



COUNTRY REPORT:

Zimbabwe

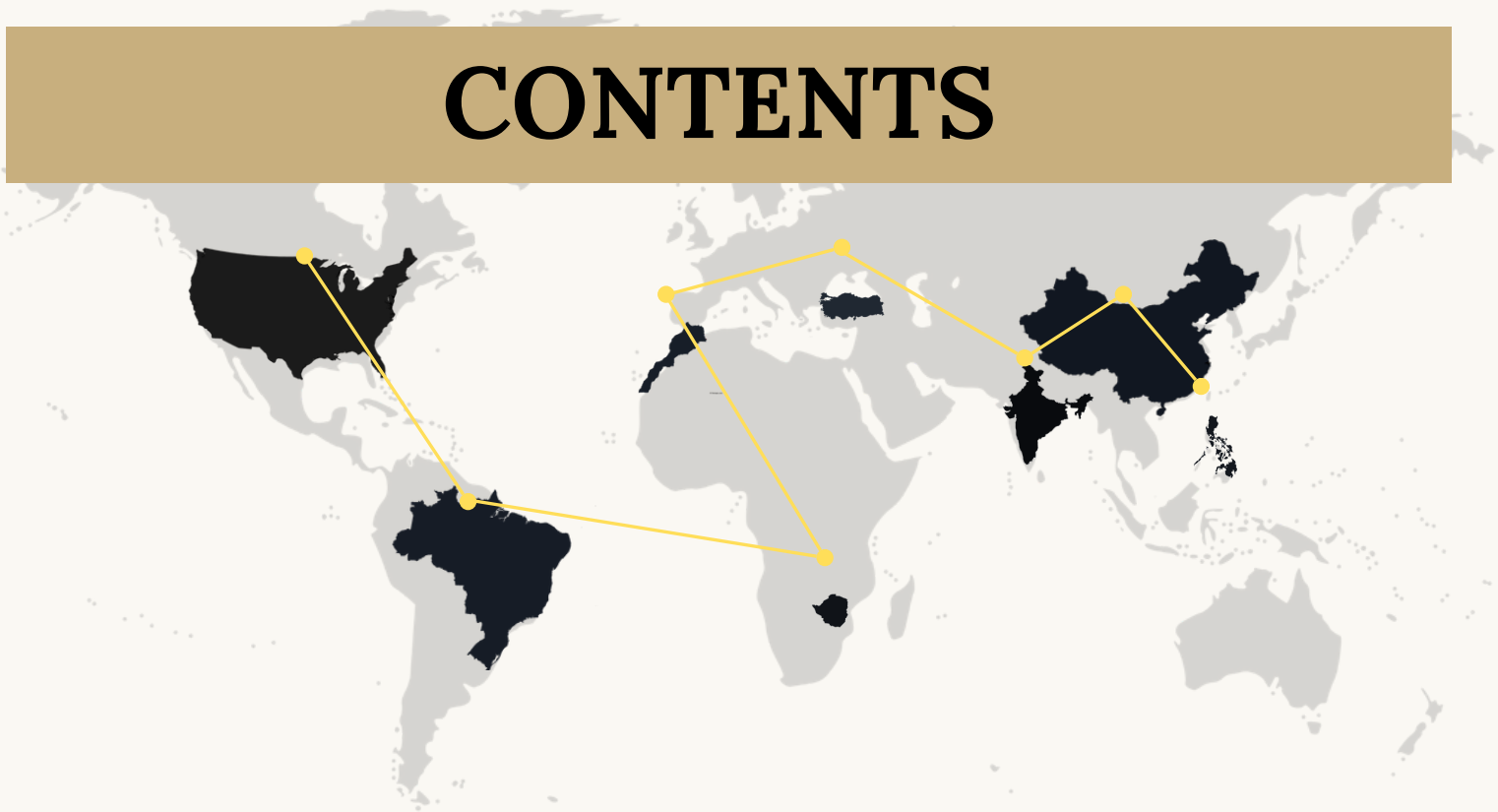


**Caregiving Community, and
Connection in Zimbabwe**

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A Multi-Country Investigation into the Conceptualization and Experience of Social Connection, Social Isolation, and Loneliness

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1. Summary Report

“That period was so important to me because I felt so much connected to her. Even though I was in pain, I felt that I was free.”

– participant from Zimbabwe



Introduction

This report presents findings from a multi-country qualitative study examining how people across diverse cultural settings conceptualize and experience social connection, belonging, disconnection, and loneliness. The project engages with eight countries: Brazil, China, India, Morocco, the Philippines, Turkey, the United States, and Zimbabwe.

The goal is to provide actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers by highlighting both universal and culture-specific dimensions of social life. Through a consistent analytic framework, we identify challenges, cultural practices, and opportunities for strengthening social connections.

In Zimbabwe, social connection is often mediated through extended family, community, and caregiving roles, with older women frequently described as carrying heavy emotional burdens.

Methodology

The study employed a stratified sampling design and recruited 354 participants aged 18 and older across eight countries. Stratification included age, gender, income, partnership status, loneliness severity, urban/rural residence, and region. Recruitment followed a drift sampling strategy, combining targeted outreach with participant referrals.

Semi-structured interviews (2–3 hours each) explored social mapping, definitions of connection, experiences of disconnection and loneliness, and cultural expectations. Data were transcribed, translated into English, and de-identified. Country teams conducted inductive coding before synthesizing results into a shared framework. Thematic coding was supported by qualitative analysis tools (Quirkos, NVivo, Google Sheets). Country leads produced national reports, which informed the cross-country synthesis presented here.

Analytic Approach

For each interview, the whole transcript was first mapped to an analysis summary sheet, which summarizes all sections of the interview. Information from these summary sheets was then aggregated together to form the evidence table. Concurrently, each transcript was subjected to a selective line-by-line coding focusing on how individuals experience and conceptualize social connection (including how individuals define social connection, how they characterize good and deficient social connections, and how they define belonging); as well as how they experience and conceptualize disconnection and loneliness (including how the individuals experience and define disconnection, experience and define loneliness, and whether they make a distinction between loneliness and solitude).

For the line-by-line coding, country leads initially inductively coded manuscripts independently of the rest of the team. The codes that were developed then reflected culturally applicable elements. Codes from across all countries were then collated and synthesized, and overlapping or similar codes were integrated.

This synthesis provided the coding framework, which the research team then applied to the full set of transcripts.

