Undocumented Child Migrants in South Africa:

A study of Service Provision

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any other university for any degree.

Signature: …………………………………………….......   Date: ………………………………….

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ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CoRMSA	Consortium of Refugees and Migrants in South Africa
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DOE	Department of Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
ESCR	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FMSP	Forced Migration Studies Programme
HDI	Human Development Index
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
LHR	Lawyers for Human Rights
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SA	South Africa
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASA	South African Schools Act
SCUK	Save the Children United Kingdom
SCN	Save the Children Norway
SMG	Soutpansberg Military Grounds
SNT	Social Network Theory
UCM	Undocumented Child Migrants
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations' Children Fund
URC	Uniting Reformed Church

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

Migration is not a new phenomenon; people have been crossing borders for centuries. Yet at the start of the millennium, migration has become more pronounced than ever before. Today, migration is increasingly used as a survival strategy (Bloch 2006: 67). Worldwide, thousands are desperate to escape the destitution, political instability and civil wars that have come to represent daily life in their country. This is especially true for Africa, where most countries are faced with immense levels of poverty, violence and underdevelopment. Indeed, the countries surrounding South Africa (SA), with the exception of Namibia and Botswana, are among the poorest of the world (World Bank quoted in Maharaj 2004: 6). With its newly embedded democracy and thriving economy (at least in comparison to that of its neighbouring countries) South Africa has become a hot-spot for many, with thousands originating from neighbouring countries like Mozambique and Lesotho, but even further still, including Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, with influx levels steadily rising since 2000, Zimbabweans are currently the largest migrant group in the country (CoRMSA 2008: 66). By the beginning of 2008 an estimated 1.5 million Zimbabweans were living in South Africa (Human Rights Watch 2008: 23). Children make up a significant portion of this number as their movement independent of adults has been rising continuously.

It is not inconceivable why many are fleeing Zimbabwe and crossing over into neighbouring South Africa. Following the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme in 1990, the once high-performing economy of Zimbabwe began to decline dramatically. By the end of the 1990s, Zimbabwe was in economic crisis. Today, the country remains in crisis, with unemployment levels estimated to be around seventy percent and inflation running at a staggering 180%. In the face of government debt, the provision of public services was cut - resulting in a rapid deterioration of the country's health and education sectors (Bloch 2006: 67). Government, under Mugabe rule, adopted repressive policies aimed at curbing political opposition. As such, the human rights situation in Zimbabwe has deteriorated enormously. All in all, unimaginable inflation, deep poverty, a high level of unemployment, food insecurity, AIDS and the fairly recent wave of cholera has affected the lives of millions. Zimbabweans have experienced major violations of their basic human rights to food, clean drinking water, health care services, education and shelter. Thousands are therefore leaving behind their homes and families in search of a better life.

Of course, Zimbabwe is not the only country confronting problems of service delivery. Prior to the arrival of Zimbabweans, SA has been struggling to bridge the gap between on the one hand a needy

population, and on the other, a short supply of resources. In 1994 for example, an estimated twelve million South Africans lacked access to clean drinking water and twenty-one million were unable to acquire adequate sanitation (Peberdy 2002: 25). However, a great number of South Africans blame the massive influx of Zimbabweans for exacerbating an already imperfect system of service delivery. This is reflected in a report published by the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA 2008: 27) whose findings suggest that South Africans feel threatened by the increasing presence of Zimbabweans and the fact that scarce business opportunities and jobs now need to be shared among an even greater number of destitute people. Hence, what initially started out as protests over service delivery in August last year quickly mounted into full-scale attacks on foreign nationals. All in all, the suffering of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants is a result of both the growing humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe and the lack of basic humanitarian services in South Africa (Polzer 2007: 6).

While this high level of in-migration from Zimbabwe is a concerning reality, even more worrying is the movement of children crossing the border into SA. In Southern Africa, children are increasingly part of the border-hopping trend. The latter stems from a long history of labour migration that has resulted in the spatial dispersion of many families (Van Blerk and Ansell 2006: 451). It is therefore not unusual for children to either be sent by family or willingly decide to live with relatives elsewhere. In the case of Zimbabwe, thousands of children, some as young as seven, make their way across the border into SA. There is no certainty on the actual number of children crossing the border from day to day. What the few existing sources do tell us is that the severity of the problem extends beyond the issue of numbers (Polzer 2007: 5). Whether we are dealing with five hundred or five thousand child migrants, the extreme vulnerability of these minors hints at the desperate need for social assistance and protection. The real concern lies in the fact that the majority of these children enter South Africa alone and illegally. The child migrants in this study can be defined according to three factors: (1) their age, (2) the fact that they are unaccompanied and (3) their undocumented status. For the purposes of this study, a child is defined as any person who is eighteen years or younger[1]. The average age of the children who participated in the study was fifteen, with the youngest participant an eight year old boy. An unaccompanied migrant is a child who migrated alone; this is to say that the child migrated to South Africa without the company of an adult but not ruling out the company of other migrant children. For the most part, unaccompanied children are also undocumented (Hillier 2007: 8). Many writers tend to equate undocumented with illegal, yet the

[1] This definition is in accordance to the one provided by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child: Available at: http://untreaty.un.org/English/TreatyEvent2001/pdf/03e.pdf.

former need not automatically translate into the latter. Any person expressing a wish to apply for asylum cannot be defined as an illegal foreigner (HRW 2008: 96). Unfortunately, many children are unable to reach a Refugee Reception Office where they can apply for asylum. Consequently, many child migrants have not put their desire to apply for asylum in writing. However, the fact that they are in SA without their families speaks volumes of their hope of being granted asylum.

Migration, especially in the aftermath of 9/11, is increasingly dealt with as a security issue. International migration has become a top priority, with policymakers worldwide placing migration at the centre of international security (de Haas 2007: 820). States seem to be presenting migration more as an issue of human security than one of human rights (Ibrahim 2005: 168). Migrants are no longer victims of circumstance, be that war, persecution or hunger. Rather, they are considered a threat to the receiving country's population. Quite possibly it is because of this apparent threat that SA has been undertaking serious efforts in bringing an end to this massive influx of Zimbabwean migrants. As such, attempts to deter migration are done not so much for the safety of child migrants, but rather for the sake of South African society at large. Sen (2008: 8) uses this same logic in explaining the causal connection of violence to poverty. He suggests that efforts aimed at curbing poverty receive greater support when people are reminded of the fact that alleviating poverty results in a simultaneous reduction in violence. This is not to say that poverty in itself is not harmful; but by linking it to violence, poverty is no longer confined to only the poor but affects the entire population (frustrations born out of deprivation culminate into violent outbursts targeting innocent bystanders). Similarly, there exists a popular perception that migrants have a negative effect on South African society, the economy in particular (Peberdy 2002: 25). Migrants have become the scapegoat for much of the country's problems; for example, many argue that it is because of migrants that crime has worsened and that the economy has taken a turn for the worst. Migrants are accused of stealing jobs and for carrying diseases into the country (Gotz and Landau quoted in Landau 2004: 14). Hence, South Africa's motives to halt migration are not necessarily born out of a need to protect the human security of children, but more so to protect the nation-state at large. While it is true that migration can pose very real problems for states, the fact that migrants themselves are at risk should not go unnoticed (Koser 2005).

It appears as though SA is more concerned with halting migrants' movement as opposed to finding ways of supporting them (Ibrahim 2005: 169). The major influx of foreigners' crossing over into its terrain in unorthodox manner in the past decade has led government, in the words of Crush, to "prioritise control over management, expulsion over admission and exclusion over inclusion" (2000: 105). Owed to the strict visa regulations, narrowly interpreted asylum conditions and the

introduction of new application fees in 2005 that make up South Africa's immigration policy, children from Zimbabwe wishing to enter SA have been forced to change paths (Peberdy 2002: 17). Contrary to a migration process that is legal i.e. entrance through an official border post and in possession of a valid travel document, thousands of children are finding alternate, often life-threatening routes to enter the country. They embark on their journey with little more than the clothes on their backs; no documentation, no guardians, no money and very often no final destination in mind. This exposes them to a great number of risks. Children negotiate attacks by wildlife in the Kruger National Park, potential drowning in the Limpopo River, and abuse and exploitation at the hands of not only gangs they meet along the way but also by soldiers and police patrolling the border posts (Staunton et al. 2008: VIII-XI). Their vulnerability as undocumented foreigners is further amplified by their young age, their inability to influence, change or defend their positions, and the fact that they are alone (Winterstein 2004: 9).

Certainly SA is not the only country facing an influx of undocumented child migrants; one need only think of India, Bangladesh and Ghana (Anarfi et al. 2005: 2). However, what makes SA unique is its ownership of an admirably generous Constitution[2]. The protection of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) provided by the 1996 South African Constitution is exceptional, with many of these rights extended to everyone living in the country[3]. Additionally, the welfare of children is a national priority. The country is committed to children and has embarked on a children's rights movement, aiming to fulfil the rights and protection of its youth. In 1995 SA ratified the world's most universally accepted human rights document, namely the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[4]. The Convention enjoys a heightened status in the country's legal framework as some of its major features have been constitutionalised in the Constitution and are thereby justiciable in South African courts (Sloth-Nielsen 2002: 139). It recognises that children require special care and protection and therefore grants all children a comprehensive set of rights, including the rights to education and health care[5]. The state has also made numerous other commitments, including on a regional level the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and on a national level the Children's Act. Yet, while SA has taken conscious steps to bring the plight of its children onto the child rights agenda, undocumented child migrants hardly feature at all. This is essentially where the problem begins.

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[2] Available at: http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf

[3] The preamble of the Constitution states the following: "we, the people of South Africa believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity". It continues by stating that "the Bill of Rights enshrines the rights of all people in our country". Hence, with the exception of Chapter 1, Section 3 wherein the rights of citizens are explicitly mentioned, the rights in the Constitution are extended to everyone living within the boundaries of the nation-state (Crush 2000: 110).

[4] Available at: http://wwww.unhchr.ch/pdf/report.pdf

[5] UNCRC article 24 and Article 28 available at: http://untreaty.un.org/English/TreatyEvent2001/pdf/03e.pdf

1.2. Research Description

Despite South Africa's outspoken commitment to children that was briefly discussed in the preceding paragraphs, there are a significant number of Zimbabwean minors who are not accorded the protection that should be due to them as children first and foremost (Bell et al. 2006: 40). Undocumented child migrants are particularly vulnerable and they require an added level of protection. Still, South Africa has failed to prioritise them on the child rights agenda.

> "In spite of many years of high in-migration levels and the continuing humanitarian and political crisis in Zimbabwe, the South African government has still not developed and implemented a coherent response to recognize and assist Zimbabweans in South Africa".

This statement by CoRMSA (2008: 66) clearly sums up the heart of the problem and is supported by Polzer (2007: 8) who, in her report, also mentions the government's failure in responding to what is now adding up to nine years of Zimbabwean in-migration. CoRMSA believes that the best way in which government can respond to this high level of in-migration is to acknowledge the potential of migration as promoting the welfare of all living in the country rather than seeing migration as imposing a cost on South Africans; a shift that can only be achieved with the combined efforts of, amongst others, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Department of Social Development (DSD) and Provincial and Local Government (CoRMSA 2008: 15). Of course, before deciding which policy SA should adopt with regards to regularising and assisting the large numbers of Zimbabwean foreigners in the country, it is important to formulate the problem first.

South Africa has adopted numerous legislations that stipulate the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, of which the Immigration Act, the Refugees Act, the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and of course the Constitution are the most prominent. Yet there is no legislation that mentions the plight of undocumented child migrants. The Immigration Act remains silent on the issue of undocumented child migrants, providing no guidelines on the protection and treatment of this specific group of vulnerable children (Social Workers Guide 2003: 17). As such, undocumented child migrants are not recognised as a distinct migrant class in need of protection. Indeed, too many children continue to be deprived of the most basic services such as health care, education, shelter and food (Kaime 2004: 346). NGOs often limit their assistance to recognised asylum seekers or refugees, leaving out the many vulnerable children who are not accorded asylum or refugee status (Polzer 2007: 13). To be sure, refugees and asylum seekers are not always assured

assistance and protection either. Research suggests that even those in possession of the proper documentation experience difficulties in accessing services (HRW 2008: 33). But whereas refugees and asylum seekers are at least recognized on paper, undocumented minors tend to be largely ignored. This problem of recognition originates at the state level. Several experts have addressed the failure of the South African state to clearly distinguish between migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; a distinction that is crucial as different rights are accorded to different migrant groups (Peberdy 2002: 24).

The failure to recognise these children as a distinct migrant class with rights has led to a situation in which SA violates both its constitutional obligations and those spelled out by the international human rights law (SAHRC 2003: 1). Worse still, it has resulted in a high level of uncertainty amongst service providers regarding the rights of undocumented foreigners (Misago, Landau and Monson 2009: 35). Arguably, this uncertainty may result in service providers considering undocumented Zimbabwean child migrants as nothing more than illegal foreigners who threaten society, especially in light of the negative discourse used by the state in describing undocumented migrants. Indeed, as the situation stands now, there is no standardisation of services to migrants throughout the country, and with the continued failure to recognise undocumented child migrants, there appears to be little hope of the situation improving in the near future (CoRMSA 2009: 7).

The lack of recognition of undocumented foreign children within the state and the consequential uncertainty among service providers has obvious repercussions for a child's legal right to effective protection. In this case, it has led to a continuous deprivation of services, or where services are provided, these are often inadequate and ineffective (Winterstein 2004: 12). In spite of the Children's Charter[6] which states that *all* children are created equal, *all* children are entitled to basic human rights and freedoms and *all* children deserve special care and protection, undocumented migrants continue to be deprived of even the most basic rights as set out in the Constitution and other conventions of forced migration that SA is a signatory to (Crush 2000: 105). For example, while the DSD is obliged to provide basic services to migrant minors, it has failed to implement a programme targeting the needs of the increasing number of child migrants in the country. Similarly, DHA has made little progress in ensuring that children can access the asylum system (CoRMSA 2008). Also, many schools make it difficult for undocumented Zimbabweans to enrol in spite of children's Constitutional right to basic education (Polzer 2007: 12). To be fair, it is not entirely correct to speak

[6] The Children's Charter of South Africa is available at: http://www.anc.org.za/misc/childcht.html.

of a total deprivation of services. There are service providers who do work with or cater to the undocumented population, providing shelter, food and clothing - to be discussed at length in chapter four. However, it is suggested here that such services do not serve children effectively and hence do not satisfy children's needs. This logic is based on two realities. Firstly, the fact that soon after arrival, many children (boys in particular) run away from the shelters, and secondly, the so-called invisibility of girl migrants. I believe that both these 'trends' tell us something about the efficiency of services that are currently being provided for.

In sum, the human security of child migrants seems to be undermined by the prioritised security of the state and South African society. This failure of the state to protect child migrants has resulted in the formation of a migrant network from which children can draw the support needed to survive. However, these networks are seemingly ineffective in relieving the hardships of the migration process, something which will be elaborated on in chapter three.

1.3. Research Objectives

This thesis is both a case study and a theoretical reflection of undocumented Zimbabwean children who continue to cross the border into South Africa despite the inherent lack of services or, where provided, inadequacy of these services. There are many gaps in the existing literature as to why this is and how these children are able to survive in the face of such deficiency. This is largely due to the fact that the bulk of existing literature in the field of child migration originates from research conducted on the household level, thereby overlooking children's own experiences (Palmary 2009: 4). By incorporating children's perspectives then, this thesis has two primary objectives. First, the thesis seeks to explain why children continue to come to SA. To do so, the paper closely considers the gap that exists between the reality of the migration process (looking at the various risks associated with migration) and the discourse that is constructed by these children with regards to life in South Africa. The second objective is to explain why child migrants are unable to access services, and where they are able to access services, determine the quality and extent to which they satisfy the needs of children. Furthermore, the compatibility of perceptions of service providers and child migrants is explored so as to assess whether the needs expressed by child migrants correspond to the needs that service providers believe are of priority to child migrants. Explaining these objectives will generate knowledge that will hopefully help improve service delivery in the future.

1.4. Main Research Question

In an effort to achieve the objectives set out above, the following question has been compiled to guide the research:

To what extent is social service provision in the Northern Province[7] of South Africa of significance to undocumented child migrants from Zimbabwe and what is the role of social networks in all this?

