK] but I don't want to be buried there because he buried so many of his relatives there on the farm [L: OK] the farm which belongs to me and my CHILDREN and now there are these people that are already there. Even to go and stay there I won't go back to the farm because of those graves there.

L: So you've got people renting the house?

Fred's initial point that he wants to return to Zimbabwe 'a dead man' leads to an exchange of arguments and counter arguments concerning place of burial and when to return to Zimbabwe. Mary responds that transporting a body to Zimbabwe is expensive to which Fred replies that he will return home when he is close to death. Mary expresses doubt that he will know when he is going to die (through a high-pitched sound rather than words) and by implication questions his reluctance to return to Zimbabwe when he is still in good health so that his family do not have to pay thousands of pounds to have his body repatriated for burial. Mary and Fred did not come to an agreement about when they should return to Zimbabwe; indeed, I got the impression that this discussion was part of an ongoing conversation that preceded the interview and continued long after it. As Gunaratnam (2013:121) points out, interviews are sometimes used 'as a space from which people can voice and explore difficult topics, apparently for the benefit of the interviewer'.

My efforts to change the subject on more than one occasion may reflect my discomfort about being present while Mary and Fred discussed such a 'sober' topic. Or perhaps I tried to direct the conversation away from place of burial because I felt they were not engaging with the topic in a meaningful way i.e. they were talking about the practical considerations relating to place of burial rather than talking about it in terms of belonging and identity. Whatever my reasons for attempting to change the subject, their insistence that they must talk about this now demonstrates that 'interviewees are not just the subjects of researcher dominance, they are active resisters of such dominance' (Scheurich 1997: 71).

When I returned to interview Fred a few months later he reiterated that he has no desire to live in Zimbabwe, but he would like to be buried there:

L: Does it still feel like home, Zimbabwe?

F: I don't feel the same, I have no urge to go to Zimbabwe now. If I go to Zimbabwe as I always tell my wife, it's only to get buried there, that's all.

L: But that's important to you, even though you don't want to live there, it's important that you're buried there?

F: Ya, I feel it's very important that I get, that eventually my resting place should be Zimbabwe.

L: Could you explain why?

F: Ahhh.....it's purely traditional. My father's grave, my mother's grave, everybody's grave is around there, why must I get buried here? I think people still do it here, you still get a lot of Zimbabweans who die here and they are flown home. My sister was here, died here and she had to be flown home. But I just wish we knew we are dying, then I could do something about it, get prepared.

In response to my request for him to explain why being buried in Zimbabwe is important to him, Fred states that it is 'purely traditional'. He goes on to say, 'why should I be buried here?' which frames my question as strange. Indeed, his point that a lot of Zimbabweans who die here are repatriated suggests that his wish to be buried in Zimbabwe is not uncommon, so does not warrant explanation.

In Mary's interview, Fred voiced his desire to continue living in the UK but be buried in Zimbabwe in a similarly matter-of-fact way, however he did defend his position when challenged by his wife. He tailored his justification to Mary's expressed wish to return to Zimbabwe and her objections about the cost of repatriation; he argued that he will know when he is close to death so they can delay returning until he feels like life is 'ebbing'. A comparison of Fred's justification for wishing to be buried in Zimbabwe but remain in the UK on these two separate occasions illustrates how utterances are highly context specific and orientated to particular rhetorical ends (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984; Wetherell 1998).

Although Fred did not explain at this juncture of the interview why he has no desire to 'go home', he did talk about this earlier in the interview:

L: So do you think the way you feel about Zimbabwe has changed over the years, your relationship with Zimbabwe?