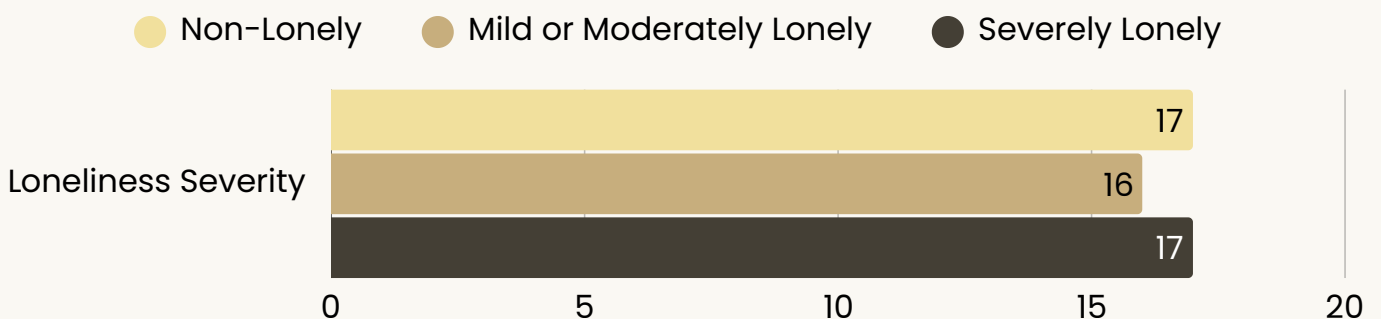
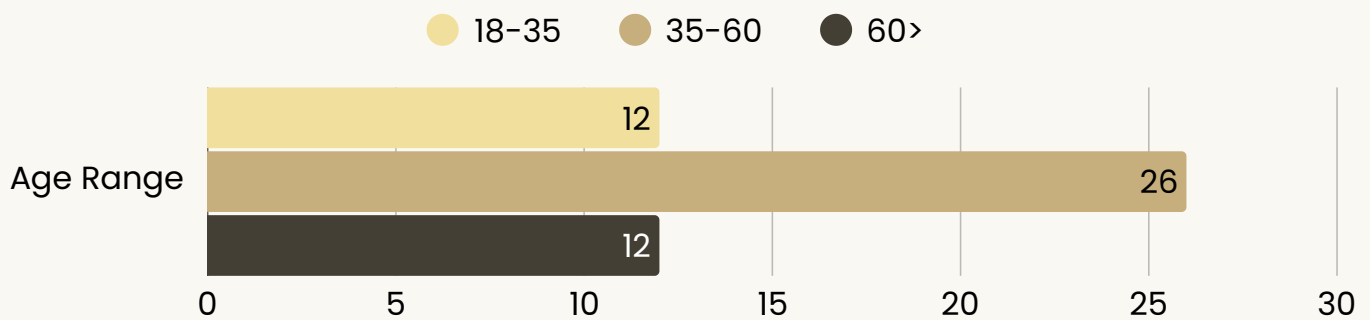
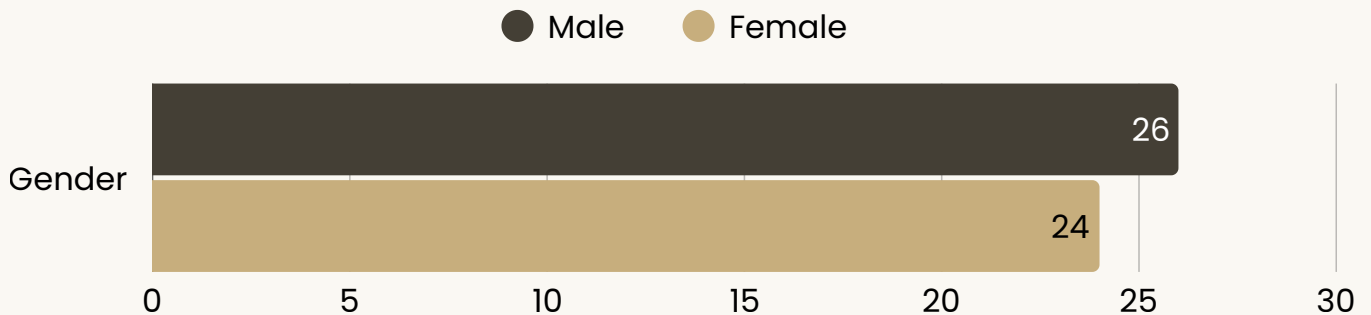
For example, the code [Emotional depth / superficiality] was used for responses that indicate the depth or superficiality of the emotional connection, such as when one participant mentioned, "People could be extroverted but still lonely if they don't really connect on a deeper level." Codes are not mutually exclusive, and transcript portions can be coded with multiple applicable codes

Codes were clustered as to whether they referred to the characterization of the relationship (e.g., "closeness/depth", "duration"), the interaction (e.g., "frequency of interaction", "reciprocity of interaction"), the function of the interaction (e.g., "instrumental support", "emotional support"), the perceived characteristics of the other (e.g., "availability", "trustworthiness"), or one's self state (e.g., "satisfaction", "obligation"). The full list of codes can be found in the project OSF. The team met weekly to refine the codes, clarifying provisional definitions and applicability of the codes to instances in the data.

Sample Demographics Overview

Participant Profile Summary

 Total Sample: 50



*Loneliness severity was determined during sampling using a single item from the Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression scale (CES-D): "During the past week, have you felt lonely?" Responses were categorized as: Non-lonely: ≤1 day, Mild/Moderate: 1-4 days, Severe: 5-7 days.

Summary of Select Findings

Key Social Categories

In Zimbabwe, social life is deeply interwoven with kinship, community, and Ubuntu values. Families are large and multigenerational, with grandmothers often serving as emotional anchors for entire neighborhoods. Community gatherings and totemic identities strengthen a sense of belonging, while friends and neighbors provide additional support through reciprocity and shared responsibility.

Challenges and Quality of Connection

While kinship ties offer resilience, they also place heavy demands on women who shoulder disproportionate caregiving burdens. Grandmothers in particular described being expected to absorb the emotional weight of entire families, often at personal cost. Poverty and migration disrupt community ties, leaving individuals feeling overextended or abandoned despite the strength of tradition.

Definitions of Connection and Belonging

Belonging is expressed through mutual obligation, shared ancestry, and cyclical rituals. Ubuntu principles emphasize that identity is inseparable from community, while totemic affiliations provide a symbolic map of kinship that extends across families. Belonging is reinforced by

ceremonies, storytelling, and collective caregiving practices:

“Belonging means that people can rely on me, and I can rely on them.”

- participant from Zimbabwe

Cultural Specificity

Zimbabwean connection is inseparable from cultural practices and ancestral ties. Ubuntu frames the self as relational rather than individual, and caregiving is not just a duty but a cultural expectation. Yet the same structures that foster belonging can also perpetuate hidden burdens, especially for women and the elderly. Connection is both protective and, at times, exhausting.

Disconnection and Loneliness

Loneliness in Zimbabwe is often tied to economic displacement, illness, or the erosion of traditional practices. Migration leaves families fragmented, while caregiving burdens can make individuals feel unseen in their own struggles. Disconnection is rarely described as being physically alone, but rather as being unsupported in times of need. Rituals and gatherings serve as critical buffers, reaffirming collective belonging even after loss.