1.5. Hypothesis

Drawing from the research question set out above, the paper anticipates the following findings:

1. Undocumented child migrants in South Africa do rely on social networks, yet these networks do not necessarily have a positive influence on migrants as is advocated by social network theorists.
2. Where services are provided, these do not satisfy the needs of child migrants. This is because the social tie that links child migrants to service providers is flawed resulting from a misperception and misunderstanding of the other's needs and challenges.

1.6. Research Design and Data Gathering Techniques

With regards to existing literary sources, data was taken from academic books, electronic journals, the Internet as well as newspaper articles. Save the Children UK (SCUK), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), CoRMSA and the Forced Migration Studies Programme at the University of Witwatersrand (FMSP) are amongst the most prominent organisations dedicated to this particular field and have published several documents and reports that were extensively drawn upon for the purposes of this research. While secondary sources were a critical and vital source of information, the largest portion of the data originated from primary sources. Bearing in mind the focus of this thesis, the areas where research was conducted had to be strategically selected. The bulk of the research therefore took place in Musina, a small town located on the Northern border of South Africa in the Limpopo Province. Given the town's close proximity to Zimbabwe, Musina is the primary recipient of undocumented Zimbabweans. Other research areas included Beitbridge in Zimbabwe, central Pretoria (in particular Sunnyside) and central Johannesburg. The respondents in this study included foreign children (forty Zimbabwean and fifteen Congolese children), relevant government officials and representatives of both local and international organisations. Data was gathered through either one-on-one interviews or by setting up focus groups. Whereas the former was used for the service providers, owed to the large quantity of children participating in the study, this would have been a far too time-consuming way of extracting information and as such focus

[7] Northern Province includes only those areas where research was conducted, namely Musina, Beitbridge, central Pretoria (predominantly Sunnyside) and central Johannesburg.

group discussions were a more viable option. In order to create a safe and comfortable environment for the child respondents, the groups were formed on the basis of pre-existing social groups i.e. children attending the same school or church or living at the same shelter. Children were therefore placed in a group with peers with whom they were familiar. In-depth, open-ended questions were used and before each session, a set of predetermined questions were drawn up as a guideline for the interview. Having said this, the interviews remained relatively unstructured allowing respondents the freedom to introduce any issues they felt was of relevance to the topic. Prior to official interviews, a pilot study was carried out with the purpose of testing the validity and practicality of the questions. Two Congolese refugee women and four social workers took part in this pilot study. Needless to say, these findings were not included in the final paper.

1.6.1. Set-up of Paper

The paper begins by presenting an overview of the existing literature on child migration in South Africa so as to gain insight into the research that has already been conducted in this field. The thesis is divided into two main sections. The first section focuses on the child migrants and is partly descriptive, taking account of the risks and motives involved in the migration process, and partly explanatory, looking at why children continue to come to SA. Drawing primarily from the material that was extracted from the interviews, the extent to which child migrants function in networks is investigated. The second section is concerned with the service providers active in the field of migration and will shed light on the social link that binds service providers to migrants. It therefore looks at how service providers function: the services they provide; the obstacles they encounter; and how they perceive child migrants and their needs. Here again, the bulk of the data stems from personally conducted interviews with the service providers. The aim is to determine whether the assistance provided meets and satisfies children's needs. I believe that a significant gap exists between service providers and child migrants, a gap that stems from a misperception of the other. Service providers were therefore asked to reflect on their work in assisting child migrants and children in turn were asked to describe the support they received. This section also includes a discussion on the state, an agent whose role cannot go unnoticed in the process of migration. The state undoubtedly contributes to the inefficiency of service delivery for undocumented child migrants and this section takes into consideration the role of the state by closely examining the concept of recognition.

1.6.2. Motivation For the Selection of This Topic

Despite rising interest in recent years in the field of undocumented migration, there is a need for more work to be done on this topic. Indeed, there are plenty of missing links in the existing literature

on child migration, such as the motives that spark children's continual migration into the country. There is also limited knowledge regarding the networks within which child migrants function. The relevance of this thesis is therefore born out of a need to fill some of these gaps.

Furthermore, the significance of this study lies in the fact that it is current, it is real and is happening as we speak. It is also an issue that is likely to persist for some time. As long as we are faced with a situation in which one country is able to provide that which another country fails to provide, migration will always occur (Staunton et al. 2008: xiii). Indeed, if the situation in Zimbabwe persists or deteriorates further, we can expect more Zimbabweans to move into the country (Polzer 2007: 6). This was reiterated in an interview with a social worker at Crossroads[8]. According to her, the situation in Zimbabwe is worsening, because whereas previously South Africa was only receiving adult migrants, it is now facing a massive influx of children. Given the unlikelihood of the problem fixing itself and the real possibility of the situation exacerbating further, SA has to acknowledge and deal with the problem, the seriousness of which should not be underestimated. A few writers have even dared to compare the treatment of undocumented migrants to the hardships suffered by the suppressed black majority during the Apartheid years (Vigneswaran 2007: 10). Peberdy (2002) and Crush (2000) are amongst two such writers who claim that methods used in the arrests, detention and deportation of child migrants are reminiscent of past-Apartheid practices. This clearly implicates the violation of migrants' basic human rights and should not be taken lightly. The fact that we are dealing here with migrants that are children serves as perhaps the most relevant motivation for this study. This thesis drew its inspiration from a need to empower children by giving them, as a first step, the opportunity to voice their own experiences.

1.7. Ethical aspects

During the research process, several ethical aspects were taken into consideration. First, the researcher ensured that all participants were correctly informed. Participants were explained what the aim of the study was and were given a choice to participate. Consent forms were drawn up for the children who took part in the focus group sessions. No child therefore participated in the interviews against his or her own will, or against the will of his or her parents. If at any time the participant felt the need to withdraw, he or she had every right to do so. Efforts were also undertaken to ensure the safety of participants. To do so, participants were allowed to decide where and when the interviews would be held. Owed to the fact that the majority of the children interviewed were undocumented, all details belonging to the participant were kept confidential.

[8]A shelter for only boys located in the centre of Pretoria.

Where a voice recorder was used, participants were asked for permission and assured of the fact that the information would be used by only the researcher.

1.8. Research Limitations and Concluding Remarks

Research was conducted in a somewhat limited timeframe of two months, and while a total of thirty interviews were undertaken, one can undoubtedly expect a few gaps in the data collected.

The biggest problem is that of representation, one that is certainly not unique to this study alone but which most researchers can relate to. The child respondents included in this study represent only a small fraction of the total number of undocumented Zimbabwean children currently living in South Africa. A great proportion of child migrants are living on the streets and while their story would be of interest to researchers, it was decided, for safety purposes, to not include these children in the study. Also, the data collected is largely confined to the Limpopo Province and to a lesser extent the Gauteng Province. The researcher would like to emphasise that given the area limitations of this study, no generalisations can be made to the country at large. Furthermore, at no point does this study suggest that the views expressed by the participating parties are representative of all service providers or child migrants in SA.

While the researcher set out to achieve effective gender representation, in the case of Zimbabwean child migrants in South Africa, unequal representation is sadly unavoidable. Zingu (2007: 5) claims that there is a gendered pattern of migration to SA, with boys more likely to migrate alone than girls. Based on my research, and the fact that I was fortunate to speak to a fair number of both girl and boy migrants, I found no evidence to support this statement. But the fact remains that girl migrants are largely invisible. Indeed, the urgent need for in-depth research into this phenomenon was something that was emphasised by all service providers in the study. Whereas a significant number of boys make a conscious decision to live on the streets where they are free to engage in a wide range of piece jobs, girls are far more likely to be employed as domestic workers or, worse still, sex workers. As a result, researchers, service providers and the authorities struggle to locate migrant girls and this has resulted in their under-representation in most available migration studies (Palmary 2009: 21). Despite this, I was fortunate to come into contact with quite a large number of girls. I imagine this has something to do with the fact that the bulk of the interviews were conducted in Musina which for most children serves as a mere stop-over before moving on to the city centres of Pretoria and Johannesburg where they disappear.

Perhaps the biggest drawback of the study lies in the dependency on focus group discussions. It was hoped that the focus groups would give way to interaction between the participants, yet sadly the sessions sparked little to no interaction between the children. This is most likely due to language limitations. With the exception of two sessions, no interpreters were asked to sit in as I was assured by the care-takers that the children could communicate satisfactorily in English. While I found this to be true, I am convinced that the focus groups would have been far more fruitful had the children spoken in their mother tongue. Another downfall when working in groups is the risk that the more outgoing members of the group tend to dominate the discussion. In many sessions, only one or two were contributing to the discussion, with the shier children often repeating much of what their peers were saying. This certainly compromises the creditability of the stories and one can question the truthfulness of some of their testimonies. Overall however, and owed to the qualitative nature of the study, the research process progressed fairly smoothly.

This chapter intended to offer the reader a clear idea of the aim and expected outcomes of the research. The next chapter presents an overview of the existing literature on child migration in South Africa and provides a detailed explanation of the theoretical framework that will be used.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section provides a brief yet concise overview of the existing literature on child migration so as to provide a comprehensive outline of the current state of child migration in SA. Of course, it is impossible to give a complete overview of the work that has been done thus far. For this reason, literature has been carefully selected to include only that which is of relevance to this study. Before determining the extent to which undocumented child migrants are deprived of their rights, it is important to understand just which rights are accorded to this group of migrants. This may prove somewhat tricky as undocumented child migrants are not a recognised group in SA and as such do not feature in official migration legislation (Social Workers Guide 2003: 17). This chapter however serves to remind the reader that Zimbabwean child migrants, despite their undocumented status, are children first and foremost. They are also migrants in their own right and should therefore be protected accordingly. Some of the most prominent legislation with regards to both children and migration is examined (both at the national and international level), with special attention given to children's rights to education, health care services and social security. Thereafter, the focus shifts onto the state. This section includes a discussion on South Africa's migration strategy, with special attention given to the state's dependence on detention and deportation. Lastly, the issue of xenophobia deserves mention, especially in a country like South Africa where xenophobic attitudes are deeply entrenched at not only the grass root level but at the state level too.

The second section of the chapter describes the theoretical framework upon which this thesis builds, namely social network theory (SNT), with the bulk of the literature reviewed accredited to the work of Granovetter, Massey and Portes. Here, the underlying belief upon which social network theory rests is outlined, and the three basic concepts that comprise this theory are conceptualised: social capital, networks of obligation, and circular and cumulative causation. In doing so, the section explains how this theory fails to effectively explain the recurrent arrival of undocumented child migration in SA.

2.2. Legislation Stipulating the Rights of Undocumented Child Migrants (UCM)

When it comes to UCM, there exists a huge human rights deficit; not so much in the sense of an existing gap between rights on paper and implemented rights in reality, but in the sense that these children's rights do not even feature on paper. This is essentially where the problem of service delivery begins. SA is renowned for having one of the world's most generous constitutions, especially

when it comes to children. Article 28 of the 1996 Constitution[9] states that every child has the right to "basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services". The use of the term *every child* suggests no distinction is made between citizens and non-citizens and as Viviers (2008: 2) quite rightly states, this can be interpreted as applying to all children in South Africa, including foreign child migrants. The following section seeks to show that while there is little mention of undocumented child migrants' rights on paper, they too have an equal right to (1) education (2) health care services and (3) social security. To do so, several pieces of legislation will be used as the primary means of interpretation. These include the Constitution, the Child Care Act, the Refugees Act, the ACRWC and the UNCRC.

2.2.1. Education

According to Section 29 of the Bill of Rights *everyone* has a right to basic education. As such, undocumented child migrants have a right to schooling. Even more telling is section 19 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) which explicitly states that the Act applies equally to learners who are not citizens of South Africa (CoRMSA 2008: 44). Hence, no child may be refused access to schooling, whether on the basis of documentation, language, nationality or inability to pay school fees. In addition to the aforementioned right to education as safeguarded in the Constitution, the Minister for Education confirmed to Parliament in August 2007 that refugee and unaccompanied minors (unaccompanied children are almost always undocumented) are allowed access to education in terms of Section 5 of the SASA (Viviers 2008: 3). The UNCRC[10] also states that the right of every child to education shall be recognised and that every state is required to achieve this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity. Likewise, according to Article 24[11] of the UNCRC, state parties are to "recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health" and they are to "pursue full implementation of this right". This is discussed below.

2.2.2. Health Care Services

In April last year, the Gauteng Department of Health released a memo which clearly indicates that non-South African citizens may not be denied access to health services, whether in possession of official documentation or not. This includes access to antiretroviral treatment and medicine (Viviers 2008: 5). Furthermore, the Social Relief of Distress grant, which is a temporary provision of assistance intended for people facing hardships and unable to meet their most basic needs, does not require identity documentation for eligibility and so theoretically should be applicable to anyone in dire need

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[9] Article 28 in the 1996 Constitution is dedicated entirely to the welfare of children: available at: http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf.

[10] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child available at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc.pdf.

[11] Available at: http://untreaty.un.org/English/TreatyEvent2001/pdf/03e.pdf

of food support, including UCM (Polzer 2007: 25). Likewise, UNCRC encourages state parties to "take appropriate measures to ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance"[12]. The Convention further holds all state parties responsible to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to health care services.

2.2.3. Social Security

Similar to the right to education and health care, Section 27 of the Constitution[13] states that *everyone* in South Africa has the right to sufficient food and water, as well as the right to have access to social security, including appropriate social assistance. It should be noted that SA has a policy of self-sufficiency, meaning that refugees and asylum seekers, like the majority of South Africans, are responsible for their own needs for food and basic welfare through their own work or through social networks. However, in those cases when the extremely vulnerable (like unaccompanied child migrants) are unable to support themselves, the constitutional right to social welfare should not exclude non-citizens (CoRMSA 2008: 38). Article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provides that every child shall have:

> "Without any discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property or birth, the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the State"[14].

Furthermore, the UNCRC makes several provisions to children's social security rights. Of relevance here is Article 26 which states that every child has the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance.

While the above paragraphs focused on three rights in particular, the Child Care Act and the Refugees Act make a more general claim to children's rights by stating that any child under the age of eighteen should be accorded the same rights and protection as South African children (Eyber quoted in Landau 2004: 74).

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[12] Article 24, section 2b. Available at: http://untreaty.un.org/English/TreatyEvent2001/pdf/03e.pdf

[13] Section 27 b and c. Available at: http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf.

[14] Available at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm. South Africa ratified the ICCPR on 10 December 1998.

2.3. Lack of Implementation

Almost none of these provisions are being implemented appropriately for child migrants. CoRMSA (2008: 39) found evidence to suggest that thirty-five percent of migrant and refugee children of school-going age are not in school. Also, the DSD is obliged to provide basic services to unaccompanied minors but has till this day failed to implement a programme designed to target the increasing number of child migrants present in South Africa (Polzer 2007: 12). While NGOs have proven to be rather successful in the field of child migration, their limited financial capacity has largely restricted their assistance to recognized asylum seekers or refugees, a status undocumented children are unable to qualify for (Polzer 2007: 13). Moreover, the 2005 Children's Act[15] does not make provisions for unaccompanied minors. In short, much remains to be done to establish the progressive realization of the rights of child migrants. While the paper focused specifically on access to health care, education and social security, these are only three amongst many other basic survival needs. For example, access to safe and secure housing is as crucial to human life and dignity. In this respect, it is widely accepted that denial of one right will negatively affect the exercise of other rights. For example, whether or not one has access to housing will determine whether the person in question is able to realise educational and health care rights. We can therefore conclude that when UCM are denied access to health care, education and social security, they are also deprived of other equally crucial social, economic and cultural needs. Owed to the mutual and interdependent relation that exists between economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) and civil political rights (CPR), deprivation of the former results in instant deprivation of the latter (de Gaay Fortman 2008). The paragraph that follows focuses on the violation of one such civil right, namely the right against detention and deportation.

2.4. South Africa's Migration Strategy

2.4.1. Detention and Deportation

In theory, UCM should be picked off the streets by police officers or immigration officials and be referred to a social worker who will arrange for them to be accommodated in a place of safety while investigating their circumstances. In reality, the state continues to deport children. This is problematic, not only because deportation is a serious violation of international human rights law, but because such acts are in violation of the constitutional rights accorded to children in detention centres.

[15] Available at: http://www.info.gov.za/gazette/acts/2005/a38-05.pdf.