F: No, you mean ah...my feelings about current Zimbabwe? I read this paper here (picks up copy of *The Zimbabwean*)...I can't stand it really, I can't stand what has happened to Zimbabwe. I've been there, I went there once and I can't stand the whole thing..... It's just...I just can't stay in such a country, no. I don't mind living in South Africa ...because that's...in other words if there was a democratic Zimbabwe and it all went back to the way it was 20 years ago it would have been a different story all together. I don't think my wife would have come here, no. But now it's a question ofthe situation is so bad that ah.....I prefer it here. It can be cold, it can be icy but I would rather be here than go to Zimbabwe...even last time I went back home, close relatives would say, 'You are better off where you are. Uncle you are better off there because when you come here you will die. There's no food, there's no medicine'. But then I turn round and say, 'But how come you are around?' And they say, 'Oh we are used to it, used to the system' But I wouldn't get used to it. I don't think I would be alive if I stayed in Zimbabwe because I am an open critique of the whole system.... We want the democratic way of living, I think there were..some of my very good friends were whites when I was there 20 years ago, when I used to work there and to think they just took their land and grabbed them and kicked them off...I couldn't stand that.

In response to my question regarding whether his relationship with Zimbabwe has changed over the years, Fred momentarily takes control of the interview by reformulating my question into one that he would rather respond to ('No, you mean ah...my feelings about current Zimbabwe?'). In reply to this question, he states that he cannot stand what has happened to Zimbabwe and cannot live in such a country. However, he goes on to suggest that it was not solely his emotional response to what happened to Zimbabwe which prompted his departure and influences his decision to remain in the UK. Through a combination of direct statements ('I don't think I would be alive if I stayed in Zimbabwe because I am an open critique of the whole system') and the reported words of others ('when you come here you will die'), he suggests that leaving Zimbabwe and remaining in the UK was/is a matter of survival. Indeed, by stating that he and Mary would not have left if 'there was a democratic Zimbabwe', he simultaneously positions himself as a forced migrant and identifies misgovernance as the main reason for his departure.

Fred's account of how his 'feelings about current Zimbabwe' are affected by the absence of democracy in the country builds on an earlier account of how a less than ideal political system in Zimbabwe, then called Rhodesia, in the mid-1960s prompted his decision to move to country Y in Europe:

F: Even when I left to come to [country Y], it's all connected with the political system at home, I couldn't bear it.

F: I don't know whether I felt home sick while I was in [country Y]. I was home sick in [country X in Asia] definitely but when I was in [country Y] I don't think I felt home sick because the system was also very...the political system [in Rhodesia] was not ideal at all. But you miss your relatives, that's why at independence that was the pull, back to my mother, back to my relatives, back to a time I can play my role as the eldest son in the family.

L: So it was your family pulling you back as opposed to..Zimbabwe itself?

F: No I don't think I was thinking of Zimbabwe, well maybe I was thinking of Zimbabwe to develop it. All of us who were abroad, there was a register kept and we were being told constantly, I think England was doing it, colonial officers, we were being told, 'Listen Zimbabwe is going to be independent very soon and it needs manpower.' So we felt, apart from the pull home there was that feeling that I was going to develop my, our own country [...] Apart from the pull, everybody at home was saying, 'Come home now, we are now free!'

L: And what did it feel like being back after so long in [country Y]?

F: It didn't take me long to find I'd made a mistake because there were already shortages creeping in, life was not what I expected. So it didn't take me long. I felt at the time like going back to [country Y].

L: So you were disappointed?

F: Disappointed with the whole thing, Ya, very, very disappointed. I think they were playing dirty politics. No I felt very disappointed. But as usual it's the day-to-day living, have you got these things which you want? Have you got these items which you want? Do you have to go and buy salt outside the country, small, everyday things. That's what really disappointed me so much. Some people were clever and went back, some went back to America and so on. But I couldn't do that because I had that big, big responsibility...the family. I couldn't do that so I had to stick to it. Now that the family is almost gone now, they are adults, some have died, my mother passed away, my father passed away, uncles so I don't have any attachments any more.

This account of not feeling homesick when he was living in country Y because the political system in Rhodesia was 'not ideal at all', like his account of how he has 'no urge to go to Zimbabwe' because he cannot stand what has

happened to the country, implicitly suggests that the nature of Zimbabwe's political system is the most important determinant of his emotional connection to the country he calls home. Fred states that his sense of responsibility to his family not only 'pulled [him] back' to Zimbabwe around 1980, but encouraged him to stay there and 'stick to it' despite feeling, soon after arrival, that returning had been a mistake. This account of staying in Zimbabwe for the sake of his family serves to position him as someone who is willing to put the needs of his family before his own.

