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### Becoming cornered

*Migration, masculinities and marginalisation in inner-city Johannesburg*

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

**‘A man with a  
woman’s heart’:  
friendship, kinship  
and belonging among  
cornered migrants**

## Introduction

29 May 2019. It was Uncle Kofi's 42nd birthday. The previous day, he had invited me along with many others to celebrate. In attendance were more than 15 people. Initially, Bertha and I were the only women. On a rough and dirty wooden table were plastic plates of the usual food: *kwasa kwasa*, pap and *mabhonzo*, and chocolate cake, placed in the centre of the table. After eating, Uncle Kofi invited us to ask any question that came to mind. 'Today is my birthday, so feel free to ask me anything; all the secrets will come [out]', he said, giggling and showing his milky white teeth that complemented his dark chocolate complexion. With no direct instruction from anyone, we found ourselves standing in a semi-circle facing Uncle Kofi. He had requested me to film his birthday celebration, and I asked Josh the filmmaker, who also frequented the corner. Josh was behind the camera. Uncle Kofi answered all the questions thrown at him, telling stories about his childhood in Ghana, his attempt to go to Europe via Libya, his aspirations to go to the United States, and how his transit through South Africa became permanent after marrying a South African woman and having children. Those attending the party asked him how he started his business as a shoemaker and about his plans as an entrepreneur; others were curious to know how he had dealt with the criticism and mockery that came with his profession. Others congratulated him on his recent acquisition of a car. The question-and-answer session was joyous, as people laughed and teased each other.

After we had questioned Uncle Kofi, I suggested that everyone who wished to participate tell us how they had met Uncle Kofi, and then answer any other question that anyone else might want to ask. I was surprised to see how keen everyone was to share their first encounters with Uncle Kofi. Several men who had not been very enthusiastic about taking part in my study stood up in front of the camera to share their stories. They were 'doing it all for Uncle Kofi', as one of them said, implying they were using his birthday to acknowledge his importance in their lives. This session turned out to be an emotional one as some reminisced, as well, about the challenges they had been through. Nine men and two women shared their stories; below I share a few of these.

Denga, a man in his mid-30s who worked providing security services, was a frequent visitor at Uncle Kofi's Corner, and he had remained quite reserved during our informal conversations. I had managed to interview him twice previously but did not know how he had come to Uncle Kofi's Corner or what he did for a living. On this day he kept reiterating how Uncle Kofi was an emotional man, always ready to shed a tear:

I was a hungry little boy. I would kneel over here [pointing], just

listening to the conversations taking place [at Uncle Kofi's stall]. So, this man [Uncle Kofi] is a caring man. He would buy bread – you know, the R5 [.30 euro] bread, he would just provide that bread. It was a lot at that time. There were a lot of people here in the church, people parking cars, people we knew that they were well off, financially, but they would not even care for us.... But a shoemaker would provide bread. This man is actually caring. He has got a heart of a woman that takes care of a lot of people. Not that he is a woman but a heart of a woman.

Ronald was a Mozambican man who had grown up in Zimbabwe:

How I met Kofi. It was when I was coming from Zim. I had a friend of mine whom I was staying with at Meyerton. So, this guy now says, 'Eish, guys, now people are complaining about this place, that we are now too crowded in one place'.... So I had to come from Meyerton to Joburg, and I had nowhere to go, nowhere to run, so somebody directed me to our church. So, when I was at this place, I saw this guy with the name Kofi. He was just sitting by this place. So, I just came in and himself knew that if you see somebody coming, there is a big problem. So, I told him my story and he told me, 'At this place you are not allowed to be [squat] here. But don't worry, you just wait, it will be dark'. Because they said there are too many people staying here, so I would be adding to that number and we would be too many.... Kofi said, 'When it's night, just go and sneak in'.

That heart of him, welcoming me, and it was a long story. So, I sneaked in because of him. He accepted me as I am.... and took me as his brother. It was not easy, to tell you the truth. We will be sharing funny food that he would have bought here, R5 kip kip [snacks] at Kudzi's place. [becoming very emotional].... We would share food worth R20 (1.50 euro) among seven men, not boys, we were men.... Seven men could eat R20. As for me, this gate has got lots of stories, lots of helping things, and I had to get some clients because I am a motor mechanic, so Kofi had to introduce me to some of his guys.... [Saying] that 'this one can fix your cars'. That's how I got up, because I used to sleep here at church, doing everything here, but now Ronald is married, family man, white wedding, happy man. I thank God for this man.

Uncle Kofi interrupted Ronald to add: 'He is forgetting one thing. He is the one who was now looking after us when he found work that paid him R20 a day. And everyone was asking him, 'Why do you go to that work? It's not good'. But after getting paid and he bought food, everyone is enjoying that food of R20'.

Ronald continued, sharing that he had worked and shared food with

everybody for more than two years. What I found interesting in his story and from my own observations was how sharing resources had become the norm at Uncle Kofi's Corner. Despite the mistrust I perceived, and the reported animosity among individuals that I had heard via the grapevine, when it came to helping each other out, they were there for each other. Khulu, mentioned in the previous chapter, a Malawian man of Djibouti origin, told his story of how he met Uncle Kofi:

I have known Uncle Kofi for about 14 years. What I have realised is that he is quite a rare breed. You hardly find people like that. When I came to Joburg I saw a lot of evil people. It's a city infested by evil people. And I never thought I was going to meet a good man and I met that one in him. When I met him, it was my first [time] to know that at least you have one in a million chance to meet a good man in Johannesburg. . . . I was kicked out from where I was staying and had run out of cash for rent, and when I came here the guy [Kofi] told me there was space and it was cheaper. . . . From there our friendship started. The first food I ate was peanuts [that he gave me]. He is a humble man, a good man. You hardly find a person who tells the truth in a place like this. If we refer it to the Bible, I think we can call it one of those evil cities mentioned in the Bible and I met this man in such kind of a city.

The speeches and conversations that day made clear that many of the people present were fond of Uncle Kofi and each other. They also gave me a better understanding of what people thought about 'positive' masculinity. During fieldwork, at different times and to different people, I had asked the question: 'What is a good man?' I received varied answers, but certain phrases were often repeated: 'one who is responsible and provides for his family', 'one who respects other people and his community', and 'a hard worker'. Those who had attended the behavioural change interventions promoting positive masculinities gave similar responses, but they were also likely to say things like: 'one who is not violent' or 'one who respects the rights of other people, including women and children'.

Men at Uncle Kofi's Corner spoke of Uncle Kofi in relation to certain contextual issues, including dominant narratives of being 'in a city like Johannesburg' or comparisons between themselves and others who were well off. They marked Uncle Kofi as a different man, a rare man in Johannesburg, and these comparisons suggested that their notion of masculinities was constructed in relational terms. Many had commended him on how he had managed to ward off negative influences that came with the city, alluding to the significance of space in articulating certain practices, especially in relational terms.