Summary of Select Findings

Implications

Measurement in Zimbabwe must capture the dual nature of connection: as both a lifeline and a burden. Tools would benefit from reflecting the realities of caregiving, the cultural importance of Ubuntu and totemic ties, and the role of rituals in sustaining belonging. Policies and interventions must acknowledge that connection is not always positive, and that supporting caregivers—especially older women—is essential to strengthening community well-being.



Summary of Research Questions

This study was guided by a shared analytic framework and research questions* across eight participating countries:

SOCIAL MAPPING

- What are common social categories among the target population?
- What are common challenges/burdens of social connection among the target population?

SOCIAL CONNECTION

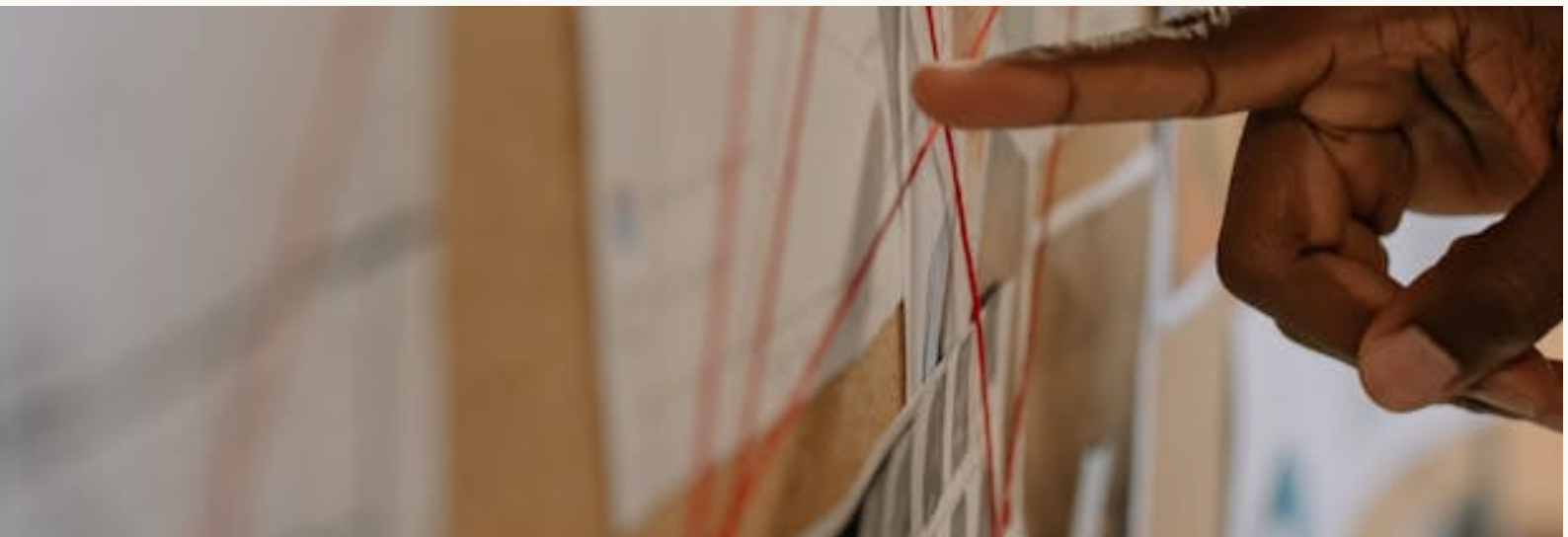
- Definition of social connection: how does the target population define social connection?
- Characteristics of a good (and deficient) social connection: what makes for a good social connection for the target population?
- Definition of belonging: what is belonging for the target population?
- What are culture specific aspects of social connection among the target population?
- What else does the target population feel connected to?

DISCONNECTION AND LONELINESS

- Experiences of disconnection: What are the experiences of disconnection among the target population?
- Definition of disconnection: How do the target population define disconnection?
- Experiences of loneliness: What are the experiences of loneliness among the target population?
- What is the physiology of loneliness among the target population?
- What are the effects of loneliness among the target population?
- How does the target population cope with loneliness?
- What factors affects loneliness for the target population?
- Definition of loneliness: How do the target population define and explain loneliness?

DISCONNECTION AND LONELINESS (*continued*)

- How are lonely individuals perceived among the target population?
- Why is loneliness difficult to be spoken about among the target population?
- What are culture specific aspects of loneliness among the target population?



Summary of Project Resources



Project OSF

This project's materials are openly available on the Open Science Framework (OSF) at <https://osf.io/p3msu>, to ensure transparency, and accessibility.

- **Interview Guide:** A copy of the interview guide containing the questions asked across 8 countries
- **Deidentified Transcripts:** Interview transcripts (anonymized) from all participating countries
- **Ethics:** Documentation of institutional ethics approvals, consent processes, and ethical safeguards
- **Evidence Tables:** Verbatim transcript portions and summarized information per participant across different research questions
- **Codebook:** The codebook contains the codes, provisional code definitions and transcript portion examples across different research questions
- **Country Reports:** Country reports from the analysis of within-country data in Brazil, China, India, Morocco, the Philippines, Turkey, the United States, and Zimbabwe.
- **Main Publication:** Pre-print of the publication that features the cross-country comparisons across the global project.

DOI

- <https://doi.org/10.54224/32560>

OTHER TWCF COUNTRY REPORTS:

- <https://absi.io/publications/>



*Multi-Country Investigation into the Conceptualization and
Experience of Social Connection, Social Isolation, and Loneliness*

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2. Analysis Report

I felt sick... I was expecting to see people helping me, coming to see me, coming to encourage me, but I felt lonely... because no one seemed caring for me
- participant from Zimbabwe



Common social categories

Across the 50 interviews analyzed for Zimbabwe, six major social categories emerged consistently: Family, Friends, Workmates, Church Members, Community Members/Neighbours, and Online Contacts.

These categories are central to the participants' social networks, though the degree of interaction and emotional closeness varied.