Summary

On the two occasions that we met, Fred stressed that although he has 'no urge' to live in Zimbabwe, he would like to be buried there. The nature of Zimbabwe's political system was implicitly identified as the main determinant of his sentiments towards the country he regards as his home; he told me that he cannot stand what has happened to Zimbabwe over the last 20 years and could not live in such an undemocratic country. Apart from not being able to 'stand it' on an emotional level, Fred suggested that it was not safe for him to live in Zimbabwe as he is 'an open critique of the whole system'. His account of the political situation in Zimbabwe being so bad that he prefers it here served to position him as a reluctant UK resident.

Summary

Building on the work of those who have taken a discursive approach to place attachment (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Taylor 2001; Di Masso et al. 2014), this chapter has sought to demonstrate that the interviews I conducted with UK residents from Zimbabwe were an occasion for the interviewees to construct, rather than provide an insight into, the nature of their relationships with current and former places of residence. My readings of the interview accounts explored the way in which talk about place attachments is part of a public dialogue in which existing modes of talking about belonging are reproduced and contested, and an occasion for identity work.

The discursive approach to place attachment has made an important contribution to a field which, until relatively recently, was dominated by the cognitive approach (Di Masso et al. 2014). Starting from the assumption that ‘in publically expressing bonds of attachment to place, we may be doing far more than expressing internal feelings’ (Di Masso et al. 2014: 81), discourse analytic studies of place attachment highlight the effects such linguistic practice has at the micro-interactional and/or socio-political level (Di Masso et al. 2014).

One of the limitations of this and other research which has taken a discursive approach to place attachment, is that by focusing on the linguistic practices through which person-place relations are created, reproduced and contested, the non-linguistic practices through which relationships to place are performed tend to be neglected (Di Masso et al. 2014). One such non-linguistic practice discussed by Tolia-Kelly (2004) and Walsh (2006) is the act of displaying objects ‘from home’ in current places of residence as a means of communicating connections to other places. A challenge for future research on this topic is to explore the way in which relationships to places are constructed through both linguistic and non-linguistic practices (Di Masso et al. 2014).

Conclusion

This chapter reflects on the contributions and limitations of the study and suggests directions for future research. It will start by discussing the contribution discourse analytic research makes in a general sense before focusing on the contribution this particular study makes to the literature. It will then move on to explore the limitations of the study and suggest areas for future research.

The contribution made by discourse analytic research

In Chapter One I situated this study within the field of discourse analysis. As previously discussed, discourse studies is a heterogeneous field with discernible ‘schools’ (Angermüller et al. 2014) but all discourse analysts reject the ‘realist’ model of language (Alvesson 2002; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002; Phillips and Hardy 2002; Wetherell 2003). This rejection of the notion that language reflects reality has far reaching implications when trying to assess the value and contribution of a study. The question of how valid the findings are, in other words how closely they correspond to the real world, is not relevant when the research is underpinned by the theoretical assumption that there is no real world other than one constructed through discourse (Phillips and Hardy 2002). This raises the question, if discourse analytic studies do not provide an insight into the thoughts, feelings and experiences of their research participants, what insights do they offer? Firstly, discourse analytic research makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the process by which language constitutes phenomena (Phillips and Hardy 2002). For those who reject the correspondence model of language, ‘meaning is produced from text to text rather than, as it were, between text and world’ (Rylance 1987: 113). In other words, when we speak or write we construct

phenomena by taking imperfectly remembered speech and text and employing it in new contexts (Becker 1995). Following Bakhtin's (1986) theory that utterances are filled with the echoes and reverberations of other utterances, discourse analysts developed the idea that texts can only be understood in relation to other texts (McKinlay and McVittie 2008). This has led to empirical investigations of the construction of phenomena through the production of intertextual representations (see for example Daniels 1992; McGreevy 1992).