Everyone identified Uncle Kofi as a good man, mainly because he had helped

them to meet practical needs in their lives: food, transport money, accommodation or advice. All stressed that even though he had little for himself, he was always willing to share his limited resources. Their comments made me realise the extent to which acting generously from a space of being cornered was a key element of being a good man. Sharing money from a place of lack was admirable, making a sharp contrast with those less generous churchgoers who were, as Denga put it, 'financially well'. Although we were celebrating Uncle Kofi that day, and this may have led to an excess of praise, the discussion made it clear that he was not the only one taking care of the basic needs of others at the corner. Ronald worked for two years for R20, using all his money to buy food for his friends at the corner. Even as I wondered at how the reciprocity operating at Uncle Kofi's had helped people to survive in the city, I could not help but think about what Ronald's family back home thought of him, failing to send anything home because he was taking care of his friends at Uncle Kofi's Corner.

Pols's (2016, 184) concept of 'caring communities' – in which 'members do things together, look after one another and share common goals' – provides a frame for understanding the relationships observed at Uncle Kofi's Corner and, more importantly, how the caring actions among the men who spent time there were integral to their makeup as a community. Identifying care and involvement as central to what communities do, she posits that caring communities and related networks emerge from materially mediated relationships between people, which she defines as 'relational citizenship' (Pols 2016, 178). Her understanding of citizenship as something that emerges through human relationships invites us to think beyond an individual's status vis-à-vis the nation state. The possibility of relational citizenship, I would argue, is particularly important in corner spaces where state-based forms of citizenship are contested. For those who lack legal residency status and/or work papers, and whose access to state resources is limited, social spaces such as Uncle Kofi's Corner provide those who are systematically excluded ways to cope and a sense of belonging.

Uncle Kofi's Corner was an enclave where positive masculinities were practiced, leading to the formation and maintenance of friendship and kinship bonds – a caring community – in a hostile city. At Uncle Kofi's Corner, caring for each other by sharing resources was normalised, and this norm was reproduced as more people joined the community. In this community people from the margins of the society somehow managed 'to live successfully with each other' (Pols 2016, 178), in the process creating their own basis of citizenship. Building on Pols's work and drawing on my observations of corner life, I propose the term 'corner citizenship': emerging in spaces of marginalisation, corner citizenship is compensatory, substituting the hard-to-access state citizenship as well as the impractical modes of NGO citizenship explored in Chapter 5.

In previous chapters, I established that Uncle Kofi's Corner can be viewed as a

site of enclaved masculinities, where dominant masculine ideals and tropes were contested, negotiated and altered to match the lived realities of the men (and women) there who found themselves on the margins of the economy and society. In Chapter 6, I specifically explored how men understood aggression and interpersonal violence as emanating from systematic marginalisation, structural violence and spiritual possession.

In this chapter, I turn to examine the non-violent ways that men expressed their masculinity, specifically how care helped maintain friendship, kinship and community. Focusing on how migrants engaged in activities of place making as they mapped urban space, I examine the relations and practices that emerged in these spaces. I highlight how men at Uncle Kofi's Corner disrupted certain gender roles and norms as they engaged in activities and practices commonly said to be for women. I advance this argument by examining how the practice of care emerges among cornered men. I build on extensive research that has been done in Southern Africa on how care practices in families and kin networks continue to be (re)shaped by demographic processes such as migration, morbidity, disability, population ageing and mortality, particularly in the context of HIV and AIDS (Manderson and Block 2016; Carrasco, Vearey, and Drimie 2011; Moyer and Igonya 2014). I also engage with research in gender studies that situates care within (re)productive gendered practices and identities. By highlighting the complexity of care as a gendered practice, I argue that masculinities should be understood as relational practices shaped by space and time, and not as a taken-for-granted stable category that defines identity. I also suggest looking at care and masculinities beyond the gender-transformative framework championed in the NGO world.

## Care and gender

Care has been understood in multiple ways across many scholarly disciplines. Themen and Alber (2017) have identified four approaches to the study of care. Firstly, care has been understood as essential for establishing, nurturing and negotiating kin relationships. Secondly, care has been looked at through the lens of neoliberal policies that emphasise the making of responsible citizens. Thirdly, care has been used in feminist theory to distinguish between productive and reproductive work. There is ample evidence that in many countries, across Africa and worldwide, caregiving roles and domestic chores are seen as the responsibility of women, while men are expected to earn sufficient income to support the household (see also Risman and Davis 2013). Fourthly, framing care as a kind of labour has proved important in analyses of global care chains and transnational migration.

The involvement of men in care activities has become a central issue of concern not only within the feminist movement (Abel and Nelson 1990; Fisher and Tronto 1990; Morrell et al. 2016), but also within masculinities studies (Morrell and Jewkes 2011) and development studies (Drotbohm and Alber 2015). Scholars of masculinities within migration studies have also established that migration disrupts gender norms and roles when men take up reproductive work and express emotions historically and culturally perceived as feminine (Montes 2013; Gonzalez-Allende 2016; Pasura and Christou 2018).

Some of these studies challenge the unequal distribution of particular kinds of care work, questioning the patriarchal status quo within which caregiving tasks are assigned to women (Morrell and Jewkes 2011; Risman and Davis 2013). Abel and Nelson (1990, 6), summarising the debates related to care work and gender equality, explain that this line of argumentation stems mainly from socialist feminists who frame caregiving work as 'oppressive to women' because usually it is not freely chosen and because it is unacknowledged as labour. Other feminists, they continue, contend that the emotional involvement that comes with caregiving is meaningful and fulfilling to women, and is thus humanising (Abel and Nelson 1990). Finding both of these critiques inadequate, Abel and Nelson (1990) argue that the first overlooks the human connectedness that comes with caring and the second overemphasises the personal fulfilment of women, while failing to acknowledge the entwinement of caregiving and women's subordinate status and the ways that women are essentialised as emotionally driven caregivers and men as intellectual and instrumental.

In South Africa, gender scholars have looked at care mostly from a feminist perspective to distinguish between reproductive and productive work. Working to financially provide for one's family is considered masculine care, while the hands-on work of taking care of children, the sick and the elderly is considered feminine care (Morell and Jewkes 2011). This division of labour, often framed in traditionalising discourses, reinforces gender inequality. With the aim of challenging this status quo and fighting gender inequality, development agencies have advocated for men to take on more care work and 'feminine' roles such as childcare (Morell and Jewkes 2011). In this way, care in its many forms – such as child care, responsible fatherhood, caregiving and care work – has been identified as a marker of positive masculinities. In contrast, violence has been identified as a marker of problematic masculinities. The aim of gender-transformative interventions is to work with men to move them from one pole to the other. In this thesis, I look at practices of both care and violence, and unpack these with the aim of showing their complexities and questioning their validity as clear-cut markers of specific masculinities. By looking at migration, marginality, nationality, religion and space in relation to these concepts, we may gain a better view of their merits and limitations in constituting certain types of men.