Table 1: Summary Table: Social Functions by Category

Social Category	% of Participants Mentioning	Example Descriptions/Quotes
Family (including children, parents, siblings)	100%	"My children come first, then maybe my my brother and my mother" – Kizito; "I stay with my daughter... My grandchild leaves home for just a while but comes back." – Gogo Mutoko
Church and Religious Affiliates	84%	"As for me personally at the choir if we sing then I feel better..." – Pianist; "they gave me a diary, a thank you card... We are active in church" – Ngore "I belong to the Anglican church and so I am part of the Vabvuvi group" – Zula
Workmates	76%	"Of course, my colleagues, the employees." – Young Farmer "In those large numbers [community work groups] people will share different issues" – Wonder; "Co-workers, I think, are the most important part of my social life." – Wilton; "we discuss work related issues, any challenges that we do with our work. But when it comes to personal life issues, that's that's a, that's a real challenge" – Ngore
Friends (non-kin peers)	72%	"I would call on my best friend in South Africa" – Kizito
Online/social media connections	56%	"WhatsApp and TikTok" – Pianist
Community Members/Neighbours	52%	"Our relationship is good. We never quarrel with my, my, my, my neighbors " – Kizito; "We should connect on everything including at funerals, in times of trouble, during joyous events." – Gogo "not in one of my neighbors actually set foot in this house. I have not set foot in either of these houses unless they lose a close relative. I go there to pass my condolences." – Ngore

Family emerges as the most dominant category of social connection among participants. Many participants highlighted how familial ties provided emotional support, stability, and a sense of identity. For instance, Tatenda noted that his sister *"calls me three times a day... she is concerned about me when I fall into a problem"* a pattern echoed in many cases of strong sibling bonds. Also Kizito explained that his children come first, then brother and mother, underscoring a deeply rooted priority on familial bonds despite separation. Similarly, Gogo Mutoko described her involvement in caregiving, living with her daughter and grandchild, showing intergenerational dependency and emotional fulfillment within households.

Some families are characterized by dual roles of support and conflict. Officer expressed both gratitude and burden, the wife supports him, but sometimes he feels the pressure to always be strong for everyone, showing the complex dynamics in primary social units. Lisa also described conflict with extended family over remarrying, saying, her in-laws don't support her; they just wait for her to fail so they can blame her, *"I'm actually still expected to be grieving. Like the in laws, they expect me to be grieving"* and never get married again after the death of her husband.

Church or religious group affiliations were reported in about 84% of interviews. Church affiliations stood out as a major social domain, particularly among older and rural individuals. Participants frequently described churches as sources of belonging, routine, and purpose. Pianist highlighted, *"As for me personally at the choir if we sing then I feel better,"* while Zula noted, *"The Vabvuvi group holds some prayers in people's homes during their spare time."* These connections often compensated for other categories as illustrated by Enia who described how her church group supported her emotionally after her husband's illness.

Friends featured in 72% of interviews, often characterized by emotional support. Kizito emphasized, *"My best friend is in South... He has been with me through TNT. We started playing together while we were still at high school."* Likewise, Alone and Officer referenced friends as the go-to for disclosure, despite recognizing the limitations in trust or reliability. Notably, friendships forged during high school or early adulthood remained enduring across distance and time. For example, Lisa spoke of her one friend who checks on her daily even if they are in different towns and countries now. Young participants in transition (e.g., recent school leavers like Tatenda and Alone) often lacked current deep friendships but maintained bonds from their home communities or previous schools. However, some participants, like Wezhira, reported strained friendships due to betrayal or unmet expectations.

Online contacts referenced in 56% of the interviews, were notably common among younger participants. Pianist reflected: *"Most of the time I will be on WhatsApp and TikTok ... Most of the time I use WhatsApp... Everyone is just mad at you and they feel like they don't want to talk to you. You have no option but to go on your phone and you go on WhatsApp and be quiet because everyone is just against you... You can go on TikTok and watch a couple of videos and then laugh but there are times when you need real people and a phone won't work in those instances. WhatsApp ends up boring to you and so there are times when you need to talk to people and share your experiences with them..."* This reveals a nuanced dependence on digital interaction for temporary relief, while also acknowledging its limits. Similarly, Vinita and Ruru noted that although online spaces offer escape, they lack the depth of in-person bonds.

Community members and neighbours were highlighted by just over half the participants (52%). These connections often centered around mutual aid, such as sharing food, checking in on one another, and communal

ceremonies. Zula shared, *"Burial societies that's another way of connecting people because those who are in the burial society if they lose a member to death, they all go for the funeral."* Meanwhile, Ngore noted a decline in community engagement, suggesting generational shifts or urban drift. Nonetheless, for participants like Gogo and Kizito neighbours were vital figures in daily routines and emergencies. Equally, Mutorido and Gogo experienced deep social support from a non-family elder women in their communities, indicating how surrogate kin structures can emerge in low-family-presence contexts. However, engagement with neighbours was said to require some caution as Mamoyo noted how neighbors could both support and stigmatize, depending on circumstances. Mamoyo maintains deep connections with family and church, avoids over-involvement with community, and emphasizes emotional safety and trust.

Older rural respondents often described neighbours as vital companions or co-supporters, while urban and younger participants described them as *"just people I greet"*, reflecting distinct neighborhood and community dynamics in social connection.

Which social categories typically fulfill which social functions among the target population?

The analysis of the 50 transcripts reveals that social categories do not just signify who participants are connected to, but also what kinds of support, exchanges, and relational functions these connections fulfill. We identified key social functions served by different categories of people in participants' networks, including emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, companionship/socialization, and self-esteem enhancement. Below is a breakdown of the main findings.

Table 1: Summary Table: Social Functions by Category

Table 2: Summary Table: Social Functions by Category

Social Function	Most Common Providers	Representative Quotes
Emotional Support	Family, Close Friends, Church	"My best friend is in South Africa... He has been with me through TNT. We started playing together while we were still at high school." – Kizito; "Then, we have the church and if you go to the [Province A] diocese, especially in [Municipality E] and [Town A] I am well known because I interact with a lot of people. These are the people who are in my social life." – Zula "My daughter... my sister" – Karoi
Instrumental Support	Family, Neighbours, Church	" So with my mother it's now more like we are sisters." – Mamoyo; "We should connect on everything including at funerals, in times of trouble, during joyous events." – Gogo
Informational Support	Workmates, Online Contacts, Church, Friends	"They are just people who are just good especially when I need advice" – Connect; "WhatsApp groups... We do chat because we learn together " – Tatenda
Companionship or Socialization	Friends, Church, Family, Online	"As for me personally at the choir if we sing then I feel better. " – Pianist ; "Once there's a funeral, everyone turns up" – Lisa "then I have church members" – Lisa
Self-esteem/Identity	Church, Family, Work Roles	"The position [choirmaster] makes me, I feel like by most people they respect me. They earn a lot of respect from some, some group members" – Kizito; "my wife stood with my family till the case was closed." – Damba

Emotional Support: Emotional support, in the form of comfort in times of distress or someone to confide in, was most frequently associated with family, close friends, and church members. Siblings and long-term friends were primary emotional confidants. For example, Tatenda said his sister, *“is concerned about me when I fall into a problem. She is the one who will be closer to me during those times and she comforts me a lot.”* Similarly, Damba reiterated that *“We are one thing [Brothers and sisters]. If I mention my problem to them, they are able to assist me that is if they can provide the help. For most problems that I encounter and which I need support from them, they do stand with me.”* Kizito also confides in a friend in South Africa. Similarly, Zula described his church as a place where he is well known and interacts with many people. This underscores the emotional anchoring role of faith communities. Spouses played this role among partnered adults. For example, Ngore shared, *“my wife is my closest friend.”* However, several other respondents indicated a lack of emotional support even among traditionally close relations. Ngore said of his workmates, *“We work well together... but I do not consider them close,”* and Wezhira mentioned that while neighbours greet her, deeper support is lacking.