Secondly, discourse analytic research improves our understanding of 'language in use' (van Dijk 1985). By studying the way in which language performs social actions such as persuading, accusing and justifying, discourse analytic research examines the *effects* of language (Parker 2004; Gergen 2009). This includes the way in which social inequity is perpetuated through discursive activity (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). For instance, van Dijk (1992) has shown that one of the crucial properties of racism is its denial, and there are numerous discursive strategies employed by people to deny that they are racist. A further example is the rhetorical device of using existing prejudice to justify further prejudice which, as Goodman (2008) discusses, has been used to perform the same function in different contexts: to oppose lesbian/gay parenting; to perform hostility toward immigrants in Greece; and to oppose the rights of asylum seekers in the UK. For Burman and Parker (1993), the popularity of discourse analysis owes much to the ways in which its analytical tools can be used to comment on social processes which participate in the maintenance of structures of oppression.

The contribution made by this study

Using positioning theory (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999) and the synthetic approach to discourse analysis (see Potter and Wetherell 1987; Potter et al 1990; Wetherell and Potter 1992; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999) as a conceptual framework, the aim of this research was to explore the way in which the interviews I conducted with ten UK residents from Zimbabwe in 2011 were a site for the discursive construction of

subjects, places and place attachments in an occasioned way. While this research employed existing analytic tools rather than developing new ones, it did extend them in a new direction. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to have taken a discursive approach to analysing the accounts of UK residents from Zimbabwe. As discussed in Chapter One, previous empirical studies of Zimbabweans in Britain have used the interview as a tool for gaining access to their lived realities. This thesis enriches the field by demonstrating that when asked to talk about their lives, UK residents from Zimbabwe are not merely providing an insight into their experiences, but producing highly mediated and occasioned constructions which are orientated to the achievement of social and interactional goals.

While this research is based on the accounts of ten UK residents from Zimbabwe which emerged from specific socio-historical and interactional contexts, the discourse analytic readings I present in Chapters Five, Six and Seven contribute to our understanding of the way in which subjects, places and relationships to places are discursively constructed in talk. More specifically, by demonstrating that the interviewees constructed subjects, places and place attachments in an occasioned way, this thesis provides support for the argument that while discourses determine what it is possible to think, say and be within a particular historical juncture (Foucault 1972), the way in which people construct phenomena and position themselves as subjects in talk is shaped by the interactional context (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999; Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). This thesis aligns itself with those who argue that the discursive analysis of talk needs to explore the way in which it reflects both the local pragmatics of the interactional context, and broader patterns of collective meaning-making and understanding (Wetherell and Edley 1999: 338).

Chapter Five focused on the way in which the life history interviews I conducted with UK residents from Zimbabwe were a site for the discursive construction of subjects. The first part of the chapter used examples from the interviews to demonstrate that when people talk about their lives they recapitulate established narrative forms (Elliot 2005); they are fabricated into

the social order because it is virtually impossible to speak outside of discourses (Foucault 1979); and they engage in a dynamic process of positioning themselves, positioning each other, and rejecting, ignoring and accepting the positions made available to them (Davies and Harre 1990; Davies and Harre 1999). In part two of Chapter Five I presented two case studies which enabled a more detailed discussion of the way in which the life history interviews I conducted were a site for the recapitulation of narrative frameworks and positioning. I also explored how the two interviewees constructed themselves as subjects narratively by producing life stories which focused on particular periods in their lives.

Chapter Six builds on two bodies of work relating to the discursive construction of place: work which explores the process in which representations of places invest those places with meaning by appropriating other representations (see Daniels 1992; McGreevy 1992); and research which examines the action-orientation of constructions of places (see Durrheim and Dixon 2001; Wallwork and Dixon 2004; Garner 2013; Di Masso et al. 2014). My discussion of the way in which interviewees constructed Zimbabwe as a country in crisis illustrates how description is central to the process of attributing blame as causal relations are constructed as versions are produced (Edwards and Potter 1992). I explored how the interviewees used a number of commonly employed rhetorical strategies to make their accounts of Zimbabwe as a country in crisis appear less like artful constructions and more like accurate descriptions. By situating these attribution-orientated descriptions within public debates concerning who is responsible for Zimbabwe's crisis, my readings of the interview accounts also attended to the way in which interviewees' utterances form a link in a complexly organised chain of other utterances (Bakhtin 1986). In part two of Chapter Six I discussed the way in which the men and women I interviewed talked about racism in Britain. Taking inspiration from work which has explored the way in which constructions of places have been used to perform a variety of social actions such as attributing blame, justifying, derogating, excusing and excluding (see Durrheim and Dixon 2001; Wallwork and Dixon 2004; Garner 2013; Di Masso et al. 2014), Chapter Six discussed how