## Care, masculinities and migration

Following the demand for domestic/caregiving work, there has been a notable increase in women's migration, as well as studies documenting women's and men's migration experiences (Gallo and Scrinzi 2019). Studies have highlighted how migration may result in the emancipation of women, as they enter the labour force, while men may report feelings of emasculation when they take up reproductive work or when their female partners became breadwinners (Montes 2013). Other studies of migrant masculinities have highlighted the performance of socially deviant and criminal masculinities in urban spaces (Gallo and Scrinzi 2019). Aiming to move beyond the dichotomisation of men's and women's experiences of migration, and more specifically beyond the negative portrayal of migrant men, some scholars have called for a focus on the overlaps and differences in experiences between sexes, especially in regards to (re)productive labour (Gallo and Scrinzi 2019; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

In recent years, a number of studies have more positively emphasised that men are capable of and willing to embrace change, help their partners, take care of their children and sacrifice for their families (Pasura and Christou 2017; Montes 2013; Gallo and Scrinzi 2019). Gallo and Scrinzi (2019, 1637), for example, explore 'the workplace as a site for Asian migrant men in Italy to engage with emotional and relational dimensions of paid care work'. In this study migrant men do not disdain feminised work, such as domestic work or caregiving, but rather embrace it. They have managed to draw from both masculinised and feminised tasks and reconstruct themselves as respectable men and carers of the community, especially in relation to other migrant men who are constructed as criminals. Montes's (2013) study of Guatemalan migrant men in the United States explores the interplay between masculinities and emotion. She presents her study participants as expressing emotions associated with interdependence, social support, sadness, fear, anxiety, love and sacrifice, emotions usually associated with femininity, as opposed to 'anger, pride and independence which are not only supported but strongly praised as masculine' (Montes 2013, 471).

Because these men did express their emotions, she posits, they positioned themselves outside of the model of hegemonic masculinity (Montes 2013, 480). Studies such as these are insightful as they cast migrant men not only as rational individuals who are driven by cost-benefit calculations, as stated by neoclassical and macro-economic theories of migration, but as gendered emotional beings who can and do engage in affective relations and practices. Similarly, in Africa, there has been a notable shift in research on migration, moving beyond the focus on disruptions that come with migration, health conditions and the social costs linked to them, violence and/or problematic masculinities.

Scholars on migration in South Africa have also begun to engage with migration beyond the crisis narrative. For example, studies have shown how the precarity and marginalisation that come with migration give rise to new modes of belonging and sociality marked by conviviality and accommodation (Landau 2014, 2018; Nyamnjoh 2012b). Landau argues that following their political, economic and social exclusion, migrants in urban spaces end up forming political communities characterised by a sense of common purpose and shared values where care can be seen as a critical currency. Drawing on his findings in Maputo, Nairobi and Johannesburg, Landau (2018, 369) concludes that networks or communities are usually fragmented and 'are often limited to assisting others only to overcome immediate risks or sharing information and tips for avoiding the police or other hazards that endanger larger subgroups'. These communities of convenience are shaped by pragmatism rather than a written ethical code that hardly translates to long-term meaningful relationships.

In my study, I found that in certain contexts men engaged in deep and sometimes long-term relationships that were characterised by friendship and mutual trust. Despite dominant social expectations and other post-migration constraints, these men found themselves in caregiving positions both in their public and private lives. They both received care and took care of others. Among cornered migrants, caring activities emerged as a form of *kukiya kiyi*; for example, Ronald worked for a small amount of money, just enough to buy bread to share with his friends at the corner. In order to capture such forms of care in the daily activities of migrants, I turn to theorisations of care that move beyond its gendered dimensions and focus on the specificities of care in people's everyday lives as they form friendships and networks that resemble kinship.

## Care, crisis and corner citizenship

Anthropologists have long established that care is an essential quality of human beings especially in relation to other human beings (Drotbohm 2015). Care is best understood as a social process involving other people and things. As Drotbohm (2015, 96) puts it, care transforms the individual subject into a relational subject, someone who is a member of society; care is thus central to kinship ties. The need for care is accentuated in times of crisis, for example, sickness, disability, economic crisis, loss. A plethora of studies has followed flows of care, in moments of crisis such as mental illness (Pols 2016), disability (Krause 2018) and HIV and AIDS (Manderson, Block, and Mkhwanazi 2016; Moyer and Igonya 2014).

Shared across these studies is the finding that care can be a vehicle of security in crisis, as it produces feelings of inclusion within certain social spaces. Manderson and Block (2016) suggest that the willingness to care has been

associated with the quality of affective relationships inherent in most kinship networks. In a special issue on kinship and care in Southern Africa and beyond, Manderson and Block (2016), with colleagues, complicate a longstanding conception of kinship as familial ties by unravelling senses of relatedness, responsibilities and obligations of care. Bringing to the fore the versatility of contemporary kinship ties as shaped by structural changes such as migration, urbanisation and economic changes, they posit that 'people have extended old forms of fictive or intentional kinship and so have created new ways of being kin, with care often the basis of closeness' (Manderson and Block 2016, 208).

A similar observation can be made regarding Margaretten's (2011) study of street youth in Durban, South Africa. She examines how young boys and girls who find themselves homeless and poor organise themselves socially as friends, kin and conjugal lovers. In their efforts to belong and to survive the harshness of street life, these youth find resourceful and yet provisional ways to connect with each other by emphasising their commonalities as a collective over socially constructed differences. They did so through imaginings of siblinghood, brotherhood, sisterhood and even child-parent relationships. These relationships were characterised by both material transactions and affective aspects, such as dependence and nurturance. Margaretten, however, emphasises the flexibility and fragility of these relationships, which could change at any time. I relate this to Fisher and Tronto's (1990, 40) understanding of caring as 'activities that people – both women and men – do to maintain, continue and repair the world with the aim of keeping life going'. This framing of caring is associated with survival tactics, or *kukiyi kiyi* in the case of my research, and can take any form. Mol and colleagues (2010, 16) echo this framing when they focus on the 'tinkering' character of care, highlighting how people make diverse adaptations, experimenting and adjusting 'until a suitable arrangement is reached'. Such care, they argue, seeks to lighten what is heavy, and even if it fails people keep on trying with the aim of improving their circumstances (Mol, Moser, and Pols 2010, 13).

My research with migrants in Johannesburg produced similar findings: men and women from different ethnic, national and religious backgrounds came together to form friendships and intentional kinship, undergirded by practices of care. Through acts of caring, individuals constituted themselves as corner citizens, becoming members of an often-marginalised community. Attending to the open-ended and creative use of kinship (Carsten 2004; Manderson and Block 2016, Margaretten 2011) I observed among these migrants, I could trace their post-migration social organisation and their 'embeddedness, citizenship and belonging' (Thelen and Alber 2017, 4).