Instrumental Support: Practical or material help—such as financial support, childcare, or help with transport—was typically sourced from family members and neighbours/community members. Family (especially mothers and sisters) were the main providers of instrumental support among participants. This included school fees, food, care during illness, and covering for emergencies. Tatenda described how his mother left work mid-day to send him money urgently via mobile transfer. Church groups and neighbours provided food, help during funerals, and caregiving, particularly among older women. For example, Gogo Mutoko stated, *“Our pastor and his wife, regards us as his own children.”* Gogo also explained that community helps during funerals and ceremonies. Mamoyo noted that her mother it’s now *“more like*

we are sisters.” Notably, church groups also served this function through organized visits and assistance during crises. Participants like Gogo described benefitting directly from neighbourly support:

“[Friend A] was staying a few meters from my home and she was with me when I needed help... She would hold my hand and lead me to the toilet ... she would come at my home to make sure that I had taken a bath and I had eaten some porridge....That period was so important to me because I felt so much connected to her.”

Particularly for lower-income contexts, functional neighborly relations still persist.

As discussed in the previous section, community members and neighbours were not consistently characterized as supportive across participants. While Zula praised his community for organizing food handouts, Ngore described increasing isolation in newer urban settings. Mai D also reported feeling isolated despite living with family, saying, *“We have got issues here and there where I would have expected them [Sisters in laws] as women to support me and be there for me when their brother is doing certain things but they don’t....”* This highlights that presumed traditional support networks may not always deliver assistance.

Across interviews, there are also interesting cases highlighting unique dynamics of instrumental support. *Mutorido* and *Gogo* experienced deep social support from a non-family elder women in their communities, indicating how surrogate kin structures can emerge in low-family-presence contexts. *Gogo* is a spiritually grounded, community-oriented elder who anchors her life in church involvement, traditional wisdom, and intergenerational caregiving. She enjoys deep connections with both family and non-relatives, particularly women and youth who seek her guidance. Despite claiming she has no close friends, she maintains intimate and respectful ties with neighbors, nieces, and fellow church members. Her relationship with *Gogo Gondo* (a neighbor who became a relative) reflects profound mutual trust, anchored in shared totemic roots and caregiving:

*I have lived in [Town A] for more than 40 years and I have known [Friend A] for more than 20 years. I trusted her because even if it's your first time talking to her, she gives you a good teaching and you will clearly see that there is something inside her that draws you to her. I can lean on her so that my life will not be ruined. We have people like that who, when you lean on them, they become tired with your burden so that you will remain standing. So, [Friend A] is one person who, when you lean on her she will then become tired because of your burden, so that you keep on leaning on her until your burden is lifted from you. When the burden is lifted from you, that's when she will be free. This is why I am close to her. I saw that she is that kind of a person who holds on to something and will never let go until there is a breakthrough.What happened was that I got ill and by then I was staying with young children such that they couldn't help me with the aid that I needed. [Friend A] was staying a few meters from my home and she was with me when I needed help. She would go to her home and take her own blanket and give me. She would hold my hand and lead me to the toilet so that I would relieve myself. She would come when the sun was setting holding a blanket and she would spread it on the floor. I felt connected during that time. In the morning before she left her house, she would come at my home to make sure that I had taken a bath and I had eaten some porridge. She respects me a lot and she would say to me, "Eat Vatete". Up to now she calls me Vatete. Before she left, she would then give instructions to the children who I was living with. She would tell them that she had left some water in the house so the children had to ask me if I need any water for drinking. She also cooked for these children and left after they ate. She would bring some relish from her home so that those children would have relish to eat with the sadza. That period was so important to me because I felt so much connected to her. **Even though I was in pain, I felt that I was free.** "*

For Mutorido, she found support from fellow women whom she shared same characteristics:

"...there are certain households where the husbands in those households died and so we share a common trait in such households. So, I have a common link with these women. So, maybe I might have a problem with my child and there is need for me to make a certain decision as a single parent. So, we all have the same characteristics. So, if we have financial challenges, we have to share the various ways in which we can make money so that our children can go to school. So, I usually interact with these single women."



Informational Support: Participants described church groups, workmates, and sometimes online groups as key sources of advice or knowledge. Parents, especially fathers, were cited as the go-to for advice. Tatenda observed: *“My father. He is always rebuking me about certain behaviors.”* Connect also shared about church members : *“They are just people who are just good especially when I need advice.”* Similarly, Tatenda described receiving job tips from WhatsApp peers. Peers in school groups and WhatsApp chats also played a role for younger respondents who exchanged notes, career info, or dates for events. However, some participants like

Monitor felt left out of such networks due to limited digital access. This represents an unequally inclusive trend, especially among those in lower digital access brackets.

Companionship and Socialization: Most participants sought companionship from friends, church peers, and family. Pianist noted, *“As for me personally at the choir if we sing then I feel better.”* Social events—funerals, weddings, and religious meetings—served as regular sites for companionship. Still, Lonely Lady expressed discomfort even among crowds: *“you can be an inner crowd of people that are not nice to you or people that you don't like.”* This dissonance between presence and connection is a theme needing further exploration.

Self-esteem and Identity Reinforcement: Social categories such as family, church, and professional roles contributed to self-worth. Being a choirmaster, as reported by Kizito, made him feel *“respected by others.”* Likewise, Damba expressed that being relied upon by relatives makes one feel important. Friends and siblings featured in about 84% of transcripts as agents of esteem. Feeling understood and valued was often anchored in these ties. Church groups also contributed significantly to esteem especially among older participants, as in the cases of *Zula and Gogo* who find pleasure in leading in church sessions. Nevertheless, at family level, negative family dynamics sometimes undermined this. Filo reported family accusations of witchcraft, leaving feelings of disconnection, *“most members of the family now accuse others of witchcraft and so there is no more social connection.”*

Different social categories often fulfill varied functional roles across individuals, particularly regarding emotional, instrumental, informational, and esteem-based support. Family and church or faith groups are overwhelmingly the most functionally dense social categories. They provides the broadest range of support types – from emotional and informational to instrumental and esteem-related support. Yet even this category is not uniformly positive. For instance, Mr Lonely revealed minimal family contact and shared feelings of abandonment.

Common challenges/burdens of social connection

Participants reported a diverse range of challenges affecting their ability to build and maintain social connections. These include mistrust and family conflict, emotional suppression and avoidance, geographic separation, stigma and perceived judgment, lack of reciprocity, and overburdening social expectations.