interviewees' talk about racism in the UK was orientated to the achievement of two communicative goals: maintaining a positive self-identity, and minimising racism via relativisation and universalisation. By exploring how interviewees talked about experiences of racism in a tentative way, and engaged in rhetorical work to ensure that talking about racism did not undermine their previous identity work, this research contributes to our understanding of how in social contexts which render the act of making accusations of racism a serious social infraction, speakers/writers are inclined to distance themselves from the subject position of someone who makes accusations of racism (see Goodman 2010; Goodman and Burke 2010; Riggs and Due 2010; Kirkwood et al. 2013). Chapter Six also provides support for the argument that claiming racism is worse elsewhere/ in the past, and arguing that racism exists everywhere are rhetorical strategies employed to minimise the significance of racism as a feature of daily life in a particular place (see also Verkeyten 2005; Condor et al 2006). Understanding the linguistic strategies people use to undermine the significance of racism is extremely important as the denial of racism plays an important role in its reproduction (van Dijk 1992).

Chapter Seven extends the work of those who have taken a discursive approach to place attachment (see Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Taylor 2001; Di Masso et al. 2014). I focused on the way in which four of the men and women I interviewed constructed relationships with places of residence by engaging with commonly employed modes of talking about belonging such as the root metaphor (Malkki 1992) and the born-and-bred narrative (Taylor 2005b), and negotiated the politics of belonging relating to past and present places of residence (Yuval-Davis 2011). By exploring the way in which interviewees positioned themselves as particular types of people in the process of talking about their place attachments, this research provides support for the argument that discursively constructing a place and positioning oneself in relation to it provides considerable scope for identity work (Taylor 2003).

Limitations of the study and areas for future research

The readings I present in Chapters Five, Six and Seven discuss numerous features of the interview talk and draw on a small selection of interview extracts for illustrative purposes. A focus on fewer features of the talk with more examples from across all the interviews may have led to more fully developed discussions. The approach I took was partly informed by the interviews I had at my disposal. If I had planned to carry out discourse analytic research from the start I would have conducted more focused interviews; this would have generated more talk relating to a particular topic which would have enabled me to produce more detailed readings exploring variations between and within accounts. My decision to discuss numerous features of the interview talk rather than focus on, for instance, the construction of subjects, was also a reflection of my desire to explore and present as much of the interview talk as possible because I found it so compelling.

The way in which I present interview extracts without stating how prevalent a particular feature of the talk was across all the interviews may leave some readers wondering what is being represented and what is not. Indeed, one of the reservations Abrams and Hogg (1990) express about the value of discourse analysis is that some analysts place insufficient importance on the representativeness of evidence. I would argue, however, that my use of interview extracts to illustrate a particular linguistic resource or rhetorical device without stating how prevalent this resource or rhetorical device was across all the interviews would be more problematic if I was claiming to have discovered a new feature of talk rather than presenting further empirical evidence for existing theoretical arguments.

Since this thesis is based solely on audio-recorded interviews, it could *only* explore the discursive construction of phenomena in talk. This exclusive focus on linguistic practice is a criticism that has been levelled at discourse analytic research more generally (Alvesson 2002; Dixon and Durrheim 2005).

According to Iedema (2011), the ‘turn to language’ which played an important

role in popularising discourse studies has reduced our attention and sensitivity to the non-linguistic. Similarly, Durrheim and Dixon (2005) argue that while the primary interest of discursive research has been the way in which the social and material world is constructed through talk, it would benefit from a dual empirical focus on linguistic and embodied practice.