My research shows that kinship and state politics such as migration laws are not exclusive of each other but rather interlinked. For example, the South African government's stance on denying particular migrants the papers required to officially live and work in the country has created the context for multinational

migrants to come together to create alternative forms of belonging and citizenship that go beyond nation-states and family (see also Coe 2015). I understand care in these kinship and friendship relations as more than functional, and I emphasise the emotional attachments that characterise these relations. Attending to these is particularly important for the larger study of masculinities since men are rarely considered as emotional beings.

In the following section, I present case studies that highlight men's caring practices. These cases show that migration can interfere with the polarised categories of hegemonic and positive masculinities, interrupting family structures and gender roles, while also facilitating men to take up caring activities without necessarily requiring them to subscribe to the rhetoric of gender equality. Drawing on the work of anthropologists, I argue that providing care or caring for someone is dependent on many factors including capacity, potency and social power (Drotbohm 2015, 96; Manderson and Block 2016). This is captured well by Manderson and Block (2016, 205) who distinguish between caring for and caring about:

The capacity to care and decisions about who undertakes care work are shaped by other considerations: resources and assets that facilitate the work and costs of care; expectations and commitments at societal, economic and political levels; alternative obligations and responsibilities to other householders; and affective ties to others that do not always follow prescribed kinship ideals.

Care is not a given, nor is it an identity. Instead, it is a process that is characterised by chaos and contradictions, challenging the understanding of care as 'gracefully unfolding' or as a fixed category (Fisher and Tronto 1990, 40). At times it is strategic and the right thing to do; at other times it is an imposition.

## **Case 1: 'These are my people, they have been good to me' - Uncle Kofi's Corner as a caring community**

Uncle's Kofi's friends celebrated his birthday by acknowledging his generosity, linking his giving practices to his caring heart. Having observed his behaviour during my fieldwork and also benefited from his generosity, I agreed with the general sentiment expressed that day, even though this generosity did not always make sense to me. A few years earlier, on a hot Thursday afternoon in 2017, Khulu and I brought four black plastic boxes of *kwasa kwasa* to Uncle Kofi's Corner. This spicy rice

dish was one of the many ways that men at the corner would differentiate not only 'southerners' from West Africans, but 'real' men from 'wimps': real men could eat it without flinching. *Kwasa kwasa* also reminded Uncle Kofi of his home in Ghana. Upon arriving at the corner, Khulu called out to Uncle Kofi, telling him to 'do what you do best', meaning to share the food. Uncle Kofi washed his hands before taking the take-away plates and breaking them into pieces, to match the number of people who were there.

I was surprised that Uncle Kofi would share the food I had bought with everyone, including people I had never met, giving some to everyone else before taking the last and the least portion. Earlier that day, he and some of the regulars had said how hungry they were, which is what prompted me to go and buy the food. Uncle Kofi's behaviour astonished me because I thought, according to common courtesy, he should have asked me if I minded sharing with everybody present. If it were up to me, I would not have done so. I was not sure if I should read my reaction as my own version of 'going Dutch' (sharing costs), having spent a few months in Amsterdam, or if it was due to some desire for my contribution to be acknowledged. Either way, I later felt ashamed, especially when I looked back on my own journey as a migrant and realised that I once was in a similar predicament. Sharing food among economically marginalised migrants is a gesture of friendship. It is an act of caring that comes from having shared knowledge and experiences of both collective and individual struggles.

When I first met Uncle Kofi in 2017, he had been in South Africa for more than 10 years.<sup>39</sup> Like most migrants, he had come to South Africa looking for better economic opportunities. Upon arriving, however, he struggled to find a job, so he resorted to fix people's shoes in the streets, a trade of which he was at first ashamed. Over the years, he expanded his shoe repair business to include a phone and tuck shop, where he sold his famous ice cream, sweets and snacks, toilet paper, airtime and pay-as-you-go electricity. He often sold to people on credit, especially to children with insufficient money for ice cream. It was not always clear how he made a profit and, although he sometimes complained about some people not paying, he was generally cheerful, laughing and talking with everyone, even those who owed him money. When I asked him why he always gave freebies and credits, he responded 'God has been good to me. These are my people, they have been good to me. I have been here for more than 10 years'.

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39 This case study has been published in the book *Connected lives* (Mkwanazi and Manderson 2020).

His response showed me how, over the years, his business had evolved beyond an economic enterprise to be more relationship based. I also noticed this one day, midway through my fieldwork, when I was sitting by his stool with my legs towards him. He reached out and removed the Masai beaded sandals that I was wearing from my feet. Both had slight tears in the front, which he repaired with glue and stitches. 'You shouldn't wear them like this because the tear can grow and you spoil your nice sandals', he said as he gave them back. Thanking him, I asked how much I owed him. He laughed, saying: 'You don't pay Uncle Kofi. Keep the money and buy your baby some sweets'. Throughout my fieldwork, he would offer me a free ice cream on a daily basis and at times more than once, especially when it was hot. Slowly I came to see how he was including me in his circle of friends.

In a context characterised by chronic poverty and scarcity, I interpreted Uncle Kofi's sharing as an act of care. Normative masculinity dictates that men provide for their families: this was the most common response I got when I asked participants what a good man is. However, Uncle Kofi's generosity shows that men can gain respect among their peers by providing for those less well-off and by helping provide for the larger community. By selling things on credit, Uncle Kofi was being part of the community and asserting political belonging as well as strengthening friendships.

## Case 2: 'I became his brother': redefining kinship in a 'foreign' land

In August 2017, Uncle Kofi lost one of his Ghanaian friends whom he fondly called 'Baba' (father).<sup>40</sup> I never met Baba, as he never came by Uncle Kofi's Corner when I was there. Having grown up in the same country, Uncle Kofi and Baba had become good friends and shared many a Ghanaian meal. Although they were quite close, Uncle Kofi knew nothing about the man's family, other than that they were not able to take care of him when he fell critically ill. On the day he died, Baba had called Uncle Kofi, asking him to bring him *fufu* and goat soup, a Ghanaian delicacy. Uncle Kofi said Baba seemed strong and had been in a happy mood, and had thanked Uncle Kofi for honouring his wish and taking care of him. A short time after leaving Baba's house that morning, Uncle Kofi had received a call from a neighbour informing him that Baba had died.

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40 Portions of this case study originally appeared in *Connected lives* (Mkhwanazi and Manderson 2020)

Over the next couple of days, Uncle Kofi searched for Baba's family in Ghana, posting messages on Facebook and WhatsApp. He also stood in as an official relative to facilitate Baba's burial, including identifying him at the mortuary, speaking to the police and signing papers at the hospital so that Baba's body could be released. Just before the burial, he learned that Baba had a daughter who was living and working in South Africa. Neither the daughter nor Baba knew that the other was in Johannesburg, but she showed up just in time for the burial and took her father's belongings. Uncle Kofi described the care he gave to Baba, both preceding and following his death, as obligatory: 'Because we are in a foreign land with no mother, father, brother or sister, I became his brother. He had no one to look after him when he was sick, so I had to take care of him'. Being away from home redefined family ties for Uncle Kofi and Baba, turning them into kin, making them responsible for one another.