South Africa's international obligations to respect the right not to be detained in conditions that are inhuman or degrading and to respect the rights of minors in detention are reflected in several pieces of domestic law. For example, under the Constitution, everyone who is detained has the right "to conditions of detention that are consistent with human dignity, including at least exercise and the provision of adequate accommodation, nutrition, reading material and medical treatment"[16]. Furthermore, according to Section 28 of the Constitution, every child has the right not to be detained except as a measure of last resort, in which case the child, in addition to the rights enjoyed under sections 12[17] and 35[18] may be detained only for the shortest appropriate period of time, has the right to be kept separately from detained persons over the age of eighteen years and is treated in a manner, and kept in conditions, that take account of the child's age (Viviers 2008: 2). Under the ICCPR, refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants have the right to liberty and security[19]. Children therefore have the right not to be detained, arrested or deported. In spite of this, the SAPF is currently still running its own detention facility in the Limpopo Province. In September 2004, the Pretoria High Court handed down a judgement that held that the legal mechanisms for the protection of South African children found in the Constitution and the Children's Act, apply equally to unaccompanied foreign children present within South Africa's borders. Although the Pretoria High Court's judgement held that the practice of deportation was unlawful, there is still no proper government policy or procedure providing for the lawful and dignified deportation of children from South Africa (CoRMSA 2008: 21).

2.4.2. Xenophobia

Much has been written on xenophobia in SA, especially in the aftermath of the 2008 xenophobic attacks. Crush (2000) dedicates a large section of his article to this theme, with special focus on the hostile behaviour of South African citizens towards outsiders. To be sure, Polzer would appreciate Crush's work as she believes that South African citizens are still a largely forgotten group in existing literature. There exists a general consensus that the current wave of xenophobia is born out of a hostile discourse embraced by government. Terms such as 'aliens' and 'illegals' are used when discussing the impact of migration on South Africa (Crush 2000: 117). Interestingly, Peberdy (2001: 29) makes a crucial link between xenophobia and citizenship, where the latter serves as a criterion for belonging. As such, the so-called citizenship card feeds into xenophobic tendencies towards non-nationals who do not belong. We shall return to this issue of inclusion versus exclusion at a later

[16]1996 Constitution of South Africa available at: http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf.

[17] Freedom and security of the person.
[18] Arrest, detained and accused persons.
[19] Article 9 available at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm

stage. Whatever the reason for xenophobic tendencies, no one would dispute the necessity of government to change its exclusionary discourse. As Polzer (2007: 14) reminds us, negative discourse places few constraints on the behaviour of those policing immigration, thereby removing any hope that effective protection can one day be realized. Indeed, it is because of such discourse that government has adopted and continues to uphold the exclusive and restrictionist nature of its immigration policy. Interestingly, South Africa's desperate attempt to control the growing influx of unaccompanied migrant children has arguably resulted in the systematic arrival of these minors into the country (Peberdy 2001: 17).

2.5. Conceptualising Social Network Theory

As has repeatedly been mentioned in the introductory chapter, in South Africa undocumented migrants in general, but Zimbabwean children in particular, have been experiencing an unjust denial in basic services (and in cases where services have been provided they have failed to satisfy children's needs). In the face of a life without basic human rights, undocumented minors have developed strategies to cope with this situation (Stöbbe 2000: 13). One such strategy is believed to be the formation of social networks. Indeed, Erickson and Yancey (quoted in Granovetter 1983: 212) propose that a strong link exists between a lack of social services on the one hand and networks on the other. They reason that, as long as people experience difficulties in accessing certain services, they will rely on networks. This thinking is supported by Collyer (2005: 706) who claims that when a state fails to provide services (like South Africa is failing to provide for child migrants) there is a natural tendency to become dependent on social networks. Indeed, the majority of the respondents in this study who were service providers believe in the existence of networks amongst Zimbabwean child migrants. This is not surprising, given the widely accepted belief that undocumented migrants rely more upon the services of networks than do documented migrants (Stöbbe 2000: 4). To be sure, this paper does not reject the idea that child migrants depend on networks. Yet whereas social network analysts promote the positive effect of networks, it is suggested here that networks may not always prove to be useful. On the contrary, they may even end up doing more harm than good. All in all, given the focus of this thesis and the self-sufficiency principle which SA promotes, this theory of social networking seems like an appropriate one to apply and hence will form the basis of this paper's theoretical framework.

Until recently, the widely used theory in explaining migration has been that of rational choice; the idea that individuals are rational actors who make decisions based on economic reasons i.e. weighing up the potential gains against the possible losses. For child migrants, this equation might be formulated as follows: the gain of education and potential income versus a loss in the form of arrest

and deportation. Social network theorists however view people not as isolated rational agents, but rather as agents who are connected to other agents through networks (Curran and Saguy 2001: 59). According to Boyd (quoted in Spittel 1998: 2) recognising social relationships and its role in migration in this way adds an important theoretical emphasis which facilitates our understanding of migration as a social product. The paragraphs to follow will begin with a brief outline of the underlying belief upon which social network theory rests. The three concepts mentioned in the foregoing paragraph i.e. social capital, networks of obligation and circular and cumulative causation will be conceptualised. As will become clear, these concepts are intrinsically linked and therefore cannot be studied in isolation from each other.

Simplified, social network theory builds on the premise that individuals form networks, or to use Massey's terminology, individuals are connected to one another through 'interpersonal ties' (quoted in Zanowiak 2006: 6). As the name suggests, network theorists are concerned with the significance of personal relations that exists between migrants and non-migrants (de Haas 2008: 21). A migrant network is therefore defined as follows:

> "…sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in places of origin and destination through ties of kinship, friendship, shared community origin and reciprocal obligations" (Massey quoted in Zanowiak 2006: 6).

In this light, migration leads to the development of a dense web of contacts, making it a network-creating process (Portes quoted in Spittel 1998: 2). Several conceptual models can be employed to explain how these social networks function. Social capital is one such model.

2.5.1. Social Capital

Economist Glenn Loury defines social capital as "a set of intangible resources that help promote social development" (quoted in Zanowiak 2006: 5). Other prominent theorists include Pierre Bourdieu and Portes who state that social capital

> " … is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue or possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationship of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (quoted in Zanowiak 2006: 5).

In simple English, social capital refers to the ability of individuals to draw upon their position in a network. The central idea is that settled migrants provide potential migrants with information on

the migration process and in some cases direct assistance in the form of food and shelter, thereby reducing the uncertainties associated with the act of migrating (Davis et al. 2002: 93). As such, the theory rests on the belief that social capital reduces the risks and costs involved in migration. We know undocumented child migration to South Africa to be a risky endeavour. This makes it doubtful whether social capital is indeed a form of insurance for these child migrants. It should be pointed out that the rationale that social capital lowers the cost of migration does not apply if social networks can no longer be relied on for support; the so-called 'downside' of social capital (Portes quoted in de Haas 2008: 20). According to Collyer (2005: 706) this appears to be the case for increasing numbers of undocumented migrants. Social network analysts work according to the following logic: migrants and non-migrants form part of a network; within this network, migrants possess and share social capital which then reduces the costs and risks coupled to the process of migration. For the purposes of this study, the reasoning stated above will be reversed. The analysis therefore begins by examining the costs and risks of migration. This is done with the help of three indicators that are borrowed from the work of Spittel (1998: 3) namely (1) access to safe transportation, (2) social interaction and (3) housing. The results will verify that migration is indeed a risky and costly procedure for undocumented children. Based on these findings we can assume one of two things; either there is no social capital from which migrants can draw, or the social capital that exists is proving to be futile. In the case of the former, we are inclined to state that a migrant network does not exist at all. With regards to the latter, it is safe to state (according to SNT) that a migrant network does exist but does not operate effectively. This paper proposes that child migrants do indeed form part of a social network; however what remains to be seen is whether such a network is of significance to these minors. Whereas theory stresses the positive effect of migrant networks, the empirical evidence of this thesis shows a bleaker outcome of the use of these networks (Davis et al. 2002: 293).

Proponents of social network theory argue that social networks are significant in promoting individuals' sense of belonging or inclusion within particular places, their feelings of security, freedom, opportunity and empowerment (Spicer 2008: 492). Hence, if children are part of well-functioning network, we would expect them to feel free, secure, included and empowered. By analytically discussing each of these indicators (security, inclusion, freedom and opportunity), I seek to determine the true worth of networks to child migrants. Similarly, the paper looks specifically at the network that exists between new and old migrants, exploring to what extent settled migrants can be of value to migrants. A distinction is made between bridgeheads (suggesting they are helpful) or gatekeepers (suggesting they are unsupportive). One hypothesis is that child migrants have come to realise that their survival depends on their own unreliable informal labour (also referred to as

piece work) and on their ability to avoid detection by security forces, and as such break away from networks (Collyer 2005: 711).

2.5.2. Networks of Obligation

The operation of social capital through social networks is reinforced by what network theorists have coined networks of obligation. The latter stems from a so-called bounded solidarity through which members of the migrant network support each other (Portes quoted in Collyer 2005: 704). Solidarity is likely to arise in those situations where a common threat is recognised as a result of (1) shared identity, (2) circumstance and (3) history (Curran and Saguy 2001: 60). It is expected that the risk-cost analysis mentioned above will verify that migration is indeed a dangerous activity. According to the theory then and in light of the common threat (i.e. migration) child migrants are expected to work within such networks of obligation.

At this point, something should be said regarding the nature of the connection or rather the ties that connect migrants to each other and to non-migrants. Network theorists distinguish between weak and strong ties. With regards to the latter, when agents within a network are connected on the basis of familial ties or friendship, we are inclined to refer to this link as a strong tie. Anything less than this is considered a weak tie. The reader should bear in mind that everything that has been discussed thus far is very much dependent on the nature of the ties.

For the third concept to become clear, it is perhaps useful to briefly summarise the above. According to SNT, migrants are part of a network through the social ties that bind them. Vital information flows between migrants through these ties (both weak and strong). This leads to two things. First and foremost, the risks associated with migration are supposedly lowered. Secondly, a denser network is established through the linkage of agents between the places of destination to the place of origin. The latter in turn will increase the likelihood of people's decision to migrate and in this way migration becomes self-perpetuating (Massey quoted in de Haas: 19). Massey has phrased this as circular and cumulative causation. While this reasoning may seem logical, I propose that it fails to explain the continuing arrival of children into the country. Network theorists would argue that migrants develop confidence in the network because the information that is disseminated is reliable and consistent across messengers (Curran and Saguy 2001: 67). I partly disagree with this reasoning, challenging the reliability of the information. It is important to remember that the migrants in this network are children and the information that flows between migrants is based on a child's mind. In this thesis, I propose that children are not disseminating information as such, but rather perceptions that are based on false constructions. The family and friends that comprise their network convey idealised

‘truths’ regarding life in SA and as naive children, UMC easily buy into the popular belief that life in South Africa is perfect. UCM are therefore guided by perceptions that are constructed from imperfect information.

To be sure, social networks are more than mere transmitters of information; they transmit values, perceptions and desires. In this way, migrant networks lead to a cultural transformation (Curran and Saguy 2001: 59). As children move between Zimbabwe and SA, they introduce new ideas which can lead to a change in other Zimbabwean children’s needs and desires, or rather, their perceptions of what they need. Massey uses the theory of relative deprivation to explain this phenomenon. While not rejecting the validity of this theory, I believe in the explanatory power of discourse to account for why children continue to cross the border into South Africa. As Granovetter (1983: 214) reminds us: “the speed at which children’s knowledge is spread across great distances suggests the role of weak ties”. By analysing the so-called networks of communication that exist within these migrant networks, this paper seeks to provide a counter-thesis to Massey’s circular and cumulative causation. Instead of accepting the belief that UCM come to SA to join their family, I argue that their motivation stems from a discourse that has child migrants believe that South Africa is in fact the land of milk and honey.

2.6. Concluding Remarks

Few would deny that the primary responsibility to ensure that migrant children are kept safe and given the support and assistance they need lies with the state. Yet as the preceding paragraphs show, South Africa has fallen well short in assisting and protecting migrant children. Too many child migrants continue to fall through the cracks of the existing child care system. The preceding paragraphs set out to prove two things: firstly, undocumented child migrants do in fact have a right to education, health and social security (amongst others) and secondly that in spite of these rights, they continue to be deprived of the most basic service provision. With the deeply entrenched xenophobic attitudes and the state’s consistent practices of detaining and deporting migrants, few provisions are being implemented to appropriately assist and protect these children. Unable to depend on the state and desperate to survive, children become dependent on their social networks. While at first glance these networks may appear useful, a different use of the networks was suggested here, one that is not necessarily positive. In light of the reality sketched above, this paper aims to explain why children’s networks are not particularly helpful and why child migrants are unable to receive the assistance needed. In cases where children are able to access services, an explanation is given for why I believe these services are not satisfying the needs of UCM.

Chapter Three: Undocumented Child Migrants

3.1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter lies with undocumented child migrants in South Africa. UCM are a fairly easily understood category of migrants. The problem lies in their recognition, something to be discussed at length in the next chapter (section 4.2) when addressing the role of the state. What will be said at this stage is that the lack of recognition is a direct consequence of the fact that in SA little attention appears to be given to the motives that inspire the decision to migrate. It is generally assumed that Zimbabwean children crossing over into SA are driven by economic aspirations. Yet from the discussion that follows below it becomes clear that children are driven by a complex interplay of different motives. Placing them in the single category of economic migrants is therefore erroneous. To be sure, UCM are more than just minors traveling alone. To the extent that they flee so as to escape extreme deprivation, whether cultural, political or economic, child migrants are humanitarian migrants. To the extent that they go to South Africa to find work so as to sustain themselves and their families back home, they are economic migrants (Polzer 2007: 6). Furthermore, if we accept the definition provided by the African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees[20] that says a refugee is "every person who, owing to events seriously disturbing public order, is compelled to leave his or her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his or her country of origin", then UCM (in light of the crisis situation in Zimbabwe) should in theory be able to apply for refuge in SA. In an effort to prove that undocumented child migrants cannot be boxed into a single category, this chapter begins by identifying some of the motives underlying child migration. Here, two types of factors are considered that could account for their migration, namely the factors that drive children out of Zimbabwe (commonly known as the push factors) and the factors that draw children to SA (the pull factors). While both factors play a vital role in triggering the migration of children, it is suggested that they should be considered within the broader spectrum of discourse. By introducing the so-called networks of communication, this study adds a new dimension to the standardised explanations of migration, and while doing so, challenges Massey's idea of self-perpetuating migration as well as the supposed positive worth of social networks. Although child migrants are believed to form part of a social network from which they can draw support, there is some doubt as to the true worth of these networks in facilitating the migration process. By looking at child migrants' experiences with regards to security, freedom, empowerment and sense of belonging, this chapter considers the extent to which UCM are included

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[20] Available at: http://www.africa-union.org/Official_documents/Treaties_%20Conventions_%20Protocols/Refugee_Convention.pdf. Ratified by South Africa on 15 December 1995: http://www.achpr.org/english/ratifications/ratification_refugees.pdf.

in society as this in turn determines the significance of a migrant network. Lastly, some of the risks that children face during their migration process are discussed with the aim of challenging the principle upon which SNT rests i.e. that social capital reduces the risks associated with migration. The findings of the aims set out above will be analytically discussed with the findings of the chapter that follows, where the focus shifts onto service providers and their role in assisting migrant children. This will shed light on the quality of the social link that binds the two agents, which in turn helps us answer the question of why child migrants are not receiving adequate services.

3.2. Migration Motives

3.2.1. Push/Pull Theories

The motives and reasons for children's migration are complex (Anarfi et al. 2005: 3). Note that the two cannot be used interchangeably and by using the conjunction *and*, Anarfi quite rightly distinguishes motives from reasons. According to the English Oxford Dictionary (Soanes 2002) a motive is defined as a factor influencing a person to act in a particular way. Reason, on the other hand, refers to "the power to think, understand and draw conclusions logically". As rational actors, children have the potential to reason, yet in this study the response of the participating children proves they were motivated by factors of poverty, hunger and unemployment. Much of the work on migration tends to focus on the role of push and pull factors in explaining why people make the decision to migrate. The theory builds on two central questions and if applied to Zimbabwean child migrants, these would be formulated as follows: why do children leave Zimbabwe (the push factors) and why do they choose South Africa as their final destination (the pull factors). Let us deal with the former first.