The scope of this research could be extended by exploring the way in which subjects, places and relationships to places are constructed via both linguistic and non-linguistic practice. This would of course entail moving beyond the study of interview talk. Previous explorations of the constitution of social phenomena via linguistic and non-linguistic practice provide inspiration for how one might go about this. Durrheim and Dixon (2005) studied the constitution of ‘race relations’ at a post-apartheid beach in South Africa via embodied spatio-temporal and linguistic practices. Interviews with people on the beach were conducted to study linguistic practice, and observations of where people sat on the beach were used to explore embodied spatio-temporal practices of racial interaction. A further example is Tolia-Kelly’s (2004) study of how the homes of South Asian women living in London acted as sites for histories linked with past landscapes to be refracted through material artefacts. She used a combination of methods including asking the women to give her a tour of their homes so she could see how material objects acted as artefactual records of connections to other remembered landscapes and environments. Tolia-Kelly took photos of their possessions to support her account of what she observed in their homes. This could be taken further, however, so that photography and mobile sound technologies play a more central role in the study of how social phenomena are constructed via linguistic and non-linguistic practice. For instance, photography could be used to document non-linguistic displays of place attachment, and video could be employed to study the construction of subjects via embodied performance. There have been calls to rethink the craft of social research and reconsider our reliance on the interview as our main method for generating

‘data’ (Back 2012; Savage and Burrows 2007). Employing alternative methods to study the construction of subjects, places and relationships to place via linguistic and non-linguistic practice would contribute to ‘broadening the scope of the sociological imagination in the 21st century’ (Back 2010:16).

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Appendix A: List of useful organisations

List of useful organisations

Day centres

North London

| Contact details | Who can use the service | Opening Times | What they provide | Travel links |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| All Saints' Church Carnegie Street Islington London N1 9QW Phone: 020 7837 0720 | Anyone homeless in London. | Tues & Thurs: 10am–12am | Free food | Nearest tube stations: Kings Cross, Angel Buses: 17, 30, 45, 46, 73, 91, 153, 205, 214, 259, 274, 390, 476 |
| Equinox Spectrum Centre 6 Greenland Street Camden Town London NW1 0ND Phone: 020 7267 4937 | Anyone homeless in London. | Mon–Fri: 9:30am–7.30pm | Advice and information on housing, employment, benefits etc. | Nearest tube station: Camden Town Buses: 24, 27, 29, 31, 46, 88, 134, 168, 214, 253, 274, C2, UL1 |
| Woman's Day Centre Marylebone Project 1-5 Cosway Street London NW1 5NR Phone: 020 7262 3818 Email: daycentre@churc harmy.org.uk | Women with housing/ support needs. | Mon-Thurs: 9.30am-3.30pm | Advice, classes. | Nearest tube stations: Edgware Road, Marylebone Buses: 2, 6, 7, 13, 16, 18, 23, 27, 36, 82, 98, 113, 139, 159, 189, 205 |

Legal Advice

North London

| Contact details | Opening hours | Transport links |
|---|--|--|
| Barnet Law Service 9 Bell Lane Hendon London NW4 2BP Phone: 020 8203 4141 Website: www.barnetlaw.co.uk | Telephone to make an appointment. | Nearest tube stations: Hendon Central, Golders Green Buses: 83, 143, 183, 240, 326, 653, 683 |
| Brent Community Law Centre 389 High Road Willesden London NW10 2JR Phone: 020 8451 1122 Email: brentlaw@brentlaw.org.uk Website: www.brentlaw.org | Telephone lines are open Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri 10a.m.-6p.m. | The Brent Law Centre only provides advice over the telephone. |
| Asylum Aid Club Union House 253-254 Upper Street London N1 1RY Phone: 0207 354 9631 Email: info@asylumaid.org.uk | Call the advice Line: 0207 354 9264 Asylum Aid will take brief details about your case to work out whether they can provide legal representation. | Nearest tube station: Highbury & Islington Buses: 4, 19, 30, 43, 271, 277, 393, UL1 |

Appendix B: Advert

Are you from Zimbabwe?