Forming bonds along national lines was not peculiar to Uncle Kofi. Tino's Corner Salon attracted mostly men and a few women who were originally from Zimbabwe. This included both Ndebele and Shona people, the two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. Although, there is usually animosity between the two ethnic groups, at Tino's Corner they bridged this divide by sharing a bottle of Black Label (alcohol) or a plate of *kwasa kwasa*. As at Uncle Kofi's Corner, Tino and his friends shared their resources and offered support despite some personal differences. In the last chapter, I described how everyone at Tino's Corner expressed concern over one friend's deteriorating health. Many had advised him to go for HIV testing and to reduce his alcohol intake. Tino had even taken him home a couple of times when he could not walk. 'He is one of us', Tino had said, implying that the man was a fellow national as well as a member of their chosen family in South Africa.

Migration, particularly among people who are economically marginal, has the potential to rupture family ties while facilitating the formation of new kinship ties, and thereby shaping the gender of care relations. The fact that Baba lived in the same city as his daughter without either of them knowing was not unusual. Nor was it unusual for Baba to forge new kinship bonds with Uncle Kofi. The latter felt it was his responsibility to stand in as Baba's family at his death, although he would never have done so in Ghana. If Baba had died in Ghana, his daughter or another female relative would have been responsible for looking after him when he was sick. The task certainly never would have fallen to a man outside the family.

### Case 3: 'It's difficult to make other friends': redefining kinship in a foreign land

I met Rafik at Uncle Kofi's Corner. Originally from Guinea, he was in his late 20s and had come to Johannesburg when he was still a teenager; his family remained in Guinea. He initially came to pursue a degree in Islamic Studies, but left school and began working all sorts of jobs. When I met him in 2017, he was working as an Uber driver. In South Africa he stayed with three friends. He would often drive to the church premises at lunchtime, and join the other men and women at Uncle Kofi's Corner. A few times I had seen him dropping off Khulu and other young Muslim boys who spent a lot of time at the corner, and he often took them out to eat Asian food at Oriental Plaza.

Rafik seemed closer to Khulu and Uncle Kofi than others at the corner. I later learnt that he once stayed in the same building, attached to the church, as Khulu did. Both of their rooms were officially rented to Uncle Kofi, who kept his stock and equipment for his business there. According to Khulu, at some point the landlord had kicked Rafik and his friends out: 'These young boys from Guinea, they kept on bringing in more and more young boys from their country. All of them in one room like a pack of rats. The landlord was not happy and told Uncle Kofi that he needed to manage his property well'. When I eventually had an in-depth interview with Rafik, I learned how close he was to his friends, whom he referred to as 'brothers'. He explained: There are not many people here who are Muslim and speak French. It's difficult to make other friends. So, we become brothers and look out for each other'. Seeing the similarities between this and the story that Khulu told me, I concluded that their close relationship came from their feeling of being a minority.

In November 2017, one of his close friends, Amadou, fell sick. Rafik recalled the ordeal:

It was really terrible, I tell you. He just began losing weight and feeling weak. We didn't know what it was and he was scared of going to the doctor of getting tested, you know, he feared having a terrible disease [implying HIV]. We were all scared but we told him, 'It is better to know what is bothering you'. We eventually took him to the doctor, there at Joburg Gen [Johannesburg General Hospital]. They just admitted him but never told us what was the problem, and they were not really helping him. We then took him to a private doctor here at Brenthurst and that's when they told us he had a kidney

problem but they needed to do more tests. And it was really expensive, even the dialysis. The total amount was like R80,000, and me and my friends could not afford it.

Because Amadou could not work due to his sickness, Rafik and their other friends from Guinea put together the money to get him medication. They realised it was cheaper to take him back to Guinea because he would get free treatment there, so they needed to buy flight tickets. Rafik had to go with him because he could not walk or eat on his own. He continued the story:

We went via OR Tambo; it was a long flight because we went through Ethiopia. The journey took us 18 hours and Amadou was in serious pain. He cried along the way and I cried too because I could see that he was in pain. I wished I could take some of his pain. Because of the too much pain, he even told me that he was gonna die.

Eventually they arrived home, and Amadou's family was waiting for them. They took him to the hospital and Rafik stayed for a week before he returned to South Africa to work. He noticed an improvement in his friend's health even during that week. 'If he had stayed here he was going to die. Now I talk to him all the time. He will be coming back soon', Rafik said. Although he usually came to Uncle Kofi's Corner, Rafik did not engage that much with other men from Southern Africa. His closest friends were Muslims and Western Africans like himself. Within this Guinean network, their bonds were so strong that they were willing and felt obliged to pay for Amadou's medication and trip back home. Their bond was strengthened because they did not have many other networks.

Commenting on friendships among migrants, Landau (2018, 7) suggests that 'individualised friendship becomes an important means of generating social identities and protection especially in the context of precarity'. But he describes these bonds as 'short lived': 'Though migrant groups occasionally form collective (usually national or ethnic) identities, these are typically short lived and frequently fragment or become reconfigured' (Landau 2018, 10). Landau argues that migrants usually form associations for strategic ends, while avoiding relationships that may demand permanent friendships. He argues that, because of the precarity of city life, migrants draw on a varied language of belonging to avoid rootedness. As they are on ongoing journeys, their friendships tend to be shallow, allowing them to participate in many worlds without being bound to or by any.

Uncle Kofi's and Rafik's stories suggest that Landau's argument may not hold for all migrants. Rafik explained that it was difficult for him and his friends to make friends outside their circle because of their religion and language. Because of this, they found themselves spending more time together and sharing in small things, resulting in the formation of deep friendships and a feeling of brotherhood. When Rafik told the story about Amadou, he was emotional, and he highlighted the emotional bonds between him and Amadou, recounting that he had cried when Amadou was in pain. My reading on masculinities had not prepared me for Rafik's vulnerability and emotionality, as it is often argued that men are unable or unwilling to express their emotions, let alone admit to crying (Morrell and Jewkes 2011). Rafik and Amadou's friendship was also marked by certain responsibilities toward one another, demonstrated when Rafik and their friends pooled their resources to get care for Amadou. Contrary to Landau's observations, the shared experience of exclusion and caring for one another in South Africa resulted in Rafik, Amadou, and their circle of West Africans forming a formidable friendship. I would argue that the physical and normative space of Uncle Kofi's Corner was also integral to the formation of this type of friendship, as it provided an enclave for caring masculinities to emerge as an exception to the violence and exclusion the men experienced in the surrounding city.