According to Haldenwang (1996: 24) push factors can include anything from low living standards, a poor economy and lack of employment opportunities, low wages, deprivation, political repression, persecution and civil war. With the exception of war, Zimbabwe is struggling to deal with a mixture of these factors. Any doubt as to whether Zimbabwe is indeed in a humanitarian emergency is surely discarded by the testimonies of the children themselves. "There is no country like Zimbabwe … in Zimbabwe we starve". These were the words of a sixteen year old girl. Her father, now deceased, was a former minister in the ZANU-PF government. They were leading a life of comfort to say the least, and together with her younger sister, she was attending a good school (based on the quality of her spoken English, I assume the education she received was of high standard). Yet with the passing of her father, things changed dramatically. After fleeing to South Africa, she and her sister spent the

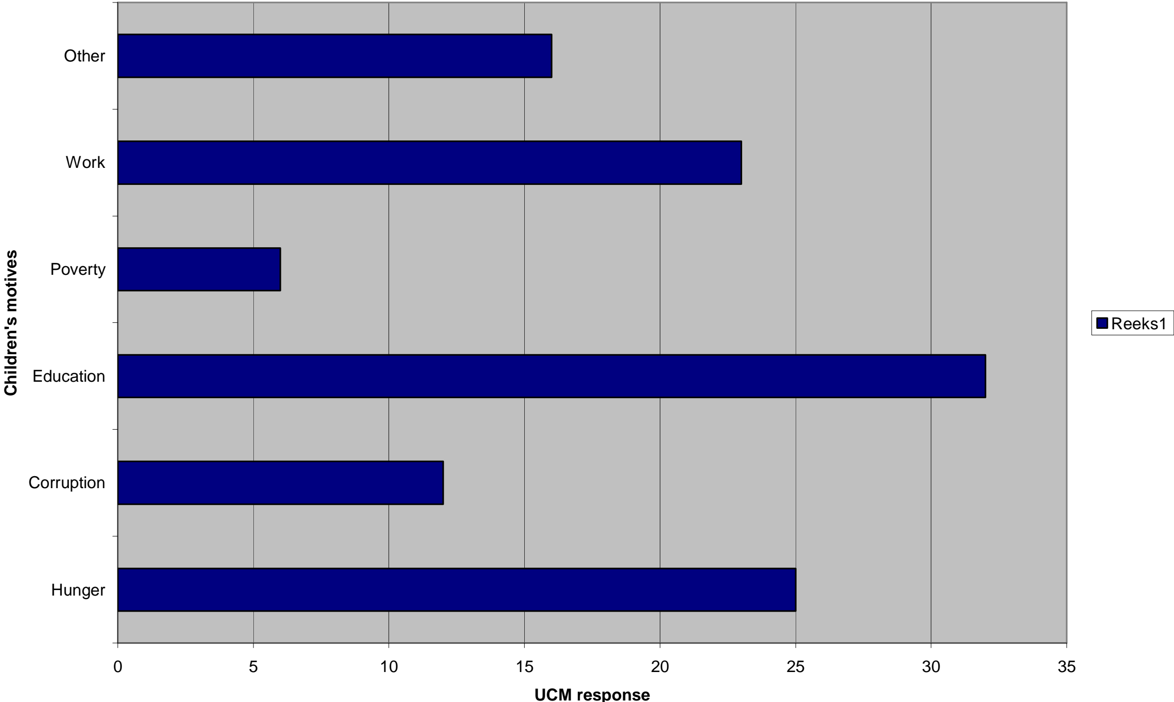
first two nights on the street before finding their way to the Uniting Reformed Church (URC)[21]. What is disheartening about this girl's story, apart from the obvious, is that it was told by someone whose father supported Mugabe; this provides little hope for those children whose family is in opposition to the ruling party. Another girl (aged seventeen) escaped Zimbabwe following the death of her father in the midst of political turmoil. According to SCUK, many children have valid political reasons for coming but this is often not discovered. This is a direct consequence of children's reluctance to tell the truth, often limiting their answers to: "… because of the people in government" or "corruption". This is not to say that these children had no direct experience of political confrontation; quite possibly children found it easier and safer to cite economic motives over political persecution. But whether children had valid political motives or not, hunger, next to education, was the most commonly cited reason for driving children out of Zimbabwe. In the words of one boy: "In Zimbabwe, everyone is hungry and no one is willing to help". Another boy, before finding his way to Crossroads, was living with his grandparents in Zimbabwe following the death of both his parents. He described them as mean and when asked to elaborate what he meant by mean, he responded: "They don't give me food". His story was strikingly similar to that of an eight year old boy at Concern Zimbabwe who was also deprived of food; in his words: "I spent most of the time crying because I was hungry". The stories of these children gain even more substance in the following quote taken from someone who runs a shelter for child migrants and who is trusted by many children: "Most come for food as they are hungry". These findings are not surprising. Owed to acute shortages of basic supplies combined with a series of very poor harvests, the food security has deteriorated in all parts of Zimbabwe, with an estimated seven million people facing severe food shortages (Mail & Guardian 2009). The Global Hunger Index (GHI)[22] has given Zimbabwe a numerical value of 23.8 and describes the situation as alarming. If we compare this to Zambia, one of the poorest countries in the world and who holds a value of 29.2, it becomes evident just how critical the hunger situation in Zimbabwe really is. Additionally, the Human Development Index (HDI) for Zimbabwe is 0.513, giving the country a rank of 151st out of a total of 177 countries.[23]

Zimbabwe, with 47% of the total population undernourished is considered the world's most food aid dependent country (Mail and Guardian 2009). All in all, the food crisis in Zimbabwe has reached its

[21] A shelter in Musina that provides accommodation, food and other basic needs. At the time of the interview, the church was accommodating 130 boys, 30 women and ten girls.
[22] HDI ranks countries on the basis of a figure arrived at by combining the following three indicators: level of child malnutrition, rates of child mortality and the proportion of people who are calorie deficient (Word Food Programme available at: http://www.wfp.org/news/hunger-in-the-news?tid=346).
[23] The Human Development Report annually publishes the human development index (HDI) which looks beyond GDP to a broader definition of well-being; available at: http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_ZWE.html

peak. In addition to hunger, other commonly cited motives for migration included education, work, corruption, poverty and disease. The graph below gives an indication of the ranking of these motives.

Table 1: Children's Migration Motives



While work and education are separated as two factors independent of one another, it should be noted that the two are closely related. For many children, the desire to work stems from a need to make money so as to pay for school fees. Likewise, while poverty and hunger are motives in their own right, they cannot be completely isolated from one another as poverty in an absolute sense refers to hunger and famine (Klein Goldewijk and de Gaay Fortman 1999: 91). The motive 'other' refers to money, clothes, and shoes.

Despite the undeniable push of these factors, there is a tendency to assume children's movement into the country as voluntary, with little regard for the critical situation in Zimbabwe. South Africans have convinced themselves that everyone in the region wants desperately to get into their country (McDonald et al. 2000: 826). But migration has never been a first choice, it is a survival strategy. The line between voluntary and forced migration has become somewhat blurred. For example, a school counselor at a secondary school in Pretoria admitted to not knowing which of the children were refugees and which children chose to come. This statement also points to the uncertainty that exists among some service providers that will be discussed in the next chapter. Bufacchi (2005: 197) reminds us of the importance of striving for precise definitions of key concepts, so for the purposes

of this study, it is important to differentiate between forced and voluntary migration. Bufacchi, in his analysis of violence, speaks of a narrow conception of violence, or rather violence as excessive force: the physical attack upon, abuse of or struggle against someone, versus a broader conception which he defines as "violence as violation". He argues that violence cannot be seen as either or but rather as a combination of the two. Similarly, migration is not always purely voluntary. With the exception of one girl, whose grandmother insisted she come to South Africa (i.e. migration that was forced), all child respondents in the study made the decision to migrate without external pressure to do so. Yet this does not make their migration fundamentally voluntary, because as the preceding paragraphs have attempted to illustrate, children's decision to migrate was influenced by an undesirable political situation, corruption, economic underdevelopment in the form of hunger or poverty, illiteracy or disease, or in many cases, a combination of these factors. With the situation as is in Zimbabwe, children no longer enjoy the freedom to choose; it comes down to survival.

The reasoning that SA serves as an almost irresistible magnet is supported by writers and analysts alike and has even been applied in explaining the recurrent arrival of child migrants into the country (Haldenwang 1996: 12). Certainly the pull factors are instrumental as well. The perception that SA knows no hunger and has a flourishing economy with ample opportunities at education and work has been a prominent factor in 'pulling' children into the country. Child respondents believe in the higher quality of education and described life in South Africa as easy. But South Africa, quite like its neighbouring countries, is also facing major challenges such as high levels of unemployment, widespread poverty, enormous income disparities, violent crime that is on the increase and not forgetting the alarming reality of HIV/AIDS; factors that are currently driving thousands of young graduates out of the country.

The point to be made is that both push and pull factors have proven vital in encouraging children to migrate out of Zimbabwe and into South Africa. Yet whereas the driving forces underlying the decision to migrate seem irrefutable, the pull factors should perhaps not be accepted as easily, especially in the face of South Africa's own push factors. In order to understand the true force of the pull factors, they need to be situated within a network. According to social network theorists and the service providers included in this study, child migrants work within a migrant network from which they can draw support in the form of information and direct assistance of food and shelter. According to one employee working at UNHCRC, this network seems to be largely underestimated by many service providers working in the field. Similarly, a spokesperson from CoRMSA expressed his confidence in the existence of social networks, arguing that these are likely to play an important role in how children fend for themselves. Still, I am not convinced of the existence of such a well-rounded

network. While not denying the flow of information between migrants, I question the quality of this information. What follows is a discussion of the pull factors linked to the powerful explanatory tool of discourse to illustrate that child migrants are sharing information that is inherently false, thereby exacerbating an already risky migration process.

3.2.2. Networks of Communication

To summarise the above, a child's decision to leave Zimbabwe is influenced by two factors: first, a comparison of the conditions in Zimbabwe to that of the conditions in SA and second, the information that the child has with regards to SA (Haldenwang 1996: 20). This is a rather flawed statement because what Haldenwang separates into two factors should essentially be grouped as one; since the comparison he speaks of can only be made once the child has collected the information. He further argues that knowledge is greatest of the area immediately adjacent and lessens with increasing distance. Based on this reasoning, we would expect Zimbabweans to have a fairly well-balanced insight of the situation in neighbouring SA. In contrast, the findings of this study suggest that child migrants are disillusioned and seemingly oblivious to the problems that are plaguing the country. It is here where this paper intends to add a valuable contribution in explaining why children continue to come to SA.

The manner in which an individual gathers information about potential destinations is guided by the extent and content of his or her 'information field' (Haldenwang 1996: 20). The content referred to in this 'field' is comprised of two sets of ties i.e. weak ties and strong ties. Recall from chapter one that when agents within a network are connected on the basis of familial or friendship ties, the link is considered strong. Anything else is defined as a weak tie. The central idea of SNT is that settled migrants provide prospective migrants with information on the migration process thereby reducing the uncertainties associated with the act of migrating. I formulate this information flow in a specific network, a so-called network of communication and argue that while migrants do indeed share information, this information does not reduce but rather enhances the risks. This reasoning works particularly well with children because as Granovetter (1983: 214) reminds us, children's knowledge is spread across great distances at a very fast pace. For Granovetter, this fast pace spread of information depends on the weak ties within the network. However, the act of migrating is such that both strong and weak ties are of value to migrants and so the former plays as crucial a role in the distribution of information as does the latter.

Of the forty Zimbabwean child respondents, nineteen claimed to have family living in SA. It is difficult to say with certainty how many of them really do have family in SA because - as mentioned in section

1.7 - children were inclined to repeat much of what was said by their peers. But if we accept that all nineteen children do indeed have family living in SA, then Massey's theory of self-perpetuating migration i.e. once an existing network of settled migrants is in place more migrants are likely to come can also be accepted (quoted in de Haas 2008: 19). The following statement taken from an interview at the Haven Night Shelter supports Massey's theory: "I think that one person comes and once that person is settled, word gets out and another one can come … I do think there is a network of family". But the findings of this study suggest that the theory can be refuted. Of the nineteen claiming to have family in SA, only one stated this as his primary motive for coming. The boy's father had come to SA a few years ago after he was released from prison in Zimbabwe and now the boy was hoping to find him. But having been in the country for close to a year, the boy has yet to be reunited with his father. The remaining eighteen said their motives for coming were to get an education or to earn an income, not to be reunited with their family. These findings were supported by a UNICEF report which found that of all the children interviewed, half of whom had a relative living in South Africa, no one mentioned this as their reason for migrating to SA (Palmary 2009: 35). Of course, Massey's theory is based on the belief that migrants successfully integrate and settle in the destination country, but in the case of Zimbabwean migrants, those who do are surely the exception. With the ease and pace with which children and adults are deported, very few make it to the larger cities where they have a real chance at settlement. Owed to the fact that this study was primarily focused on those children who have not yet settled it is impossible to draw concrete conclusions on this topic. But the fact that many children were unable to join their family (the reasons why are explained under section 3.4.3) suggests that perhaps there are only few who integrate into South African society. I dare suggest that the non-success or rather non-settlement of migrants far outweighs the success stories. If I am correct in this assumption, then we cannot speak of self-perpetuating migration in South Africa, because where there are few or even no settled migrants, the motive that is used by potential migrants to join these settled migrants is no longer valid. So why do children continue to come? The answer, it seems to me, lies in the information that children have regarding SA.

"In south Africa, people have everything you could ever want". This quote was taken from a DVD entitled *I live here* (Refugee Social Services 2008). Similar quotes were born out of the interviews, with children stating things like "South Africa is beautiful", "life in South Africa is nice", and "education is better". When asked where they got this notion, the responses were stunningly similar: my aunt, my mother, father, grandmother, brother, friends or "just some guys I know"; a combination of both strong and weak ties. I am the last person to challenge the belief that South Africa is beautiful, but to draw attention to only the positive would be somewhat ignorant. I dare say

that if we were to compile a list of pros and cons, the latter will far outweigh the former, especially in light of the high levels of crime, unemployment, AIDS, poverty and inequality. With the situation as is, SA probably does offer education that is of higher quality in comparison to the education in Zimbabwe, but what is striking is that very few of the children who mentioned education as the principal motive for coming are actually attending school[24]. Given the strength of the ties mentioned above, one would expect the information shared between settled and new migrants to be truthful and reliable. Yet evidence born out of the research shows that the information was at the very least distorted. Menjivar's (quoted in Davis et al. 2002: 293) claim of the tendency of family and friends to lie to prospective migrants is supported in an interview with a young Congolese girl. She referred to her aunt who had made promises to her of a big house and assured her of the good life in South Africa. Yet upon arrival, the actual situation nowhere near met the girl's expectation. It is safe to assume that this problem of unmet expectations is also true for Zimbabwean children. I base this reasoning on the fact that all child respondents expressed a desire for assistance, whether it was food they needed, money, a caretaker, clothes or education - all were still in need. SCUK makes a strong argument when stating that "efforts should be made to try and get the bad stories back to Zimbabwe", because while most migrants admitted to the hardships of their migration, all except one girl said they would advice their younger siblings to come to South Africa. In the words of one girl: "Once you are in, it's okay".

The information that is available to child migrants is idealised and does not inform them of the potential hardship and dangers. This is telling of the quality of the communication network. There is however another type of discourse, an even more persuasive one, that is the unspoken kind. Social networks are more than mere transmitters of information; they transmit values, perceptions and desires (Curran and Saguy 2001: 59). Most, if not all child respondents, made reference to the material objects that family members, friends and acquaintances were bringing into Zimbabwe following a visit to SA. Of these, the most commonly cited was the basic necessity of groceries and the somewhat less needed but no less desired television sets. The DVD that was mentioned earlier plays a scene in which children recall the time they witnessed South Africans throwing away microwaves and televisions, replacing them with newer ones. This sketches an image of abundance in SA, which in turn leads to what Curran and Saguy (2001: 59) have termed a 'cultural transformation' (I would rather suggest a material transformation). Children returning home with television sets awaken a change in the perceptions of what Zimbabwean children believe they need and they therefore come to desire other things. Curran and Saguy (2001) define this as relative

[24] 5 out of a total of 40 Zimbabwean children.

deprivation, or rather, the perception that one unjustly lacks desirable resources that others possess. Of course it is fair to speak of deprivation in Zimbabwe, but this deprivation cannot be isolated from the powerful tool of discourse. Based on the flow of imperfect information and the witnessing of material objects, children construct an idealised perception of what life is like in South Africa. This is worrisome because perception drives action (Misago, Landau and Monson 2009: 16). This we know to be true because children, despite the apparent hardships, continue to cross the border into South Africa.