I am a PhD student at City University (London) and I am looking for people from Zimbabwe who would be willing to tell me about their life from childhood until the present. The aim of the research is to develop an insight into the experiences, views and concerns of people who are from Zimbabwe and currently living in Britain.

To protect your anonymity I will not ask for identifying information such as your name or address and instead will ask you to choose a fake name which will be used in any notes and the final thesis. If I use extracts of your story in the thesis I will also change details such as place names, dates etc. to ensure that people cannot identify you.

If you would be willing to tell me your life story or require further information please contact me on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Appendix C: Biographies

Fred

I first met Fred when I interviewed his wife Mary at their home in England in April 2011. During Mary's interview, Fred came and sat with us for a while before returning to his gardening. When I was leaving, I asked Fred if he was willing to be interviewed some time and he agreed. I returned to interview him in July 2011. Fred started his life story by telling me that he was born in a rural setting in Zimbabwe. When he left school he trained to be a teacher before going to country X in Asia on a cultural exchange scheme. After obtaining a degree in country X, he returned to Zimbabwe. Fred then worked for a few years before applying to study in country Y in Europe. When he had completed his studies he went to work in country Z in Africa. Fred returned to country Y and applied for citizenship, but around that time Zimbabwe got independence so he decided to go 'home'. In Zimbabwe, he re-established his relationship with Mary. After working for several years, he took early retirement. In the late 1990s, Mary moved to the UK and a few years later Fred joined her. Fred described how he had visited Zimbabwe a few times since he left, and this just confirmed to him that he does not wish to live there.

Eugene

I interviewed Eugene in a coffee shop in February and August 2011. He described how when he left school, he worked as a teacher. Eugene was working in Matabeleland in the 1980s when the fifth brigade soldiers arrived; he was forced to attend political rallies, and witnessed people being 'mistreated', but he was 'lucky' as he did not experience much difficulty himself. At the end of the 1990s, Eugene came to the UK. He explained that when he first arrived, he did not know whether he would settle here, however his partner got indefinite leave to remain so he stayed. At the time of the interview Eugene was working full time and his social life revolved around the church.

Jacob

I interviewed Jacob in February 2011 in the city in England in which he lived. During the interview, which took place in a coffee shop, Jacob described how he grew up on a farm in Zimbabwe. After his A-Levels, he trained to be a police officer. Around the start of the 21st century, he started experiencing difficulties in his job. He was told by senior colleagues that some people were 'friendly forces' and should not be arrested. He was also threatened by supporters of the ruling party for refusing to arrest and detain opposition party supporters. He described how he did not attend ruling party meetings because he hates politics and this led people to believe that he supported the

opposition. After being harassed by people on the street and assaulted by the secret service, he moved to the UK. He arrived in Britain in the early 2000s. Soon after arrival, he tried to join the police force but was told that he needed to be a UK resident for five years in order to apply. After a few years, he decided to train to be a nurse.

Mary

Mary was born in Zimbabwe in the 1940s. When she left school, she trained to be a nurse. Once qualified, she worked in hospitals in rural areas before training to be an advanced clinical nurse. When Fred returned to Zimbabwe in 1980, Mary went to live with him in the city. In the late 1990s, she decided to move to the UK. When she first arrived she lived in a village in England but later moved to a large town. When I interviewed Mary at her home in April 2011, she described how she would like to go back to Zimbabwe with her husband but she feels that there is nothing there for them anymore and she has concerns about their safety.

Patson

Patson was born in Zimbabwe in the 1970s. When he left school, he got a job in an engineering company. He was dismissed from this job and numerous others because of his trade union activism. Due to his involvement in the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change party (MDC), Patson was placed on a national wanted list and later arrested. Upon release from prison, a British journalist told Patson that he would pay for his flight to the UK as his life was in danger. When he arrived in Britain he was stopped at the airport because he had deep cuts on his head. After a period of questioning, he was transferred to a detention centre. When he was released from detention, he started attending MDC meetings and working for an organisation which provides support to asylum seekers and refugees. His initial asylum application was refused but after appeal, he was granted indefinite leave to remain. At the time of the interview in February 2011, Patson had lived in the UK for approximately 10 years. He was working for an organisation which assists people from Zimbabwe, and regularly attending events and demonstrations to raise awareness about persecution in Zimbabwe and the destitution of asylum seekers in Britain.