Uncle Kofi was often celebrated as someone who could easily integrate with other people and for his ability to bring together people from many nations, calling them 'his people'. Here the geographical space was also critical in defining members of the community. Uncle Kofi always claimed that his status as a prince from the Ashanti tribe in Ghana obliged him to take care of his people, something he had learned from his late father in Ghana. Simultaneously, he was able to forge a meaningful relationship with his country mates, on the basis that they did not have kinsmen in a foreign land and thus needed each other. Uncle Kofi like other migrants was able to constitute himself in different and multiple relationships with distinct and localised codes. But everyone at the corner called him a friend and I documented some friendships that had lasted more than 15 years. The examples of Uncle Kofi and Rafik demonstrate that relationships emerging from corner places are not predetermined or solely instrumental, and that caring practices are key to defining and augmenting such relationships.

## Case 4: When culture is irrelevant

Kudzai, a Zimbabwean professional in his mid-30s, was married to Sheila, also in her mid-30s.<sup>41</sup> The couple stayed in an affluent neighbourhood in Johannesburg with their four school-going children. When I met him in 2017 he had been living in South Africa for five years. With a master's degree in development studies, he had been working as a senior manager for an international NGO. In 2017, Kudzai found himself in a situation where he had to care for his mother-in-law, something that never would have happened in Zimbabwe, as he explained:

It was not easy, because it's not just about the fact that she was my mum-in-law but because she was sick. That's the first hurdle; it's not easy to look after any sick person. Culture is irrelevant when you have no option. So, I had to do it because, except for my wife in the later stages, nobody seemed to care. There is one moment that stays in my memory when my wife was away, and she, my mum-in-law, vomited, and I had to wipe her.

Kudzai told me in some detail about how he had struggled to provide good care for his mother-in-law. In addition to diabetes mellitus, she had recently been diagnosed with heart failure. Kudzai and his wife, Sheila, first hired a domestic helper to look after her in Harare, but as her illness intensified, they decided to bring her to Johannesburg so that they could monitor her more closely as well as to ensure she access better treatment. Standing in for Sheila, who was away on a business trip, Kudzai went to pick up his mother-in-law from the airport. He was dismayed to see her in a wheelchair, escorted by an airport attendant. The last time he had seen her, she could walk on her own and he had not known that she had gotten that sick.

Though Sheila had four married brothers, she was the only female child in her family and was therefore expected to care for her mother. Kudzai told me that, as he pushed the wheelchair, he wondered how he would be able to take care of his mother-in-law when his wife wasn't around. Worse still, what would people say when they saw him carrying her around, feeding her, and so on? Back in Zimbabwe, a son-in-law is not even supposed to sit near his mother-in-law, let alone touch her.

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<sup>41</sup> Portions of this case study originally appeared in *Connected lives* (Mkhwanazi and Manderson 2020).

Despite this conflict, he saw no choice. Being in Johannesburg – away from home, away from nosy relatives and neighbours – made it a bit easier for him; in Johannesburg, no one really cared if he broke the taboo of touching his mother-in-law.

Even after his wife returned from her business trip, Kudzai decided to continue helping take care of his mother-in-law, saying that he could not let his wife 'do it on her own'. For six months, Kudzai and Sheila took turns caring for her. Both had demanding jobs, so they made a schedule, including visiting her in the hospital whenever she was admitted. Public hospitals in South Africa encourage relatives to attend to a patient's daily care needs while hospital staff focus on medication. For Kudzai's mother-in-law, who spoke only Shona, being hospitalised was difficult. Kudzai found himself doing unusual chores for a man in his position: feeding her, helping her get out of bed, walking with her around the ward. In addition to undertaking such chores, Kudzai also needed to bridge the communication gap between his mother-in-law and the nurses, as Shona is not easily understood by most South Africans and Shona speakers generally do not understand isiZulu. Kudzai, like many Zimbabweans, spoke both Shona and Ndebele (which is similar to isiZulu, the South African language), and so could converse with the nurses at the hospital and translate for his mother-in-law. His presence was therefore indispensable.

At first Kudzai was quite uncomfortable. He told me that he could feel the piercing stares from other people in the hospital – patients, nurses and visitors – but there was nothing he could do. There was no way Sheila could quit her job to focus on her mother. They had bills for which they were jointly responsible, more so with his mother-in-law in hospital. They also had to pay school fees, rent and food, and they regularly sent money back home to his parents and other relatives. They had to work as a team. If he was not at work or at the hospital, he was at home looking after their four children; the same was true for Sheila. The only time Kudzai took a break was when Sheila's sisters-in-law briefly visited. He described what this was like for him, as a man:

I did all this because I love my wife; I just wanted to support her. While it was odd at first, I had to learn to be strong. You end up doing things that you normally do not do. However, I felt it was an honour to do that for my mother-in-law, who to me is like

my mother. I know my culture says other things, but I didn't mind doing it as a man. Of course, in the hospital I could only see women doing the work that I was doing, but I didn't mind doing it since my wife was at work.

While Kudzai struggled a bit within the constraints of the Shona way of doing things, which forbade him from providing physical care to his mother-in-law, he found himself improvising and adapting to the situation. He decided to care for his mother-in-law, doing things he would not have done at home to support his wife, in a context where they did not have a wider kin network to draw support from. His statement that 'she was like my mother' illustrates a shift in kinship. In Shona, the term for mother-in-law is '*ambuya*' and mother is '*amai*', but throughout our conversations he referred to his mother-in-law as '*amai*'. In many cases, he even used '*mhonz*', a slang word for mother. I interpreted this as reflecting another level of informality in his relationship with his mother-in-law. By shifting their relationship from mother-in-law to mother, Kudzai broke the barriers regarding physical closeness and touch. Migration thus shifted the type of relationship he had with his mother-in-law, allowing him to introduce new dimensions of closeness and new modes of caring.

Kudzai's caring practices take somewhat a different form from those of Uncle Kofi and Rafik, particularly because he came from different economic class. However, in all three cases, these men found themselves cornered – 'thrown' into situations whereby they had to take up caregiving roles. Kudzai had to alter certain 'traditional' norms to match his lived reality. His statement that 'culture is irrelevant' shows that he found cultural norms negotiable, as evidenced in him changing the terms he used to address his mother-in-law. I understand this as Kudzai's ability to negotiate and create his own reality from a place of limited opportunities. Being away from people who were most likely to police his behaviour, such as relatives and family, afforded him the space to redefine codes of conduct with his mother-in-law as was needed.