To conclude this section, children's motives to migrate stem from perceptions that are constructed from imperfect or idealised information that they receive from both strong and weak ties. To strengthen this logic the paper drew support from the argument made by Curran and Saguy who argue that children continue to migrate because of a so-called cultural transformation. Given that this transformation is highly dependent on the spread of a 'material discourse', I prefer the term material transformation.

3.3. Significance of Networks

The purpose of this section is to challenge network theorists who promote the positive effects of migrant networks. It will be argued that child migrants in SA are unable to depend on these networks to facilitate the migratory process. This was already briefly discussed in the previous section but to strengthen the argument further, the following paragraphs illustrate that child migrants are largely excluded from South African society. Here, I build on the work of Spicer (2008: 492) who claims that one's social network is highly significant in promoting migrants' social inclusion. The extent to which one is included in society depends on a range of factors that are discussed below. These include (1) one's sense of belonging within a particular place and one's feelings with regard to (2) security, (3) freedom, (4) opportunity and (5) empowerment.

3.3.1. Inclusion: Security and Freedom

In response to the question: 'w*hat are your rights?'* the girls at SCUK unanimously agreed that freedom of movement was certainly something they were entitled to. Yet South Africa's continued deportation of undocumented minors suggests otherwise. While many would argue that SA is acting within its full sovereign right to control the movement of Zimbabweans into and out of its national territory, such a view deems children as criminals to be feared, not as vulnerable children in desperate need of protection. In theory, undocumented child migrants should be picked off the streets by police officers or immigration officials and be referred to a social worker who will arrange for them to be accommodated in a place of safety. In reality, the state continues to deport.

According to Crush (2000: 104) the South African government had deported 600,000 migrants in a period of five years. While Crush fails to specify how many of this number were children, plenty evidence exists to suggest that children are also being detained and deported. For example, in a survey undertaken by the FMSP in 2007, one quarter of the children interviewed had been illegally returned to their home country and in all cases these returns were carried out by the SAPF (Zingu 2007: 5). Likewise, of the respondents interviewed in this study, the majority had been to SA before and of all the children who were returned to Zimbabwe, not one mentioned willingness on their part; all were arrested and deported. Interestingly, the state's efforts to control the influx of Zimbabwean minors seem futile. An interview conducted with a fifteen year old boy at Save the Children Norway (SCN) proved just that. He had been deported for the third time and at the time of the interview he was waiting to be reunified with his family. While expressing excitement at the thought of seeing his family again, he also conveyed his unyielding intention to return to SA. The frequency and ease with which the state deports migrants suggests that children's right to freely move around is severely hindered. Indeed, as Stöbbe (2000: 4) reminds us, undocumented migrants behave differently than documented migrants. If they wish to stay in SA, they have to avoid drawing the authorities' attention to them and hence children opt to move in small groups. This was especially evident in children's descriptions of their border crossings. The largest group that was formed was a group of three girls who had crossed the border together; the rest of the children crossed in pairs or in some cases, alone. A good example that illustrates the difficulty to move freely and undetected is the eighteen year old boy, who had been arrested a month after his arrival and was awaiting deportation at the Southpansburg Military Grounds (SMG). He said that life in South Africa was difficult as he was always running. Evidently, he knew no one in SA.

Furthermore, in an effort to remain undetected, social life is restricted to a small private sphere. Interaction between children is usually confined to the boundaries of the shelter and/or school. Very seldom do children leave the shelter to play elsewhere. Home of Hope does from time to time organize play-dates with the boys at Crossroads, but under the safe supervision of the respective social workers (the issue of social interaction will be discussed in more depth in section 3.5.2). However, this is not just a problem of obstruction of movement; it is also about security as the manner in which detention and deportation are carried out are often in serious violation to the child's basic human right to security of the self. Also, the treatment of UCM by police officials is concerning. For example, the eight year old boy who is in SA searching for his father was beaten by the police as punishment for disturbing people by asking them for food.

3.3.2. Inclusion: Empowerment and Sense of Belonging

Zimbabwean migrants see South Africa as a place of opportunities, the place where their journey to empowerment begins. However, child migrants generally struggle with inadequate opportunities to make connections into arenas where power is exercised and resources flow. Indeed, if empowerment begins with education then the chances of these youngsters becoming empowered are not great as only a small minority is fortunate to be attending school. It is also doubtful that Zimbabwean children enjoy an actual sense of attachment to SA. To quote Spicer: "isolation from social networks may undermine the individual's sense of attachment to a place" (2008: 492). If we accept this statement, then surely the reverse is also true: an individual's sense of attachment determines the extent of his or her social network. Hence, when one feels attached to a particular place, that person must form part of a social network. Non-attachment in turn would imply that children do not form part of a migrant network. During the focus group discussions, very few children expressed a desire to stay in SA permanently. Indeed, the fact that all children are short-term[25] migrants is telling of the fact that most have intentions of returning to Zimbabwe. Even more telling was the evidence born out of a focus group session with five youngsters in Pretoria. All five attended a good school, spoke good English, were well-groomed and were living with family; in short, they appeared to be well integrated into South African society. Yet when asked what their future plans were, all agreed they would return to Zimbabwe soon after they completed their final year of school. If these children, empowered through their education, feel such a minimal level of attachment to SA, we can only imagine the disconnect of those living on the streets or residing in shelters.

From the above, there appears to be a moderately low level of inclusion amongst UCM in South African society; this is to say they are largely excluded from society. Indeed, according to Spicer (2008: 493) asylum-seekers and refugees living in industrialised countries experience many problems of social exclusion. Given the fact that undocumented migrants are largely unrecognised in SA, it is safe to assume that their experiences of exclusion tend to be more acute than for recognised refugees. Spicer's logic combined with the findings above therefore hint at the fact that undocumented minors from Zimbabwe are excluded from South African society. This exclusion becomes even more noticeable when considering two other factors, also borrowed from the work of Spicer, namely limited English language support and cultural marginalisation. Of these two, the former was repeatedly mentioned by both child migrants and service providers (particularly within the education sector) as the main obstacle to overcome. All teachers who participated in the study spoke of the urgent need for language development classes. A grade one teacher even spoke of an

[25] Defined here as a period of two years or less.

orientation class, stressing the need to move beyond language classes only, to include efforts at helping children adjust to the South African social system in general. Language limitations do not only make learning a challenging task for both teacher and pupil, it also creates a misunderstanding that culminates into social barriers. For example, the popular game of hide-and-seek became something to be feared by foreign children as they did not realise the purpose of the game. The latter in turn caused frustrations on the part of South African children, often feeding into xenophobic attitudes. Linked to this exclusionary potential of language is culture. Ibrahim (2005: 165) describes cultural difference as a system of classification, one that is used as a criterion for exclusion. Surprisingly, only one girl mentioned cultural marginalisation as her primary reason for wanting to return home to Zimbabwe: “I love my country and my culture, but I can’t practice it here because people will laugh”. What was interesting was that once the issue of culture was put forward, it immediately sparked a debate amongst the children in the focus group, with one boy admitting to the difficulty he experienced in trying to keep up with “the dancing and stuff“ that is part of South African culture. Interestingly, the securitisation of migration that was briefly touched on before (and which will receive greater attention in the next chapter) builds on this very concept of cultural differences (Ibrahim 2005: 164). It was suggested earlier that South Africa’s efforts to combat in-migration may well stem from the desire to protect its own people more than a willingness to protect the vulnerable child migrants themselves. Similarly, it could be argued here that South Africa would do well to stop the high influx of child migrants, not so much for reasons of preventing the social exclusion of these children, but rather to preserve its own culture as the cultural differences that migrants bring with them are believed to threaten cultural life in SA (Ibrahim 2005: 166).

While xenophobia and cultural marginalisation have the potential to exclude migrants at all spheres, the ultimate exclusion comes in the form of child migrants’ inability to acquire essential services that might enable them to minimise their survival costs. De Moura (2002: 359) defines exclusion as exactly this, a process of collective deprivation that presents itself in the form of inaccessibility. Before concluding this section on the significance of children’s network, it is important to shift the focus away from child migrants and consider the connection they have with settled migrants and how they either contribute to the inclusion of migrants or exacerbate migrants’ feelings of exclusion.

3.3.3. Bridgeheads versus Gatekeepers

According to SNT, old migrants can be viewed as a source of social capital from which new migrants can draw support (Davis et al. 2002: 292). Yet knowing a settled migrant does not automatically provide the new migrant with a guarantee to assistance. The findings of Menjivar’s study on Salvadoran migrants proved that long-term residents did not assist newcomers because of the social

distances that separated the groups (quoted in Davis et al. 2002: 293). The evidence born out of this study does not point to problems of social distance but found actual distance to be a problem, especially in those cases where family members were living in the major cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria and to a lesser extent Cape Town and Durban. Child migrants rarely made it beyond Musina, because, if they managed to avoid arrest, they had no money to pay for a taxi out of Musina. To be sure, there are incidents where children, through the help of NGO reunification programs, managed to reach their parents or other family members. SCUK has for example, since the start of their reunification program, reunified seventy-two children with their families in SA. Granted, out of a total of 352 children in their care, this represents only a fraction. The study found evidence of several cases where the family rejected the child. Menjivar relates this to a person's financial capacity, arguing that assistance may be less forthcoming in times of economic insecurity. Migrants, who refuse to support a new migrant, be that for economic or any other reason, are referred to as gatekeepers. A bridgehead is the name given to those migrants who are settled and willing to facilitate the migration process of newcomers (de Haas 2008: 20). Similarly to the findings of Menjivar, this research suggest that it is not so much about a willingness to assist but has more to do with the inability to assist, an inability that stems from financial constraints. For example, a sixteen year old girl was living at Home of Hope while her mom was living with her boyfriend in the same suburb only a few blocks away. When asked why she was not living with her mom, her response was: "she doesn't have money to keep me".[26] Another girl told me how her excitement after finding her brother was soon replaced by disappointment when he told her he did not have space to accommodate her. The two examples above strengthen Menjivar's argument that old migrants, for the most part, act as gatekeepers and not as bridgeheads like proponents of SNT would suggest. In all probability, this is related to the earlier findings that only few manage to settle successfully. This gate-keeping behaviour may stem from incapacity to help or unwillingness. Yet the fact that new migrants are rarely able to depend on settled migrants for support, suggests that, while migrants do form part of a social network, the settled migrants as well as the information that forms an integral part of this network are not adding any real worth to the migrant network.

3.4. Migration Risks

While the findings presented above undermine the positive value of social capital, the aim of the following section is to further defy the belief that social capital reduces the risks associated with migration. Migration is a risky undertaking, especially one that is inherently illegal. Clandestinely crossing borders exposes child migrants to a great number of risks. The paragraphs that follow

[26] I was informed by a manager running a shelter in Pretoria that this - mothers leaving their children in the care of a shelter while they live at home with their boyfriends - is something which frequently occurs.

discuss some of these risks, paying close attention to the actual journey from Zimbabwe to SA as well as their stay in SA. According to Spittel (1998: 3) an analysis of migrants' access to transportation, their housing and social interaction provides insight into the risks of migration. As such, children were asked to describe how they entered South Africa, in other words their means of transportation. Enquiry was also made into their living situation (housing) and their experiences with South African people (social interaction).

3.4.1. Means of Transportation

The trafficking of children receives much attention in the existing literature on child migration, with much emphasis given to the role of corrupt intermediaries. In the case of child migrants, the concern lies not so much with intermediaries per se but rather with gangs or 'amagumagumas' as they have come to be known. The amagumagumas make their living by exploiting migrant minors. They extract exorbitant fees, coerce them into debt bondage in payment for transportation or deceive them about the nature of the employment that awaits them in SA (Bell 2008: 5). At the hands of these criminals, children undergo harassment, humiliation, confiscation of goods and money, rape and beatings, all of which were confirmed by the children interviewed. One girl pointed out a scar on her left forearm and explained how she and her two friends were attacked by three men on their way across the border. "My friends were raped … I wasn't … I was lucky". The truthfulness of her story is questionable. It is possible that she was ashamed to admit that she too was a victim of rape. But whether her story is true is not important for the analysis here. The point to be made is that for the rare fortunate ones who do not directly experience such traumatizing events, the act of anticipating and witnessing attacks can have serious long-lasting effects on a child. This is confirmed by SCUK who mentioned that there is a lot of bed-wetting amongst the older boys at their shelter. Furthermore, abuse is not restricted to only the amagumagumas. Children are also exposed to the risks at the hands of corrupt soldiers and police patrolling the border posts. In 2004 for example, a South African Army captain and four soldiers were convicted of systematically raping and robbing Zimbabwean border jumpers (Staunton et al. 2008: ix). This research found no hard evidence of such attacks during the border crossings. However, in a presentation given to the women at the Central Methodist Church (CMC)[27] in Johannesburg, one young woman asked whether it was right for a male police officer to search a woman. It is quite possible therefore that young girls and boys are also victims of such sexual assaults.

[27] A church located in the centre of Johannesburg and managed by Bishop Paul Verryn; at the time of my visit in April, the church was accommodating 300 people, the majority Zimbabweans.

To be sure, not all children cross outside the official border posts. In a group discussion with five young boys, an eight year old explained how he simply approached the border officials, informing them of his desire to cross over into SA where he planned to spend the day begging. After promising to come back later that day, the boy was granted entry despite being unable to present the required documents. This of course is an exception, and while his story has a happy ending, entry through an official border post without documentation need not necessarily be a less risky means of travel. In fact, given the level of corruption within the SAPF, some might argue that crossing borders in this way is far more risky.

For those fortunate to make it onto South African soil, their misery is rarely uplifted. Children face appalling conditions in employment, education as well as their living situations. The section below discusses some of these conditions.

3.4.2. Social Interaction

Interaction between people occurs in all settings, however in the paragraphs that follow, the focus is restricted to the shelters and schools as it was here where child migrants revealed close connections to not only South Africans but also non-nationals. Despite the fact that the majority of children did not have a job, work was a common motive for being in SA; hence the conditions of employment also deserve mention.

The findings of this study suggest that very few children are able to find a job. This is not a bad thing per se, because as is revealed by the stories of those who do succeed in finding work, the employment conditions are appalling. According to a social worker at the Catholic Women's League, the jobs for which many Zimbabweans are hired are nothing more than "slave jobs". Indeed, where children may access income, it is likely to be through risky practices and unregulated labour conditions (CoRMSA 2009). Of the fifteen boys that were interviewed, only three were earning an income; one in construction, the other a tile assistant and the third a painter. The boys were pleased with their weekly salary of R100 and had no complaints. But bearing in mind that one loaf of bread amounts to R8,75 and one litre of milk R8,29, then R14,30[28] per day is nowhere near enough to meet the basic nutritional requirements. What is concerning, is that of these three boys, only two were of the official working age[29] and none had working permits. The younger group of boys was also earning money, albeit in a far less exploitative way: drying and selling Mopani worms. In one afternoon they

[28] R100 divided by 7 working days (the boys even worked on Sundays) amounts to R14,30.

[29] According to the Basic Conditions of the Employment Amendment Act 2002, the legal working age is 16 years; available at: www.labour.gov.za

had sold worms to the value of R50. While they were not exposed to harmful working conditions, there was something concerning about this story. Instead of sharing their well-deserved profit amongst themselves, the boys were required to hand the money to the man in charge of the shelter, who failed to explain how this money was to be spent.

The working conditions are arguable worse for girls than for boys. When asked which jobs girls would consider doing, all responded that any job would do, provided they receive payment. The latter is extremely concerning as their desperation to earn money makes them less critical and this can easily throw them into the criminal underworld of drugs and sex. Of course, this is not to say that boys are safe from this reality. But given the invisibility of girls - which is currently receiving much attention amongst service providers in the field of migration - it is believed that girls are even more susceptible to exploitation and abuse. One sector that receives a great deal of attention in the literature is that of domestic work. It is a sector in which young women suffer extreme abuses such as low pay, not enough rest, inadequate food, and physical and sexual abuse. Indeed as Bell (2008: 6) reminds us, girls are often believed to perform tasks that they are too young to safely undertake. The fact that girls are largely invisible suggests that our knowledge, for the most part, is based upon speculation and this in itself is cause for concern.