Samantha

Samantha was born in Zimbabwe in the late 1980s. When she was 10 years old, she moved to the United States with her family. In the early-2000s, Samantha and her mother moved to city A in England. Whilst she was studying for her A-Levels, her mother moved to city B in England. When Samantha had completed her A-Levels, she joined her mother in city B. She worked part-time whilst studying for a degree, and when she completed her studies, she secured a graduate job. At the time of the interview in July 2011, Samantha was living in city B but visiting city A on a regular basis. The interview took place in a McDonalds in city A.

Sarah

Sarah was born in the early 1970s in Matabeleland. Her mother left her in the care of her grandparents when she was a baby. When she was five years old, she and the other children in her compound were told to hide in the jungle whenever the alarm was sounded. Sarah and her cousins were taken by her aunt to live with relatives in town. During this time, her grandfather was killed by fifth brigade soldiers. After a short time, Sarah went to live with her mother's husband, Mr N, and his extended family. Her mother had met and married Mr N in the UK. When her mother and Mr N divorced a few years later, Sarah was sent to live with relatives of her mother (a couple and their children). Here she was subjected to physical and sexual abuse and fell pregnant at 13. After fleeing to her aunt's house, her mother arrived from the UK and took Sarah back with her. She lived with her mother and went to school in a city in England. She got pregnant when she was studying for her A-Levels and moved in with her partner. She later left her partner who was abusive and spent some time in a safe house. She was rehoused in another part of the city and spent a short period of time there before moving numerous times. When I interviewed Sarah in March, May and July 2011, she had been living with her children in a particular area of the city for a number of years. She was studying part-time and had a voluntary job.

Steve

I interviewed Steve in February and July 2011 in the town in England in which he lived. Steve started his life story by describing how he was born in Southern Rhodesia in the mid-1960s. He grew up on his parent's commercial farm and attended boarding school from the age of five. When he left school he worked for a few years before learning to take over the family business. Steve's mother died of cancer in the late 1990s which he described as a defining moment in his life. Around this time, lists of commercial farms that were going to be confiscated by the government started to appear in the national press. He described how his family kept escaping the lists but many people he knew had to leave their farms. In the context of growing political violence and a worsening economic situation, Steve decided to move to the UK in the early 2000s. Initially he and his father lived with his sister, but he soon found somewhere to live nearby.

Tsungi

I interviewed Tsungi in April 2011 at her home. She started her life story by explaining that she was born in Zambia because her parents moved there from Zimbabwe when the liberation struggle was gaining momentum. Whilst she was at high school, Tsungi had her first child. In 1980, her parents decided to return to the newly independent Zimbabwe. After attending college in Zimbabwe, she got a job. After a few years she had another child and got married. In the early 2000s, she moved to the UK. Tsungi applied for asylum, and when this was granted, she started working in care. Whilst working night

shifts as a care worker she studied for an access to university course followed by a degree. At the time of the interview she was living with her adult children, working full-time and attending church every weekend.

Zweli

Zweli was born in Matabeleland in the 1970s. When he was 12 years old, his father died. He went to live with his older brother in the city. After he had completed his A-Levels, he decided to join one of his sisters in the UK. When he arrived in the UK in the early 2000s he trained to be a nurse. At the time of the first and second interview which took place in August 2011, he was living with his wife and daughter in a city in England. We met in his local library but soon moved to a park nearby. The rest of the interview, and the subsequent interview, were conducted in the park.

Appendix D: Transcription notation

| | |
|-------|---|
| | Pause |
| [...] | Words omitted to reduce the length of the quote |
| -yes | Word or utterance overlapping the other speaker's |
| YES | Stress placed on a word |
| XXX | Identifying information removed |