## Discussion

### ***Unpacking the complexity of care***

These case studies show the alternative ways that care practices take form among migrant men. Both Uncle Kofi and Kudzai explained that they ended up engaging in caregiving for the sick because there were no women to take up the

task. Fisher and Tronto (1990) articulate a four-phase process (fourth one not addressed here) that illuminates some of these nuances that are obscured by totalising categories and labels such as 'caring men'. Kudzai's reason for taking care of his mother-in-law tallies with the first phase of caring identified by Fisher and Tronto (1990): 'caring about' someone or something. Kudzai claimed that his love for his wife motivated him to help, although we cannot out rule out the economic implications had Kudzai left the care of his mother-in-law solely to his wife. This is echoed by Manderson and Block (2016), who elaborate that in personal relationships people 'care for' because they 'care about' them. However, caring about someone may not always lead to action, due to structural constraints such as limited resources. For example, take Denga's statement in the introduction that Uncle Kofi cared about his well-being and therefore decided to take care of him by giving him bread. In contrast, other well-off people from the church were in a position to take care of him because they had the resources, however, they probably did not care about him or, as Manderson and Block (2016, 205) put it, they probably did not have the 'affective connection that would make such care meaningful'. This introduces the emotional aspects of care that are usually identified as feminine. Denga concluded that Uncle Kofi's caring (about) is because he has a 'woman's heart'.

The next phase of the process is taking care of something or someone, implying taking considerable action to change a situation. Kudzai and Sheila had first taken care of their mother by paying a professional helper. Uncle Kofi took care of a situation by contacting Baba's family in Ghana. Rafik took care of a situation by taking his friend back to Guinea. We cannot conclude from this that Rafik was the most caring of friends, but he was, as he told me, the only one whose papers were in order. This type of care is built on some level of power or capacity (Fisher and Tronto 1990; Drotbohm 2015; Manderson et al. 2016). This is usually linked to the resources that one uses to take care of a situation, for example, money to buy what is needed or power to carry somebody: Uncle Kofi's prior knowledge of Ghana, Kudzai's bilingual ability to communicate with the nurses, Rafik having the necessary papers. Uncle Kofi's understanding of the economic context of the men at Uncle Kofi's Corner led him to share food with all the men present. He understood what a small portion of *kwasa kwasa* meant to these men; I would come to understand this with time. If I had understood it earlier, perhaps I would not have been surprised when Uncle Kofi shared food with everyone. Resources give someone an ability or power to act, which another person may not have. Taking care of something does not always mean someone cares or holds affection for the other.

The third level involves care giving, the hands-on work of providing care. Kudzai moved from taking care of his mother-in-law by paying for a professional caregiver, to feeding and washing her himself. Uncle Kofi too fed and helped Baba to move around. Rafik helped his friend who could not walk or eat. This type

of care can be seen as more physical than emotional, especially in light of the studies that have argued that caregivers, especially paid ones, do not always emotionally engage with their patients (Manderson and Block 2016). However, Manderson and Block (2016) posit that caregiving is as physically demanding as it is emotional. Therefore, to conclude that Kudzai carried his mother-in-law because he was physically stronger takes away the emotions of fulfilment and honour that came with his experience. Therefore, different aspects of care are intertwined, as they can be independent of or dependent on other external factors and people. They serve to show the messiness and complexities of care, challenging us from assuming a linear transformation from being uncaring to being caring. Engaging in this kind of care, I argue, should not be read as evidence of some transformation. At the same time, I am also of the view, expressed by Landau (2018, 117), that even these practices, arising as contingencies, may become the norm with time. We cannot discount the potential of these practices to contribute to reshaping gender.

### ***Beyond gender transformation: care and corner citizenship***

Drawing from Uncle Kofi's and Rafik's stories, I propose understanding care as a kind of currency in relational citizenship, particularly in the process of negotiating political belonging. This kind of citizenship, as analysed in relation to care and sickness in some contexts, is said to be anchored in the tenets of relationship-based care, reciprocity and selfhood (Pols 2016; Kontos 2017, 183). This framing of citizenship, also taken up by Nets and colleagues (2019, 639), is understood as a 'relational process and as a space of action, negotiation and change'. This was evident at Uncle Kofi's Corner and Tino's Corner, where men of various nationalities and religions convened on a daily basis, transcending social boundaries and creating new modalities of inclusion and exclusion. To be included in the larger community, individuals had to express care and concern for others of the community. Mol and colleagues (2010) describe such individuals as citizens who have the right to make a choice, for example, to be part of the group through contributing and adhering to localised codes of being. For example, Ronald had a choice to either send money back home to his family or to share it with his friends at the corner; he chose the latter. And by investing in the latter, he ensured his own future care, should it be needed. In such contexts care becomes linked with duties and rights (Fisher and Tronto 1990), as individuals take on responsibility for each other's needs while making claims on the group. As Fisher and Tronto (1990, 39) write, 'Caring was a duty (stemming from a religious, kinship, and neighbourhood ethos) and a right (in the sense that to take on caring responsibilities made one a member of the community who could expect consideration from others)'.

Uncle Kofi's behaviour, particularly sharing food with everyone and giving credit to community members, can be seen as efforts to build kinship and establish political belonging or corner citizenship. Similarly, Rafik and his friends provided accommodation to each other even if there was limited space, and even took one of their friends back to Guinea. In both Rafik's and Uncle Kofi's cases, friendships resulting from happenstance or thrown-togetherness (Massey 2005) slowly began to resemble kinship. In explaining the difference, Fisher and Tronto (1990, 52) argue that friendship entails individuals choosing to come 'together as equals and stay together as long as this serves their mutual advantage'. Kinship, for example brotherhood, on the other hand, at times involves acknowledging inequality, such as unequal access to resources, skills and caring needs. Rafik's sick friend is an example here: the friends joined hands as brothers to help him even when they had no kinship obligation to do so. This supports Thelen and Coe's (2017) argument that political belonging comes with obligations and responsibility, which may be implicit or explicit or both.

Similarly, Uncle Kofi's assertion, that as a prince it was his responsibility to meet the needs of his 'community', can also be seen as an example of corner citizenship. Being part of the community, he felt responsible for others' well-being the same way that he would appreciate and expect his actions to be reciprocated. I sensed this when he called me one day in August 2018 when I was in Amsterdam. He phoned to tell me that some women who had started a catering business next to his shop within the church premises had conspired to have his contract terminated. This happened after the church authorities had complained that too much electricity was being consumed, following the new enterprise. 'But the people stood by me, Linda; they said, "Uncle Kofi will not go". You know, being good to people pays. They will remember you', he mused with a tone of gratitude. Eventually the women had to leave the premises, leaving Uncle Kofi as the sole caterer. The expulsion of these women could also serve to show how corner citizenship was defined by the men at Uncle Kofi's Corner in ways that were exclusionary to other groups of people.

Caring in this study can be seen as a kind of currency that allows a person to buy membership or claim citizenship within corner spaces (Appadurai and Holston 1998; Krause and Schramm 2011). These care practices may resemble care within the gender (in)equality framework, but this does not warrant men to be labelled as either belonging to one category or the other. Rather these care practices emerge from a place of incompleteness – limited economic resources or familial support – that is particular to migrant men and women, and they speak more to human connectedness. These care practices also come as a result of a disruption of gender roles without necessarily shifting gender order.