Notwithstanding work that is dangerous and exploitative, the fact that these children are spending their days working for money means they are losing out on their chance at education. This is an extremely worrying dynamic (Hillier 2007: 18). At present there are little if any educational opportunities for migrant children living in SA, especially in the face of a shortage of schools. In Musina, there is only one public high school in relation to a high presence of migrants who require secondary level schooling. The problem does not end here, because where schools are available, children are often denied entry on the basis of their nationality or they do not make themselves known to the school authorities for fear of deportation. This of course ties in with the security issue that was discussed in the preceding sections. Additionally, those fortunate to be attending school do so under meagre circumstances. A girl at URC (the only one out of the group of girls that was interviewed at this shelter that was attending school) expressed her need for a school uniform. While a school uniform may seem redundant, it strongly symbolises unification and hence the lack thereof can lead to the exclusion of a child within the school. Her response to the question of why she needed a school uniform confirmed she was experiencing a certain level of exclusion: “so that I can fit in”. The grade one teacher mentioned earlier revealed her frustrations with regards to not being able to give the students her undivided attention. Classes are overcrowded with up to forty students per teacher. Students are also forced to share books and stationary. All this hinders children’s

opportunity to learn effectively. Also, the few migrants fortunate to receive schooling struggle to adjust to a new language and often hostile peers. This was confirmed by five pupils at Sunnyside Primary who claimed that xenophobia was a big problem at their school. Recall from section 3.4.2 that nothing spells out exclusion more than xenophobia.

The less fortunate migrants end up on the streets where, in a desperate attempt to belong, they are often drawn into the criminal underworld of drugs and sex. While this study did not directly deal with street children, quite a significant number of child migrants had at some time or another lived on the streets, ranging from a short period of two days to the longest time of two years. The boys at Concern Zimbabwe spoke of the hardships they endured while on the streets such as being robbed of their money and clothes and being beaten and harassed. What was interesting was that the culprits were often older Zimbabwean migrant boys. This refutes the belief of SNT that migrants work within a network of obligation. Recall from the second chapter that the operation of social capital through social networks is reinforced by what network theorists have coined networks of obligation. The latter stems from a so-called bounded solidarity that is likely to arise in situations where a common threat is recognised (Curran and Saguy 2001: 60). The example above contests this theory of migrants sticking together and supporting each other where needed. Not surprisingly, interaction amongst children living at the same shelter or attending the same school was far better. Children expressed their willingness to support their peers when needed. Girls in particular mentioned how they would share advice and comfort each other when sad. However, owed to the financial restrictions of shelters, resources that stimulate interaction as well as individual development were limited. The girls at the URC and the boys at Concern Zimbabwe all mentioned a lack of toys to play with, with television the most commonly cited.

3.4.3. Housing

Child migrants' living conditions vary enormously and depend on a range of factors. One such factor is the circumstances under which their movement occurs. For undocumented migrants, the risk of deportation is very real. Indeed the majority of the children interviewed were held either at detention centres or alternative places of safety where they were awaiting their deportation back to Zimbabwe. The detention centres have built up quite a reputation as being unsuitable, unsafe and unhygienic for children. SMG, located on a military base and run by the SAPF, is one such facility. Among its failings, this facility does not adequately consider the needs of children. For example, there was nowhere to seek shelter from the sun and there were no proper toilets, just one ablution block which had to be shared by girls, women, boys and men alike. The food that was served included a piece of dry bread and water from a public tap outside (given the high incidence of

cholera in neighbouring Zimbabwe just twenty kilometres outside Musina, I am sceptical regarding the purity of this water). Bad living circumstances are not confined to detention centres however. A number of the child respondents shared their experiences of street life before arriving at the shelter they were now residing. A twelve year old boy spoke of his experience on the street, where he was forced by older boys to smoke and sniff glue. Another boy witnessed a late night shooting killing a taxi chauffeur.

Five shelters were visited whilst conducting interviews. While acknowledging their amazing efforts at keeping the kids off the street, providing them with safe sleeping arrangements, ensuring they do not go to bed hungry, as well as the need for more such shelters, there is room for improvement. When it comes to space, hygiene and nutrition, the majority of these shelters fall well short of the accepted standard. According to a report published by IOM, Concern Zimbabwe is able to hold up to three-hundred children. Having personally visited this shelter, I am stunned at this assessment. Food, in the sense of both nutritional value and quantity, raised some concern. One shelter spoke of the problems it had encountered with DSD, having received only one donation since the shelter opened in 2005. The latter ties in with the lack of networking amongst service providers -something that will receive attention in chapter four. Similarly, the women at the CMC in Johannesburg mentioned that they received food only three times a week. All in all, whether awaiting deportation, living on the streets or staying in shelters, the conditions are of grave concern to not only the child's health but to his or her development too.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

The chapter began by providing an overview of the motives underlying children's decision to migrate. To this extent, it was largely descriptive. This descriptive background is relevant in that it formed the basis upon which further arguments were built that ultimately led to an explanation of why children continue to come to SA. In order to achieve the latter, the extent to which child migrants function within social networks had to be explored. While not disputing the existence of a network of old and new migrants, the chapter sought to prove that social networks, which SNT theorists believe facilitate the risky migration process, are in fact stunted networks. This was done by firstly proving that migration is a risky undertaking, thereby refuting the principle upon which SNT rests: social capital reduces the risks associated with migration. Secondly, evidence showed that the information shared amongst migrants failed to correctly inform them of the reality of the migration process. And lastly, child migrants appeared to be unable to depend on the old and presumably settled migrants.

While the so-called communication network provides an explanation for the recurrent arrival of child migrants into the country in spite of the hardships they endure, it still does not answer the question of why these child migrants are largely unable to access services. To get deeper insight into this problem we need to consider the role of the agents who are responsible for protecting this vulnerable group of migrants. Hence, the next chapter gives attention to the role of both service providers and the state, as well as the nature of the social link that binds these agents to child migrants.

Chapter Four: Service Providers and the State

4.1. Introduction

The research question in the introductory chapter stated that the aim of this study is to explain why child migrants are unable to access services and in cases when they are able to access services, to determine the extent to which they satisfy the needs of child migrants. I argue that the failure of child migrants to access fundamental services occurs at three levels, namely the migrant network, the state and the service providers. The former was discussed at length in the previous chapter where it was concluded that the so-called migrant network of communication proved to be futile, or in the words of an advocacy officer at CoRMSA, 'oversaturated' as it does not essentially guarantee migrants access to basic services. In moving towards a deeper understanding of the inadequacy of service delivery it is important to also consider two other key agents, namely the state and the service providers[30] themselves, as well as the relation that exists between the two.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses exclusively on the state. Since the – what is generally known as – 'responsibility to protect' lies primarily with the state, this is certainly a crucial agent to be considered (Donnelly 2008: 124). Earlier I suggested that the inability of service providers to effectively assist child migrants stems partly from an unwillingness of the state to recognize child migrants as a distinct migrant class with a distinct set of rights. This, together with the state's continuous use of an exclusivist discourse, is the principal hypothesis that will be discussed. I argue that, in practice, these two intrinsically linked hypotheses have a long-lasting effect on the work of service providers.

In the second section attention is given to the service providers active in the field of migration. To be sure, service providers can be an essential form of 'social capital' from which migrants can draw support. Zanowiak (2006: 9) for example believes that there are certain services that 'weak ties' like NGOs are able to provide but which 'strong ties' such as friends and family often cannot (the failure of strong ties to assist migrants was already illustrated in section 3.4.3). In order to gain insight into the types of services they provide and the obstacles they face, service providers were asked in this research to reflect on their work in assisting child migrants. While the commonly cited explanations of limited resources and incapacity deserve brief mention, the focus lies more with the working relation of service providers, as well as the social links that exist between them, the government and the child migrants. With regards to the latter, I seek to establish the extent to which the perceptions

[30] In this paper, the term service provider refers to only those who participated in this study.

of service providers and child migrants are compatible. This is achieved by assessing the levels of correspondence that exist between the priority needs as expressed by child migrants and those deemed to have primacy for children according to service providers.

4.2. The State's Exclusivist Discourse and Non-Recognition of UCM

Something that is currently receiving much attention amongst scholars in academia is what the Copenhagen School has coined the securitisation of migration (Emmers 2007: 110). This fairly new trend, whereby states place migration policy at the centre of international security, was discussed at some length in chapter one. SA is no exception, where the high level of in-migration from Zimbabwe and other neighbouring countries is considered highly threatening to the prosperity of the nation-state. While this phenomenon in itself makes for an interesting topic of discussion, it is what gives rise to this threat that is of interest here. The preceding chapter proved that child migrants are largely excluded from South African society. Whereas exclusion can take different forms, it is the inaccessibility of UCM to fundamental services that lies at the heart of this study. In an attempt to explain this inaccessibility, we look at the powerful explanatory tool of discourse, because as van Dijk reminds us (quoted in Riaño and Wastl-Walter 2006: 1694), studying state discourse creates a good understanding of how prejudice and discrimination i.e. categories of exclusion, are produced.

According to Vale (2002: 7) South Africa's immigration policy-makers draw their power from the deepening public disquiet over the large presence of foreigners in the country. His statement suggests that the South African public is anxious about foreigners living within their borders and that the state is conveniently using this to maintain its power, or rather its deporting 'rituals'. What is interesting is that this public anxiety is not something that just happens; it is a creation of the state. While the anxiety that is largely shared across the population is real, it is based on a constructed myth. The state, for what we will accept here as its duty to protect the nation, has adopted an exclusivist discourse (Peberdy 2002: 16). In describing the impact of migrants on SA, the government has become relentlessly negative in its chosen language. 'Aliens' and 'illegals' are just two synonyms frequently employed in the place of migrants. Such language does two things. It not only portrays migrants as different but also leads to the creation of migrants as threatening (Peberdy 2002: 23). The likelihood whereby something becomes threatening purely because it is different was illustrated in section 3.4.2 where the cultural differences migrants bring with them are believed to threaten South African culture. Through such discourse the public is fed with negative images about undocumented migrants. Consequentially, South Africans have developed an increasingly hostile attitude towards foreigners. These attitudes are strengthened and justified by various stereotypes that blame migrants for all that is wrong. The belief that migrants are different, combined with their

undocumented status, is enough to convince South Africans that all migrants must be illegal and as such criminals (Misago, Landau and Monson 2009: 16). We should be reminded of the fact that the justifications (i.e. that migrants are responsible for the high level of crime, a deteriorating economy and for introducing diseases that are costing the lives of millions) are mainly perceptions; they are only true to the extent that they are believed by the greater majority. Indeed, for a discourse to have any real effect, it has to be believed by others. Perception is the key word because as the IOM (2009: 16) reminds us, perception drives action. This logic is supported by de Moura (2002: 354) who states that one's thinking determines the way in which one acts. One need only think of the 2008 xenophobic attacks, when the xenophobic attitudes of South Africans culminated into aggressive attacks on foreign nationals. A hostile public climate in turn places few constraints on the behaviour of the agents who police immigration (Crush 2000: 105). Worse still, it has empowered ordinary police officials to execute the task of deportation (recall from chapter two that the detention centre in Musina was run by the SAPF).

The social construction of child migrants as being illegal foreigners has led to state interventions which sustain the detention and deportation of migrants, thereby seriously undermining their basic human right to freedom and security. It is for this reason that we often think of states as violators of human rights (Donnelly 2008: 134). Child migrants' exclusion therefore partly stems from a state discourse that has come to naturalise their inaccessibility to basic services (other factors that may contribute to their exclusion include culture, religion, gender and political factors such as partisan affiliation to name but a few; however a discussion of each of these would take up space and time that is not available to us here; hence I choose to limit the focus to the state's discourse). This idea that discourse has the power to naturalise is supported by several writers. For example, in his article 'The Social Construction of Street Children' de Moura (2002: 353) argues that street children are constructed through a discourse that portrays them as displaying socially unacceptable attributes. In this way, their social deprivation becomes naturalised, prompting interventions that sustain the status quo of social inequalities and ultimately these children's exclusion from mainstream society. Van Dijk (quoted in Riaño and Wastl-Walter 2006: 1694) makes a similar argument in his study of colonial immigrants in Europe wherein he maintains that the social economic conditions of inequality of labour of this group have been sustained and legitimized by state discourse. In light of the preceding paragraph, I argue that the same can also be said for undocumented child migrants in SA where the perceptions or rather the social constructions of migrants as criminals, sustain and support the patterns that result in their social exclusion in South African society.

All in all, South Africa's continued deportation of UCM rests on the hegemonic authority of constructions that portray migrants as dangerous. Indeed in the quote that follows, Foucault defines power as the outcome of a knowledge or truth that is created through a discourse:

> "In any society there are manifold relations of power which cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation and functioning of a discourse" (Foucault quoted in Ibrahim 2005: 164).

But South Africa's power does not originate from discourse alone. Vale (2002: 12) makes an important point when he states that power is further strengthened through the search for national identity. Peberdy (2002: 28) who claims that in SA the promise of service delivery is intrinsic to the state's nation-building process would certainly welcome Vale's work. The process of nation-building is closely linked to the concept of citizenship which can be used as a criterion for belonging and thereby indirectly as a criterion for excluding those who do not possess citizenship. Indeed, the role played by state discourses in the portrayal of citizens and of those considered unsuitable for citizenship is currently of much scholarly interest. SA is no exception, where social services are largely reserved for those in possession of the citizen card and where foreign children are defined according to their non-South African citizenship (Riaño and Wastl-Walter 2006 : 1695). Similar to a xenophobic discourse, the issue of citizenship has meant that immigration officials have successfully managed to abrogate the rights of non-citizens when policing the nation's borders. What is concerning however, is that the Constitution explicitly mentions only two sets of rights that are meant for citizens only, with all other rights applying to *everyone* living in SA[31].

It is hard to determine which comes first; whether the state's exclusivist discourse has translated into a refusal to recognise UCM or whether the exclusivist discourse was born out of the failure to recognise UCM. Either way, both have a powerful influence on social policy and the implementation thereof (de Moura 2002: 355). The manner in which the state portrays citizens against those unsuitable for citizenship does not only affect the public's opinion (as explained above) but also shapes interventions from governmental and non-governmental organisations (Riaño and Wastl-Walter 2006: 1693; de Moura 2002: 359). The latter is discussed below.

[31] The preamble of the Constitution states the following: "we, the people of South Africa believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity". It continues by stating that "the Bill of Rights enshrines the rights of all people in our country". Hence, with the exception of Chapter 1, Section 3 wherein the rights of citizens are explicitly mentioned, the rights in the Constitution are extended to everyone living within the boundaries of the nation-state (Crush 2000: 110). Available at: http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf

4.3. CSOs and Types of Services

Given the risks migrants are exposed to during their migration process (even though this is rarely acknowledged in current migration studies) there are a number of service providers who work with or cater to the migrant population, both at the government and non-government level. This paper, borrows the broad category of civil society organisations (CSOs) from Clayton et al. (2000: 1) to include all those service providers that function independent of the state. While it would be presumptuous to equate NGOs with CSOs, when it comes to the provision of services, CSOs are almost always NGOs (Clayton et al. 2000: 2). Thus for the remainder of this paper, the two will be used interchangeably. For this research, data was extracted from both international organisations (such as the IOM, SCUK, and the UNHCR) and local CSOs. Many of these local organisations have either a research or advocacy focus - as is the case for the FMPS - or a legal focus - such as Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) and the Musina Legal Advice Office (MLAO) - whose primary purpose is provision of legal advice and assisting migrants in the complex process of acquiring documentation. Of course the assistance provided by shelters like Crossroads, Concern Zimbabwe and Home of Hope should not go unnoticed. Churches play an equally crucial role in aiding undocumented minors, two of which were included in this study, namely the URC in Musina and the Central Methodist Church situated in the centre of Johannesburg. Together, the two churches were housing an estimated 3200 migrants (of course not all children). These CSOs seem to be providing the greatest amount of assistance to UCM in the form of basic necessities of food, shelter and health care. Interestingly, few mentioned counselling and reunification as part of their service provision, although it was clear that of the two, the latter was considered of greater primacy. Indeed, Crossroads, SCUK and Home of Hope all described their efforts at reuniting children with their families, with SCUK having successfully reunified 72 Zimbabwean minors out of a total 352. Another service which appeared to receive little attention was the organising of programs so as to stimulate children physically as well as mentally. Only Crossroads made mention of their daily arts and sport programs. Of course, mere omission of such programs need not imply that other shelters ignored the importance and failed to make provision thereof.