Table 3:

Type of Challenge	Description	Example Participants	Illustrative Quotes
Mistrust and Family Conflict	Distrust among siblings, unresolved family accusations (e.g., witchcraft), divorce, alienation	Kizito, Michalsky, Saru	“they would accuse someone like our eldest brother, they would say is a witch, is a is causing us to suffer, is causing. So you end up.” – Kizito
Emotional Avoidance and Suppression	Difficulty expressing feelings, fear of spoiling image, cultural pressure not to disclose	Filo, Officer, Mai D, Kizito	“Like when I even [divorced] my family members didn't knew about it after maybe after 6-6 years.” – Kizito
Geographic Separation	Loved ones living far away or migrated	Kizito; Mr Lonely, Tatenda	“They [Children] are staying in Domboshava with their mother” – Kizito

Stigma and Perceived Judgment	Fear of being judged by family, church or society for divorce, unemployment, HIV, or loneliness	Gogo, Monitor, Mr Mayere, Lisa, Ruru, Officer	"at work during gatherings when I feel excluded" – Monitor
Lack of Reciprocity	Feeling that others don't reciprocate support or emotional investment	Zula, Ngore, Enia	"Sometimes you feel that people are rejecting you." – Zula
Overburdening Social Expectations	Being expected to help others constantly without support in return	Lisa, Mutorido; Mike	" they actually expect you to be grieving. Actually, up to now, you know" – Lisa

Table 4:

Social Category	Common Challenges/Burdens	Illustrative Respondents	Description/Quotes
Family	Estrangement, Mistrust, Interference, Absence	Kizito, Tatenda, Connect, Success, Enia	"I'm missing them [Children] a lot. Those are the only people that I have besides my brothers and Chief, but those one are the close my my close relatives." – Kizito
Church	Exclusion, Superficiality	Zula, Bindura, Mike	"At church they try to help but the level of help is more spiritual than physical." – Mike
Friends	Betrayal of trust, One-sided support	Pianist, Alone, Officer	"my best friend some instances are tricky to confide everything to him because he might share that information with someone else." – Pianist
Workmates	Limited depth, Professional boundaries	Wonder , Lisa, Mr Maro	Workmates are okay for surface talk, but can't open up to them – Lisa; "My work mates don't value me at all." – Mike

Online/social media	Disconnection, Artificiality, Inadequacy in loneliness	Pianist, Monitor, Vinita, Lonely Lady, Byol	"WhatsApp ends up boring to you and so there are times when you need to talk to people and share your experiences with them." – Pianist
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One of the most frequently cited challenges was **mistrust and family conflict**, often originating from disputes over inheritance, beliefs in witchcraft, or unresolved grievances. For instance, Kizito recounts his siblings accusing his eldest brother of witchcraft which caused him to keep his distance. This mistrust leads to estrangement and avoidance of critical family functions, significantly weakening family cohesion. Enia also shared a story in which tension was brought by witchcraft accusations:

"It might be my aunts who will say that they heard that I was accusing them of practicing witchcraft. They will say that I should sit down with them so that the matter can be judged. Maybe I would have visited a traditional healer and then heard that my aunt is the one who is causing certain problems in my family. Then, I share that information with one of my sisters and she will show those chats with my aunt and tell her that I was accusing her of being a witch. Then, my aunt will then tell me to come over her house and tell me that she saw the chats between me and my sister. So, I avoid sharing such information with other people."

Friendships were double-edged: **Pianist** shared how a trusted friend betrayed him during a sensitive situation. Workmate relationships were largely functional, often leaving emotional needs unmet (Ngore, Karoi).

Another common thread was emotional avoidance, especially among male participants who felt cultural expectations discouraged vulnerability. Participants like Officer mentioned difficulty opening up: *"failing to have someone whom I trust, someone that I can share with my problem with and*

by to find help from.” Similarly, Kizito concealed his divorce for six years to avoid embarrassment. This often contributes to deepened isolation and prolonged unresolved pain. Meanwhile, church communities, though seen as safe havens, sometimes failed to provide deeper emotional support. Mike noted, “church they try to help but the level of help is more spiritual than physical... they lack the expertise.”

Geographic separation emerged as a major disconnection driver, particularly among participants with family in rural areas or across borders. Kizito lamented his children’s absence: *“They are in Domboshava... I wanted to be very, very close to my kids, see them growing, assisting them in one or two other things.”* Tatenda expressed loneliness from a lack of physical presence: *“Those people who I used to play with are my friends even though we went separate ways last year after high school.”* As seen in Tatenda’s case, educational and work-related dispersal leads to physical distance from trusted ties. This fragmentation erodes daily support structures. These examples illustrate how mobility and migration, while sometimes economically necessary, fragment social life.

A particularly nuanced burden reported was the **stigma of loneliness and perceived judgment**, which restricted people from acknowledging their isolation. For example, Monitor shared: *“at work during gatherings when I feel excluded.”* This internal dissonance—physical proximity without emotional closeness—is especially common in religious or formal spaces, where vulnerability may be masked. Lisa spoke of stigma related to widowhood; Ruru explained her experience of cancer related stigma experiences; Officer also head fear of stigmatization due to his HIV status.

Further, in several cases, participants expressed dissatisfaction with one-sided relationships, citing lack of reciprocity as a major barrier to sustaining connections. This sentiment echoes across respondents who feel emotionally or practically drained without sufficient returns. Mismatch in interests, age, or personality – younger participants (e.g., Tatenda, Alone) reported difficulty connecting with classmates due to “different characters” or “matured mindsets,” leading to superficial or no engagement.

Lastly, the **overburdening expectation to be the caregiver** or emotional anchor in families, especially for older women, surfaced in responses like that of Lisa: “People expect me to be grieving.” This expectation can lead to burnout and unmet needs for support.

Reviewing the interviews reveal that not all participants found social connection burdensome. Some like Officer or Wonder reported supportive families and balanced work friendships. Still, even among those with good social ties, episodic disconnection or emotional withholding was not uncommon.

Definition of social connection

Thematic Analysis across Zimbabwean 50 Participants

This section explores how the 50 participants from Zimbabwe defined social connection. The analysis follows the nested framework organized under six main clusters:

1. **Characterization of Relationships**
2. **Characterization of Interactions**
3. **Functions of Relationships**
4. **Self-States**
5. **Familiarity with the Concept**
6. **Other Contextual Variables (Religion, etc.)**

Each cluster is analyzed based on the presence and salience of codes, supported by participant quotes with pseudonyms and IDs. Frequencies are included to provide insight into the dominant conceptual clusters. The analysis highlights frequently mentioned definitions, offers direct participant quotes, and explores patterns, contradictions, and context-specific nuances.



Table 5: Code and Cluster Frequency Summary

Cluster	% of Participants	Most Common Subthemes
Characterization of Relationship	94%	General connection, Emotional bond, Belonging
Functions of Relationships	90%	Emotional support, General support, Disclosure
Characterization of Interaction	60%	Frequency of interaction, Reciprocity
Self-States	68%	Satisfaction, Not feeling left out
Other Contextual Variables	30%	Religion
Familiarity with Concept	24%	Some uncertainty or unfamiliarity

Cluster 1: Characterization of Relationship (*Table 6*)

This was the most commonly cited cluster across the dataset (used in 94% of interviews). Within this, definitions leaned heavily toward emotional connection/bond, general connection, and sense of belonging.