Therefore, it is imperative to find other ways of framing masculinities beyond gender-transformative or gender-equality conceptions. For example, caring for

family or neighbours is not unusual in many African contexts, understood as a symbiotic relationship between an individual and society (Nyamnjoh 2015). This is a form of relational citizenship as individuals constitute themselves as part of the larger community through expressing concern for members of that community.

A few of my study participants repeated South African clichés such as 'Africa is for Africans', '*Umuntu, ngumuntu ngabantu*' (a person is a person through other people), or '*Simunye/Sisonke*' (we are one). Such claims were usually made by migrants in their quest to assert their nativity in South Africa and by a few South Africans who professed to be anti-xenophobic. Among those who embraced such precepts, caring was a significant currency, for example Uncle Kofi's claim that his clients and all the people who come to his shop were 'his people' and he had to take care of them. In their ethnographic study among HIV patients in Kibera, Kenya, Moyer and Kageha (2014, 137) write that, while 'the act of caring is often what defines people as friends and family', it is not always the case that they come to care for their 'loved ones'. Thus, despite the claims to Ubuntu, providing care to family, friends or communities was not common, especially in urban areas with fragmented kin networks and where people were concerned with basic issues related to survival (Manderson, Block, and Mkhwanazi 2016). Therefore, Rafik's, Kudzai's and Uncle Kofi's undertakings of caregiving roles may qualify as outliers in the general masculine society.

### ***Migration and understanding of masculinities***

These caring activities should not be read as a move towards the feminine, because all of the men in this study thought their caring activities fit very well with their roles as men (see also Morrell and Jewkes 2011). As verbalised by several people at his birthday celebration, Uncle Kofi was a 'different kind of man' or 'a man with a woman's heart'. After using the phrase 'a man with a woman's heart', Denga followed up with, 'I am not saying he is a woman', in order to emphasise that he viewed Uncle Kofi as a man, just one who is different. In Morrell and Jewkes's 2011 study, some men framed their caring behaviours as a form of alternative masculinity, which they termed being 'better men'. However, despite feeling that they were 'better men', they did not view their acts as opposing patriarchy. Rather, their caring actions were situated within the provider and protector roles, reflecting a more benevolent patriarchy. Despite caring, they retained patriarchal beliefs that men were superior to women. In Gallo and Scrinzi's (2019) study among Asian migrants employed as porters in Italy, they establish that their study participants drew from the feminine qualities as long as doing so helped them to fulfil their masculine role. For example, they drew from their experience working as domestic caregivers or cleaners to present themselves as suitable carers in the community, as porters. The migrants, most of

whom were Catholic, presented themselves as better and more trustworthy than Muslim migrants from Africa, whom they constructed as dangerous. Similarly, we see how Uncle Kofi is presented as a good man in relation to other men in the 'evil infested Johannesburg', demonstrating that masculinities are usually framed in relational terms.

While the migrant men in this study showed signs of becoming more comfortable expressing emotions and engaging in practices traditionally assigned to women, they simultaneously exhibited attitudes associated with hegemonic masculinities. Uncle Kofi's adamant statement that 'a husband cannot rape his wife' is one example of his holding on to patriarchal beliefs, something that disqualifies him from being considered a 'gender equitable man'. 'When a woman is getting married, she knows her husband needs to eat whenever he is hungry', he added, referring to sexual expectations placed on a woman at marriage. Kudzai went so far as to openly denounce gender equality. Referring to my previous work with NGOs focusing on gender equality, he told me, 'You guys take it too far with your gender equality blame game, basing on assumptions you are not sure of'. Rafik said that, as a Muslim man, he was guided by Islamic principles and that a woman would never be equal to a man. These examples show that men can easily engage in caring activities while simultaneously upholding views and norms that do not support gender equality. Men's deep ambivalence toward gender equality did not prevent them from stepping up to care for one another nor did it stop them from framing their caring practices as markers of the enclaved masculinities that made Uncle Kofi's feel welcoming to both them and me.

Howson (2013) speaks of exaggerated masculinities arising among a group of migrant men who seek to distinguish themselves as 'better men'. Mangenzvo (2015) takes up this point when he explores how Zimbabwean men who had experienced xenophobia performed exaggerated masculinities that were opposed to violent masculinities, so as to distance themselves from what they considered problematic masculinities. Matshaka (2009), as well, in her study of Zimbabwean street-corner traders in Cape Town, established that these migrant men went to lengths to present themselves as hardworking, distinguishing themselves from South African men whom they labelled as lazy and violent. Based on these examples, it would not be far-fetched to posit that some men in the present study took up caregiving roles as a performance to set themselves apart from other men. While this may apply in some contexts, it does not account for the men's affective relations, as when Rafik cried over the pain of his friend Amadou. One could argue that because these men were cornered, they had few options but to care for one another, but this would overlook the fact that they were not passive, subjugated individuals; they made conscious choices to care and being in a 'foreign' country presented them with space to step away from culturally expected masculine identities. Additionally, their caregiving practices enabled

them to connect emotionally with other people in their circles. As Montes (2013, 487) argues, 'migration becomes another determining factor of change within the construction of masculinities', as it allows individuals to connect with other people in deeper ways.

## Conclusion

The case studies presented and arguments made in this chapter challenge simplistic understandings of care, caring and caregiving as markers of alternative or positive masculinity. Given the constraining social and economic environments in which the migrant men I spent time with found themselves while living in Johannesburg, they sometimes took on non-traditional gender roles such as caregiving. While such stories help us to move away from the dominant narrative of hegemonic violent masculinities in South Africa, it does not necessarily mean that there is gender equality. Men's involvement in care roles does not mean that they have moved from one category of masculinity to another. Understanding care as a process rather than a single act help us to move beyond simplistic explanations and to avoid stereotyping certain practices as masculine or feminine. Caring activities cannot be used to distinguish feminine from masculine. None of the three men discussed here celebrated their behaviour as enlightened, feminist or even normal. I have argued that migration shrinks and reshapes social networks, 'forcing' men to do what they normally would not do in their place of origin. At the same time, being away from family and kinsmen allowed these men to manoeuvre within the constraints of societal expectations. Migration did disrupt gender norms; a man may simply have no option but to take on care work when he is away from wider kin networks and when no women are available to do the work. Caring activities may also just be a way of securing social and political belonging after migration. But just because they are 'forced', it does not mean that men do not find emotional value in providing care. Therefore, we cannot discount the idea that men take care of each other because they care about each other. Following Nyamnjoh (2015), this should not be read as men being opportunistic or calculating; rather they are frontier beings who are trying to make do in the face of uncertainty and, in the process, finding convivial ways to co-exist with and cushion (materially and emotionally) each other.