With the state as the primary protector, an analysis of efforts to assist UCM should include government departments such as DHA and DSD. However, there is a general consensus amongst the participating service providers that CSOs are far more active than government, although there is little evidence to support such a claim (Clayton et al. 2000: 7). Milly (2007: 18) argues for the integral role of NGOs in developing governmental responses to, what she refers to in her study, irregular immigrants. While not denying the worth of NGOs, I would suggest the opposite to be true i.e. that government has influenced, *not developed*, the response of NGOs to effectively deal with UCM. I

argue that the state's increasing use of negative language in describing migrants has a profound impact on the work of those service providers targeting the needs of UCM. Before arriving at this discussion, the following section first looks at the general obstacles that hinder effective service provision. Polzer (2007: 12) argues that the majority of government departments who provide social services in the form of education, health, housing, social development, security and employment, are affected by the presence of Zimbabweans in the country. But if the affect Polzer is referring to is that of too many migrants versus too little services, these are surely not restricted to government only; in fact I would dare suggest they are felt to an even greater extent at the grass root level. Needless to say, and as stated by a social worker at Crossroads, there are many problems with which service providers at all levels are confronted. What follows is a summary of two of the most commonly held reasons for why service providers are failing to make provision of basic services, namely limited resources and general incapacity.

4.3.1. Service Providers: Limited Resources and Incapacity

While it is true that CSOs have emerged as major service providers throughout the world, they are faced with a number of deficiencies, of which quality is perhaps the most crucial. If we accept that a decline in funding leads to a simultaneous drop in the quality of services as Clayton et al. (2000: 7) would have us believe, then we would also be inclined to believe that the quality of services is dependent on the quantity of funding.

"There are too many seeking the same thing". These were the words of the sixteen year old girl and daughter of the now deceased ZANU-PF official. It is an important quote in that it sums up the ultimate challenge confronting service providers. It is a basic lesson in economics that demand stands in relation to supply. This logic is supported by a CoRMSA employee who states that the problem is not just one of too many seeking services; rather it is a combination of this with the reality of too few organisations actively working with these undocumented minors. But SA has witnessed a major increase in the rise of CSOs. I argue therefore that it is more a problem of many CSOs possessing few resources to meet the demand. This is supported by Disney (quoted in UNRISD 2000: 6) who states that members are rarely able to make substantial financial contributions to their organisations resulting in an exacerbation of what often is an already constrained financial situation. Indeed, for two of the three schools who participated in the study (I will refer to them as school I and school II) money, or rather a lack thereof, presented the biggest problem to overcome. In spite of the fact that both schools receive a yearly grant from the Department of Education, the schools' existence depends largely on school fees. At the time of the interview, very few parents were able to pay these fees. This led to a situation wherein which a small number of parents were subsidising a large

number of children not their own. This of course has serious consequences that extend beyond the issue of money. The principal of school I spoke of increasing frustrations among the parents who are carrying the burden of those unable to raise the funds to pay for school fees. This theme of frustration is an important one and will be returned to in a moment. The R600,000 that school II receives from government in relation to the school's R3 million budget, is quite obviously far from sufficient. The remaining R2, 400,000 has to come from school fees. Like school I, school II is also facing a situation where a small minority is sponsoring a great number of students. Of course, the issue of lack of funding is not restricted to schools only. The URC is also experiencing serious financial problems. While they are subsidised by UNHCR, the R20 catered for every person is far from enough to satisfy the basics of food and health care. As such, limited funding leads to a significant drop in the quality of the food provided. Many mothers at the church expressed concern that their babies are not receiving the required nutritional value. URC is also highly dependent on the financial support it receives from the Red Cross. This dependence on grants which are often only available for limited periods makes it difficult if not impossible for CSOs to undertake long-term planning (Clayton et al. 2000: 10-11). Worse still, the time that it takes to approve such funding (sometimes as long as two months) can mean the difference between life and death, especially for sick infants. These financial challenges are particularly worrisome for CSOs as finance guarantees influence and influence in turn guarantees success (Disney quoted in UNRISD 2000: 7).

The inefficiency of services is not only related to limited resources. Capacity of staff (which is arguably a direct consequence of a lack in finances) is a crucial issue to the delivery and quality of services (Clayton et al. 2000: 8). In a study conducted on the NGO health care facility in Tanzania by Robinson and White (quoted in Clayton et al. 2000: 9) it was found that inefficiency of services was a direct consequence of capacity in the form of (1) few outreach facilities (2) poor performance of health care workers and (3) employment of untrained staff. With the majority of respondents in this study mentioning outreach as one of their top priorities, this proved of no real concern. However, what was somewhat concerning was that there was no check system in place to ensure that children who had been reunified with their families remained in the care of the respective family member. In this way, many child migrants become lost as service providers have no available details regarding the whereabouts of these children. As to the other two factors i.e. poor performance and ill-trained staff, this proves to be something most service providers are struggling to overcome. Despite the many attempts by LHR to train workers in the field of migration, the performance level is not what it should be. According to UNHCR, more effort is needed at monitoring and providing feedback and guidance to the working staff.

The issue of incapacity is especially concerning at the education level. All three schools in the study spoke of the problem of overcrowded classrooms, with as many as forty students per teacher. This not only takes its toll on teachers but children are unable to receive individual attention where needed. Many children therefore struggle to perform and become discouraged. According to a principal in Musina, feelings of discouragement result in a significant number of children dropping out of school. Children's performance and the capacity of teachers is further restricted through linguistic challenges, a barrier that all service providers agreed was a crucial though difficult one to overcome. While true that capacity determines performance, the problem can also simply be one of motivation, which next to capacity, is a critical issue to the delivery and quality of services (Clayton et al. 2000: 8).

The reality of many destitute migrants in the face of few available resources has meant that service providers have become sceptical with regards to finding a solution to combat this reality. This became evident in the following question, a reaction to my anticipation that studies like this one will eventually assist services providers in the future: "Can it really make an impact on the numbers of foreigners coming into the country?" Undoubtedly, the resource limitations and the general incapacity discussed above give rise to feelings of frustrations. Service providers appear to be functioning on the same level all the time. In the words of an employee at SCUK: "At times it feels as though I am running a factory; feeding, washing, clothing and reunifying". Another social worker at CWL admits to feeling as though she is failing all the time:

> "I feel as though we are just putting a plaster over the wound, we're not getting to the root of the problem; it is just a case of crisis management and this wears us down. I actually feel as though we are not moving forward, but going backwards".

Likewise, this next quote was taken from an interview with an attorney at LHR: "The biggest challenge that service providers come up against is that their work does not change policy. It might make things better for a short while but very soon we are back at square one … it is like hitting your head against the wall".

Such frustrations affect the enthusiasm with which service providers do their work. It can result in service providers giving up, simply losing the motivation and willingness to try and improve the situation. This lack of motivation makes it increasingly difficult for CSOs to attract and keep personnel long enough to build a working knowledge of policy procedures. That one social worker admitted to having experienced a total breakdown came as no surprise. Indeed, the emotional and physical

breakdown of service providers was a common theme that was reiterated on several occasions. The downfall of this 'trend' is that very few actually stick around long enough to gain the technical expertise and experience that is of utmost importance to the sustainability of CSOs (Disney quoted in UNRISD 2000: 6).

Overall, the problems that service providers are experiencing are fundamentally resource and capacity-based. Given the obstacles confronting service providers, it is not surprising that SA is experiencing large gaps when it comes to service provision for child migrants in need. According to CWL, it is only on rare occasions that service providers succeed in satisfying the basic needs of UCM. In such cases, there is no way of moving onto the very real underlying psychological problems. Provided the state continues to 'ignore' undocumented child migrants, there is little hope of the situation improving in the near future (CoRMSA 2009: 7).

4.3.2. Uncertainty or Unwillingness?

In light of the negative discourse used by the state in describing undocumented migrants, it is possible that service providers see undocumented Zimbabwean child migrants as nothing more than illegal foreigners who threaten society. A volunteer at Crossroads raises a valid point when she asks: "What is help, when South Africa does not want them here?" It is not difficult to imagine how negative attitudes may result in the denial of services, the provision of a sub-standard service or even a service that adversely affects the life of the client (Social Workers Guide 2003: 11). A CoRMSA advocacy officer believes it possible for xenophobic attitudes to convert into social barriers resulting in unwillingness on the part of key service providers to provide the services to which non-nationals, whether documented or not, are entitled. For example, there have been numerous incidents where people get turned away by the police who refuse to write up an avadavat (LHR attorney). At best, these migrants are 'advised' to return to their country of origin. While the translation of negative attitudes into harsh treatment of foreigners is manifest amongst the South African public, I would like to give service providers the benefit of the doubt. When asked to what extent the state's negative discourse affects their efforts at assisting children, many claim that it merely encourages them to continue doing what they do. "It is because of bad reports that I become more adamant to educate people … it is the ignorant ones that will be swayed by such reports" (social worker CWL). While I do not refute the possibility that service providers hold xenophobic attitudes that could lead to unwillingness to assist migrants (they are after all also just South Africans citizens), I found no hard evidence to support this. Still, I am convinced that the lack of clarity at the state level of who undocumented minors are and what their rights are has a profound impact on the work of providers. I believe the state's lack of recognition of UCM leads to a fair level of uncertainty on the part of

providers on how to effectively assist these youngsters. The following quote illustrates this uncertainty:

> "Are we doing our job by giving children a place to sleep and feeding them three times a day? Do we need to do more? What is our goal? If our goal is to get them into school and provide them with South African citizenship, then we are lacking" (social worker Crossroads).

Owed to the fact that there is no legislation that looks specifically at the rights of UCM, it is not surprising that the majority of providers are unsure of how to assist migrants (A Social Workers Guide 2003: 17). "We do not know how to help them … if they come in through the right channels it's easier" (Grade one teacher). This uncertainty affects the types of solutions that service providers come up with. It is as CWL says: "There are no long-term programs in place; we are merely putting a plaster over the wound".

It is clear that the CSOs share quite a few similarities; not only are they facing major financial hurdles but many are struggling with feelings of uncertainty and frustrations. Ideally, organisations should link up their efforts so as to achieve the best possible result. Indeed, UNHCR speaks of a need to diversify partnerships. To quote CWL: "we are all after the same things. Where one organisation can provide accommodation, another can supply food parcels". However, just as the network of child migrants proved futile, the section that follows shows that when it comes to the working relation of service providers, there is much need for improvement.

4.4. Role of Social Networks

Social network theory is based on the belief that people are linked through interpersonal ties (Massey quoted in Zanowiak 2006: 6). Similarly, organisations, comprised of individuals, are also linked to each other. Granovetter (1983: 212) claims that networks are particularly strong in times of economic insecurity and in the face of limited resources. Based on this reasoning, we would expect service providers to be strongly connected to each other. The discussion above proves that the majority of service providers are struggling to maintain resources. Also, while their means through which they achieve results may differ from one organisation to the next, they do share a common goal i.e. assisting migrants. This shared circumstance and identification[32] can strengthen solidarity amongst providers which in turn serves to reinforce their network (Curran and Saguy 2001: 60).

[32] According to Scholte (2005: 224) identities are constructions of being, belonging and becoming. With regards to the latter, one can conclude that people are identified according to their goals i.e. what they strive to become.

However, based on the data extracted from the interviews, I suggest that the network of service providers, quite like the one of child migrants, is not functioning to its maximum efficiency.

"There are so many departments that are supposed to link together, but they remain isolated" (Teacher Sunnyside Primary School). The network of service providers, or rather lack thereof, is of special concern in the Gauteng Province where a number of initiated forums never really took off[33]. Many service providers referred to the not so ideal working relationship between NGOs, suggesting the need to improve. Indeed, until now every agency has done what they deemed right as per their own mandate and resources permitted (IOM). Another problem is the lack of coordinated referral. To illustrate this, a UNHCR employee used the example of the working relation between UNHCR and faith-based organisations, where the former is faced with the challenge of convincing the latter to adopt an approach that is different to their own but which is likely to guarantee a more appropriate outcome. While this lack of coordination may at first glance appear problematic, some believe it essential for ensuring that CSOs do not duplicate each other's efforts or concentrate all their efforts in the same geographical areas (Clayton et al. 2000: 8). Not everyone shares this optimism. According to CWL, the so-called twinning of organisations, that is, when the objectives of a newer organisation are strikingly similar to those of another somewhat older organisation, is becoming a big problem. Duplication is essentially counterproductive; it defeats the purpose. Indeed, Peter Oakley (quoted in UNRISD 2000: 3) reminds us that CSOs need to work to ensure they do not lose sight of their original purpose. But with duplication, this becomes difficult. For CWL, the apparent lack of networking is a direct consequence of duplication and this again leads to increasing competition between the various organisations. The social worker at CWL spoke of several attempts and subsequent failures of the organisation to network with others. Just as child migrants are excluded on the basis of culture and nationality, organisations too experience problems of exclusion, albeit for different reasons. For example, CWL is a somewhat smaller organisation in relation to others and is Catholic. This has led larger pro-Christianity organisations to act in a superior manner thereby refusing to share critical information that may in fact save the lives of migrants. In this way, service providers get caught up in a competitive game with one another. Given the recent rise of CSOs, it is understandable that CSOs constantly have to compete with new upcoming CSOs. CWL was not the only one who referred to this competitive behaviour. Others have equally revealed frustrations with regards to the animosity that seems to characterise the working relations amongst the various organisations, with special mention of the competitive relation that exists between DHA, the SAPF and the military (Employee UNHCR). While it is important for organisations to recognise that they are in a competitive arena, the

[33] Gauteng Province is one of the nine provinces in South Africa - also the smallest province. The three main cities in this province include Johannesburg, Soweto and Pretoria (now known as Tshwane).

competition that exists among CSOs in SA appears more destructive than that it is healthy (Reilly quoted in UNRISD 2000: 9).

The lack of networking is especially prominent within government departments, with one provider claiming that there is no government action to speak of. While this may be somewhat exaggerated, there is widespread consensus amongst service providers that the working relation of the government departments is, to say the least, horrendous, with many departments quite simply refusing to collaborate. Crossroads is of the opinion that the many laws and policies that are in place seem to work against each other and that communication is lacking between the numerous departments; the repercussions of which are felt at the practical level. In the introductory chapter it was mentioned that child migrants who are found by the police should be referred to DSD. This is known not to happen. Also, in yet another interview with UNHCR, it became apparent that the police have not been particularly helpful in combating the widespread problem of sexual gender based violence (SGBV). The problem also lies between the different levels of government. According to UNHCR, there is a real disconnect between central government and local government, with the former not receiving support from the latter.

An improvement in the coordination between CSO and state provision will lead to a reduction in duplication (Clayton et al. 2000: 8). Yet the problem of duplication exists on a CSO level. I argue therefore that in order to lessen duplication, the coordination between the various CSOs should be improved. I do agree with Clayton et al. (2000: 19) that an improved CSO-state relation in the form of long-term funding arrangements could lead to improved sustainability of CSO provision programmes as CSO programmes would become less dependent on external funding.

Another worrying reality is the so-called us-versus-them-approach (LHR attorney). At present, the relation between government and NGOs is somewhat confrontational. Undoubtedly, if we are to bring more effective change, this needs to change and according to LHR, the solution lies in more dialogue with key people and organisations such as DHA and SAPF, who are both open to a rights-based approach (LHR attorney and employee UNHCR). Indeed very rarely do CSOs operate with reference to state providers and the only way to correct their partnership is by utilising their respective strengths and responsibilities of each party to ensure better service provision (Clayton et al. 2000: 5). However, there is hope of better networking relations in the near future. IOM is in the process of streamlining services and to pool resources into a so-called “referral and support centre”. It is hoped that this effort will ensure a more effective outcome of interventions. The proposal was initiated by IOM and the municipality has already granted a site for the construction of the centre. In

April this year, IOM was working to solicit funds. Once completed, all the international humanitarian organizations in Musina will be putting their services into this ‘one-stop’ centre. These include IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), Médicins Sans Frontière (MSF), Red Cross as well as other no less prominent organisations.