Subtheme	% of Interviews	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Emotional connection / bond	88%	"I would call on my best friend in South Africa.." – Kizito " "If I ever do need to talk, I open up to my sister. When I talk to her, I feel relieved" – MHA; Being close to someone who truly listens – Mutorido

Sense of belonging (to a person)	74%	"I think she values me more. Maybe I can say firstly my dad. He is someone who makes sure that in everything he plans to do, he consults me first. He says to me that he is thinking to do something so what should he do." – Pianist; "I'm in a very good and a safe place" – Lisa; "the position makes me, I feel like by most people they respect me" – Kizito "The choir members would always call to consult me almost every time. I could feel that people needed me there inasmuch as I needed them." – Pianist "I confide in my children.." – Mamoyo. "not only part of them. A very special person to them."– Wezhira; "relating well with others and understanding each other when communicating" – Filo
General connection	70%	"My mother [regularly interact]" – Monitor; "I have a lot of connections such that sometimes I think that I should prune some " – Zula ; Social connection is being able to interact freely with others nearby – Vinita; means to connect with other people who live nearby. – Mutorido "I felt so much connected to her." – Gogo; "this is the group where we have more interactions" – Tatenda
Trust	66%	"to be open to each other and to be trustworthy. There is need to speak the truth always.." – Wonder; "there is another one who gives you real advice" – Gogo Mutoko "It means trusting each other, being free to share." – Alone "should communicate and then you should help each other.". – Ruru "my very first preference." – Karoi; "You should be someone who doesn't gossip" – Damba
Emotional depth/superficiality	52%	"we start talking from there" – Mutorido; "maybe here and there, maybe just an hour or so I will spend with my few friends that I have within my community" – Young Farmer. "if what brings you together is just an occasion, it comes and passes and there's nothing else in common, you forget about the relationship.." – Ngore " they pretend to feel pity on you and you really see that pretense." – Ruru "good social connection simply means that if one faces a problem then you help that person. " – Share; "They only care about material things only." – Mike; "You just feel that this is my personal person." – Connect

Most respondents defined social connection as relationships marked by emotional closeness, mutual trust, and a sense of being seen or valued. Older participants such as Gogo Mutoko, Gogo, and Rubatsiro often emphasized consistency and emotional availability in familial or religious settings. For younger participants like Vinita and Byo1, social connection was

often tied to expressive freedom and emotional safety. For example Byo1 described connection as *"that feeling of belonging, knowing you're surrounded by people who appreciate your presence... I belong where I can say whatever, I can talk to whoever... without being judged."* Ruru articulates a nuanced distinction between proximity and psychological safety. Despite being surrounded by peers at work and in her community, she does not equate these with meaningful social connection. Her cancer diagnosis and resultant stigma deeply influence this view. She mention even at work, she had to pretend to be strong, less others think she would be using sickness as an excuse. This illustrates a contradiction between external connection (social structure) and internal disconnection (emotional bond and disclosure). Her fear of being misjudged leads to self-censorship, withholding emotional disclosure even from otherwise "friendly" networks.

Cluster 2: Characterization of Interaction (*Table 7*)

This cluster was evident in 60% of interviews and emphasized the **reciprocity, frequency, and quality of interactions**.

Subtheme	% of Interviews	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Frequency of contact and interaction	60%	"every day" – Alone; "Wife almost every day" – Officer; "we talk every day. We are well connected." – Tsumagen'a "We gather together for maybe 2 hours and teach each other." – Gogo
Reciprocity	50%	"person I can share my secrets with... also reciprocate" – Wilton; " you shouldn't look at one side ... You both respect each other and are the same" – Tatenda " need for people to be open to each other" – Wonder "They can share almost everything" – Wezhira; "what I give, I expect to get the same if I if I, if I respect a person or persons and I commit to a relationship and I realize I'm not getting same kind of respect, I would rather quit. I would rather stop investing in that relationship. " – Ngore;

Participants highlighted that regular, mutual interaction is central to connection. High-frequency interactions were often described as emotionally reassuring and indicative of a reliable relationship. Reciprocity was critical, with several participants explicitly distancing themselves from one-sided relationships. As Mr Lonely explained, *"just checking up on each other just to see how they are progressing, just to see how they are also coping with life."* These insights show that while presence and routine contact are valuable, what cements the sense of connection is shared effort and emotional balance. Presence without participation (e.g., being at the same church but not engaging) does not suffice, revealing a nuanced view where proximity does not equal connection.

Cluster 3: Functions of Relationships (*Table 8*)

This cluster appeared in 90% of interviews and covered what social connections are for. Emotional support and disclosure were most cited.

Subtheme	% of Interviews	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Emotional support	82%	"My friend and church mates did stand with me" – Wonder; "I have a good relationship with my neighbors and those around me in my community." – Gogo "my closest friend, the effort that she also puts where if I don't talk to her the whole day, she will ask, "Are you okay? Today you have been quiet. What are you up to?" – Mai D "She comforts me" – Saru; "My mum and my sisters." – Ruru; "my mother will always be on my side." – Tatenda; "Yes, my mother" – Lisa
Disclosure	74%	"Someone who assists when I have problems, someone who keeps my secrets." – Monitor; "That friend of mine in South Africa, he knew about it and if it made some efforts to try to reconcile." – Kizito "There is one friend who I know that if I tell her my

Instrumental support	68%	"I tell people to contribute food or any other resources then people will listen to this call." – Damba; "We help each other" – Rubatsiro "my children didn't have money for medications, I then got help from the Mother of Peace" – Gogo Mutoko "they do assist me when I am in need of money" – Willow; "we help each other when there are challenges" – Teacher; "I feel blessed when I am at church and if there is anything that is troubling me, I feel relieved." – Filo; "They were in pain and they were looking upon me to help them." – Mike
Informational Support	54%	"seek advice from my pastor but I won't seek advice on everything" – Mutorido; "you need also to get advice in terms of business" – Mr. Chacha; "I am the head trainer in the diocese. We hold some online training programs and once in a while we hold physical trainings." – Zula; "advices for each other." – Madyira; "They are just people who are just good especially when I need advice" – Connect; "maybe we share numbers, we share contacts and then maybe after work for the social community." – Wilton
General Support	46%	"you appreciate what your partner is doing for you in those hard times" – Damba; "I talk to my mother here and there. I can't go for 2 days without asking how she is doing." – Michalsky

Functions of social connection were primarily for emotional, disclosure and instrumental support. Participants described social relationships as crucial safety nets during personal or family crises. Emotional support was commonly referred to during definitions of social connection with respondents emphasizing comfort, companionship, and being heard. Instrumental support – particularly in the form of food, financial aid, or help during life events like funerals – also featured prominently, especially in rural communities.