While this effort at streamlining services is a welcomed one, there is also a need to strengthen the social link between the service providers and the child migrants. According to Disney (quoted in UNRISD 2000: 6) CSOs seldom fully understand the situation and needs of the people on the ground. She refers to the importance of adopting a more realistic view of how people can contribute to the development process. While Disney speaks of poor people, I would like to extend this reasoning to the UCM in this study, as these children are essentially poor as well. Disney is not alone in her belief. According to an interview with UNHCR, CSOs are to be informed about the ins and outs of child migrants if they are to assist them effectively. In order for child migrants to draw support from their networks, NGOs should feed into these networks thereby learning more about the clientele. For now, NGOs continue to work on a case-by-case basis and this takes away the likelihood of implementing long-term solutions. “There is a need of getting to know who is out there and this can be achieved by working through the community where these child migrants end up (Employee UNHCR). The necessity of NGOs to get to know child migrants is confirmed in the next and final section which seeks to show that service providers have a somewhat flawed idea when it comes to the needs of UCM.

4.5. Service Providers and Their Perception of Child Migrants’ Needs

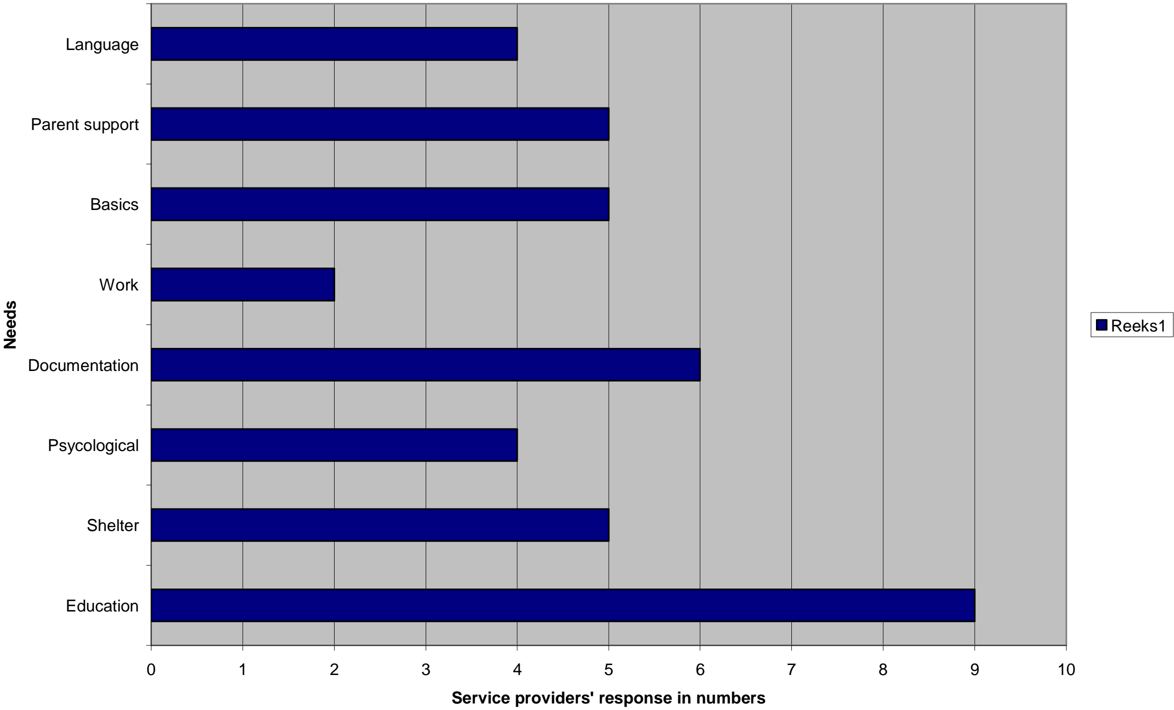
“I’ve had children run away on numerous occasions, but most come back”. This quote was taken from an interview with someone who runs a shelter in Musina. It is an important quote as it points to the fairly common trend whereby children voluntarily leave the shelter shortly after their arrival. Indeed, having to retain minors in shelters is one of the biggest challenges facing service providers (Employee UNHCR). This was briefly touched on before when discussing children’s tendency to idealise the ease with which they can build a life for themselves in SA. The quote shows that despite children’s ‘stubborn’ idealisation, they are almost always disappointed. It is again mentioned here as I believe it says something else that is important for this chapter. It is suggested here that the services that are being provided do not serve children effectively and hence do not satisfy their needs. This logic is based on two realities: the already mentioned flight-behaviour of many children (boys in particular) and the so-called invisibility of girl migrants. Service providers know painfully little about the whereabouts of girls and how they survive, suggesting that girls look for and receive assistance elsewhere. I do not propose that such services are more efficient as opposed to the

assistance provided by service providers. Rather, the point to be made is that the invisibility of girls and the flight-behaviour of boys tell us something about the efficiency of services that are currently being provided for, because if the services provided would satisfy their needs, there would be no reason to leave.

Chapter three considered some of the motives that impel children to migrate. If we compare the findings of this table to one provided below, it becomes clear that there is an overlap between the needs listed by the service providers and those listed by the child migrants themselves. For children, education and hunger were the most important motivating factors, with thirty-two and twenty-five respondents mentioning these respectively. It follows then that children have a need to be empowered and a need for food. Similarly, service providers place education and food provision[34] at the top of the priority list. However, whereas service providers stress the importance of language development, parental support and documentation, no child migrant in this study made reference to such needs. Interestingly, and this is where the issue of compatibility arises, while only two of the sixteen service providers believed that work is a priority for children, more than half of the child respondents (twenty-three out of a total forty) referred to work as a vital need. While of course there are very valid reasons for why providers believe work to be the least important need (one of which surely being that children should not be working when they are younger than the minimum required working age of fifteen), it does suggest that there is a lack of understanding between the two agents when it comes to needs. Indeed, it should not be forgotten that many of these children are the breadwinners in the household and so children take on the responsibility of earning money so as to care for the family back home (social worker CWL).

[34] Food falls within the category 'basics', which also includes shelter and health care.

Table 2: Perception of UCM needs



Admittedly, the reasoning provided above is nowhere near sufficient to draw final conclusions of incompatibility. According to CWL, the problem is far simpler than this. Undocumented minors, they say, are a difficult group to work with as they do not want to be cared for. They are used to surviving on their own and hence this is what causes many children to simply take off. This logic is supported by another social worker at URC who claims that many of the Zimbabwean child migrants were street children before arriving in SA and have hence become extremely independent. At the very least however, the preceding piece has raised some important questions that cannot be discarded without at least conducting more in-depth research.

4.6. Concluding Remarks

The failure of child migrants to access fundamental services occurs at three levels: the child migrants, the state and the service providers. Chapter three showed that UCM suffer from an ill-functioning migrant network, so much so that they are unable to depend on the assistance of other migrants or their family to access services. As such, the self-provisioning mechanism that SA so actively promotes is not available to them. However, in those cases when the extremely vulnerable are unable to support themselves or their dependents, the constitutional right to social welfare should not exclude non-citizens (CoRMSA 2008: 47). Indeed, the right to social security is fundamentally about assuring

that one has available the financial and other resources needed to lead a dignified life (Donnelly 2008: 125). Thus, it is important to consider the role of the state and CSOs in assisting child migrants.

While I was not concerned with advising who should bear the ultimate responsibility of providing services, I do agree with Donnelly (2008: 127) that the state has the responsibility of implementing an effective system of service provision so as to ensure responsiveness to their clientele. But there are many problems facing service providers that hamper this effectiveness. Firstly, and based on the invisibility of girls and the flight-behaviour of boys, the coverage of CSOs is limited in that they only reach a small pocket of the population (Peter Oakley quoted in UNRISD 2000: 2). For such a conclusion to become grounded however, both these phenomena require future research. Secondly, I argued that the state's exclusionist discourse and the related non-recognition of UCM have led to a high level of uncertainty and frustrations among service providers. This, together with the failure of organisations, both at the public and private sphere, to effectively combine their resources and efforts into a well-functioning network, has obvious repercussions for a child's legal right to effective protection. In this case, it has led to a continuous deprivation of services (Winterstein 2004: 12). Lastly, the chapter showed that while there are organisations that willingly cater for UCM, these services are often inadequate and ineffective owed to a weakened social link between the providers themselves, the state and the child migrants. While it is essential that children's basic needs are addressed, I believe the real solution lies in establishing why UCM are suffering and what it is they need. But this is a long-term plan, the implementation of which remains the ultimate challenge.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This thesis is a case study of undocumented Zimbabwean child migrants living in South Africa. Instead of being treated as children first and foremost, UCM are largely defined by their undocumented status. Two key problems have been discussed in this regard: (1) for many in SA, the term undocumented has come to acquire the same meaning as illegal; and (2) UCM are not recognised as a distinct migrant class with a distinct set of rights – even the state fails to do so. In chapter two it was argued that despite their undocumented status, UCM are children and as such are entitled to education, adequate health care, food and shelter. Unfortunately, the findings of this study suggest that the majority of these children struggle to access the fundamental services that ensure survival and few children are able to attend school. At the start of this research, it was mentioned that there is a widespread consensus that SA largely fails to adequately assist child migrants. Yet whereas previous studies largely confine their explanations to the state and service providers, this thesis sought to include the perspectives of child migrants as well as the networks within which they function.

5.1. Central Findings and Implications

From the interviews conducted, it became clear that the majority of service providers believe in the existence of a well-functioning migrant network. But contrary to this belief and to what the social network theory holds - that migrants are able to positively draw upon the social capital that makes up their network; the findings in chapter three support the hypothesis in the introductory chapter, which states that the social networks of UCM do not facilitate their migration process. To the extent that (1) the information that is available to UCM is idealised and therefore fails to provide a true reflection of the migration process, and (2) there are few settled migrants willing or able to assist, UCM are unable to depend on the social capital to reduce the migration related risks. This leads to a situation wherein which child migrants are exposed to serious risks, such as a dangerous journey and a meagre living situation. Additionally, UCM suffer major exclusion in the face of xenophobia, restricted social interaction and movement, and a deprivation or inadequacy of services. This holds serious repercussions for the well-being of UCM. Many children decide, soon after arrival, to run away from the shelters, where boys tend to get trapped in the dangerous world of street life and girls are lost in the major cities of SA where they land up in the highly exploitative sector of domestic work. This trend tells us something about the quality of the services received at the places of shelter, which in turn seriously hampers the growth and development of UCM. Furthermore, it provides service providers with an added challenge: having to recover the whereabouts of these children, because as long as they are missing, all we have is speculation about the extent of their suffering.

SA is a firm believer in the self-sufficiency of people and believes that individuals are responsible for their own development and well-being. But where the extremely vulnerable need assistance, like the UCM whose networks prove more harmful than helpful, the state has a duty to step in. However, according to the findings in chapter four, the state's exclusivist discourse and failure to recognise UCM also has serious consequences for the well-being of UCM. Firstly, it was shown how the social construction of child migrants as being illegal foreigners leads to state interventions that sustain the detention and deportation of migrants. This seriously undermines child migrants' basic human right to freedom and security. Secondly, the lack of recognition for UCM has led to a high level of uncertainty amongst service providers, which in turn affects the manner through which service providers assist these youngsters. I argued that the flight-behaviour of UCM mentioned above, is a direct result of the misperception that exists on the part of service providers regarding child migrants' needs. These findings in combination with the fact that service providers do not function effectively within a network, merely enhance child migrants' exclusion. Hence, social service provision as it stands now, is not necessarily improving the lives of UCM.

Before discussing some of the recommendations for upcoming research, it is important to briefly refer to the theoretical framework that was used in this paper. I believe that the biggest shortcoming of SNT lies in its very appeal: the fact that it is a simple theory. SNT views people as connected agents, but by doing so, the theory overlooks the fact that UCM are also independent rational agents who have the ability to weigh the potential gains of education and work against the potential losses in the form of deportation and deprivation. Contrary to what Massey may believe, the findings in chapter three showed that UCM are motivated by a wide range of both push and pull factors, which cannot be isolated from the powerful tool of discourse. To be sure, the analysis of UCM in light of their social networks did give rise to new evidence, which in my view, gives a more complete explanation of the inadequacy of service provision. However, on its own, the theory proved inefficient. For the conclusions to become grounded, it was necessary to rely on other theories, such as relative deprivation, the push/pull theory and the discourse theory.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Research

In light of the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe, the high level of in-migration of UCM into SA and the fact that UCM are deprived of some of the most basic services, there is no doubt that SA has to develop and implement a coherent response that will assist UCM. Of course, the state has already taken several steps towards building such a response. DHA for example introduced two new measures that will allow Zimbabwean nationals to enter and remain in SA legally, namely a visa-free entry as well as a document that provides Zimbabweans with legal though temporary status

(CoRMSA 2009: 2). While the new immigration regime for Zimbabwean nationals is a welcomed one, these do arguably little to alleviate the plight of UCM as they are still required to present one of three legally recognised travel documents: a passport, an emergency travel certificate or a border pass. Given the implications of the state's current use of an exclusivist discourse, perhaps the first step is to recognise UCM for the vulnerable children they are, fleeing from a desperate situation. The most recommendable way in which to alter the image of UCM as illegal criminals is for the state to acknowledge the seriousness of the crisis in Zimbabwe and to adjust its discourse accordingly. As Polzer (2007: 14) reminds us, the state's continued negative discourse places few constraints on the behaviour of those policing immigration. Without a more tolerant discourse, there is little hope that effective protection can one day be realized. Until now, South Africa's motives to halt migration have been born not so much out of a need to protect the human security of children, but more so to protect the nation-state at large. Granted, if South Africa's continued efforts of deporting had any real effect in controlling the high numbers flooding into the country, the way in which SA chooses to justify its actions has arguably little relevance. But this thesis proves that UCM continue to clandestinely cross the border into SA, despite the ease and frequency with which these minors are deported. Evidence born out of the focus group sessions with UCM has shown that this is because of a discourse that has children believe in the endless opportunities available in SA. The state therefore needs to ensure that the 'bad' stories such as the shortage of schools, unemployment, xenophobia and restricted movement also reach Zimbabwean children who are considering undertaking the journey abroad.

One thing is certain, SA cannot afford to lose any more girls to the exploitative sector of domestic work, nor can it afford to have boys run away from the shelters. It is my opinion that if SA is serious about alleviating the plight of UCM, more research should be conducted so as to determine the reasons that spark this flight-behaviour. While it is quite likely that the assumption of inadequate provision of services is accurate, it is important that both the state and the service providers gain an improved understanding of who these migrants are and what it is they need. One way to do so is to feed into children's networks. This may improve the quality of the networks, thereby making them more effective and this again promotes the self-sufficiency of UCM. But perhaps more importantly, the state and the service providers need to work on improving their relations. While competition between the two actors can be healthy, in SA competition is quickly becoming destructive. NGOs and state providers alike seem to be trapped in a competitive cycle, and this can result in them losing sight of their original purpose. Both parties need to acknowledge that they are aiming to fulfil the same goal in the case of UCM and that together, they have a better chance at doing so. The newly-founded Humanitarian Assistance Network of South Africa (HANSA) seeks to do just that. HANSA supports

existing civil society organisations by providing them with information, improving information sharing as well as improving engagement with government and other structures (CoRMSA 2009: 4).

The reader is reminded that the findings of this study are confined to the Provinces of Gauteng and Limpopo and included only a limited number of service providers. Although there is a definite need to conduct more research that extends beyond these areas and includes service providers throughout the country, this study has hopefully achieved one crucial thing: it has emphasised the urgent need to recognise that UCM deserve the assistance and protection that is due to them as both a child and a forced migrant.

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List of Service Providers Interviewed

1. Shelters

Concern Zimbabwe

Uniting Reform Church

Home of Hope

Crossroads

2. Local NGOs

Lawyers for Human Rights Musina

Lawyers for Human Right Johannesburg

Lawyers for Human Rights Pretoria

Musina Legal Advice Office

RCP Musina

Catholic Women's League

Jesuit Refugee Service

Tshwani Child Welfare

3. International NGOs

International Organisation for Migration Musina

International Organisation for Migration Beitbridge

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Musina

Save the Children UK Musina

Save the Children Norway Beitbrigde

4. Government Departments

Department of Education Musina

Department of Education Pretoria

Department of Social Development Musina

Department of Home Affairs Musina

Department of Home Affairs Johannesburg

Department of Justice

5. Teachers

Sunnyside Primary School

Pretoria Secondary School

Oosteind Secondary school

List of Child Migrants interviewed

Cross Roads

Catholic Women's League

Concern Zimbabwe

Uniting Reformed Church

Save the Children UK Musina

Home of hope

Jesuit Refugee Services

Sunnyside Primary School

List of Parents interviewed

Lawyers for Human Rights

Catholic Women's League

Peas in a pod