Importantly, informational support was more prevalent among younger participants and those working in formal employment. While some, like Connect and Zula, found knowledge exchange to be a key aspect of connection, others like Alone and Mr. Lonely noted a lack of useful networks: *"Most people I meet don't really share anything that helps."*

Cluster 4: Self States (*Table 9*)

Used in 68% of interviews, this cluster highlights how social connection impacts internal experiences—feelings of satisfaction, inclusion, and interest in others.

Subtheme	% of Interviews	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Satisfaction	50%	"I have a good relationship with my children." – Filo; "my daughter refers to her as 'mum' so there is no difference between her and me." – Karoi "I felt so free in that conference and I felt that I was really there." – Rubatsiro "I share my problems with my family." – Mamoyo; "I could feel that thing that we wanted to do wasn't mine only but it was for everyone. It was for the whole group. So, I could feel this sense of respect even to the elders who were there." – Pianist; "; "They say to me that I am valuable to them
Not feeling left out	44%	I have different groups and some are for leaders. Some are for us you know the ward. Some are for us and the service providers." – Zula
Interest in others	42%	"I cannot share with others" – Officer "Mostly she checks on me—how I'm doing, if I'm going to work, if I have any problems." – Monitor "I show this to others and then I share with others why I am excited" – Mr. D ; "If you share common interests over time, then with a bit of investment you are both." – Ngore

Self-states were often referenced in relation to emotional outcomes of connection. A strong sense of satisfaction and belonging was linked to community or church groups, particularly for those who held leadership or integrative roles (e.g. Gogo, Tsuromagen'a, Zula). The absence of connection, conversely, led to feelings of invisibility or insignificance, especially for single participants like Mutorido or Kizito.

Cluster 5: Familiarity with Concept (*Table 10*)

This cluster was used in 24% of interviews. Participants who struggled with defining social connection were usually older, less educated, or rural-based.

Subtheme	% of Interviews	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Uncertainty with concept	20%	"I am not sure if social connection is ubuntu or maybe the collective nature of the society of the African culture" – Young Farmer; "That is not a pleasing thing. That's not good at all?" – Share. "I have never heard about this term before... I think it means that people are
Unfamiliarity with concept	10%	"I don't know what that means" – MR Chacha. "That is not a pleasing thing. That's not good at all. This causes death." – Share

While most participants grasped the concept intuitively, a minority expressed confusion or conflated it with other terms. This indicates a need for more accessible language in interventions targeting understanding of social well-being.

Cluster 6: Other Contextual Variables (*Table 11*)

This cluster appeared in 38% of interviews and revealed the strong role of religion and cultural ideas about family.

Code	% of Interviews	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Religion	36%	"at church and if there is anything that is troubling me, I feel relieved." – Filo; "My friend and church mates did stand with me" – Wonder; " whole night praying, talking, disgusting, feeling totally different. You can also have close friends whom you can just pray with" – Wezhira; Church helped recover from illness – Ruru; " I attend church prayers or sessions with others." – Mwaza; "I could feel that thing that we wanted to do wasn't mine only but it was for everyone. It was for the whole group." – Pianist; "We just meet at church and pray to God then we go home. I mostly interact with the church leadership." – Mike

Gender norms	22%	"I think that men generally, they don't. They don't talk a lot. That has been my experience. And they're just trying." – Lisa; "If it's a boy, they say, "This is the man of the house." If it's a girl, they say, "This one will be the tete (aunt) of the family." So, children are assigned their roles from birth." – MHA
Culture/Tradition	38%	"I try to see my pastor at church or other leaders within my church or even some elders within the community who are known for giving good advice. These are the people I can turn to and I tell them the problems that I am facing but this seldom happens." – Willow; "The aunt should help to talk to the wife and then she comes back to talk to me, maybe she will open up to the aunt. Then after the discussion the aunt will then come back to me with the results. That's how we manage or resolve some of these issues in our culture." – Bindura

When asked to define social connection, participants from Zimbabwe also sometimes refer to religion, gender norms and culture. Church environments often provided consistent interaction, shared values, and emotional refuge, especially for women and older participants. Cultural values around respect, hierarchy, and responsibility shaped how connection was expressed and maintained, particularly among participants from rural or conservative communities. Meanwhile, cultural gender scripts shaped both the articulation and suppression of emotional connection.

Characteristics of good (and deficient) social connection

The responses were coded across four major clusters: (1) Characterization of the Relationship, (2) Characterization of Interaction, (3) Characterization of Actors, and (4) Self States. Data is presented in tabular and narrative format, with examples and quotes from a diverse set of respondents to ensure broad representativity across the 50 interviews. Also reported is frequency of code usage to give an indication of the salience of the conceptual category.

Cluster 1: Characterization of Relationship (*Table 12*)

This was the most frequently invoked cluster (92% of interviews), with the most common codes revolving around emotional connection, emotional safety and a sense of belonging.

Subtheme	% of Interviews	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Emotional connection / bond	84%	"not only part of them. A very special person to them" – Wezhira; "my mother" – Lisa "My only close friend is my wife." – Officer;

Sense of togetherness / belonging	68%	"I could feel that thing that we wanted to do wasn't mine only but it was for everyone. It was for the whole group." – Pianist; "When people get your advice then you know that you are part of them." – Mamoyo
Love and affection	64%	"Connected! Aaaaaa . I am not sure if I am going to answer this correctly. I think, for example in my relationship with my husband. If the husband just positions me in my motherhood position i feel being attracted to him so much. I can't explain fully how I feel. You just feel that this is my personal person." – Connect
Emotional safety / non-judgement	62%	"Whatever I say in these groups will be accepted. " – Mr. D
Emotional depth	58%	"most men would propose love to me and some of them were quite serious." – Mutorido;

Participants widely characterized good social connections through affective markers: the presence and depth of emotional connection, the sense of belonging, love and emotional safety within the relationship. Across both genders and age ranges, emotional bonds were reported as a central feature meaningful social connections. The sense of belonging extended beyond the family to church groups and community choirs, reinforcing that togetherness need not be limited to kinship. Non-judgment and psychological safety were vital, especially for those coping with illness or stigma (e.g., Ruru, Lisa, Officer).

Cluster 2: Characterization of Actors (*Table 13*)

Cited in 81% of transcripts, this cluster focused on who makes good connection possible and their perceived traits.

Subtheme	% Mentioned	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Availability / Presence	72%	"My sister is always there when I need her" – Nyundwa; "family or friends who are usually there for you." – Lonely Lady
Trust	80%	"When we discuss we have to be truthful." – Zula. "There are some things that are confidential with my life, which I cannot share with these people" – Officer;
Authenticity	60%	"There are times when you think that you are connected with someone yet he/she doesn't speak the truth. There are so many things that he/she hides from you." – Zula
Shared interests / values	58%	"I am interested in farming. If I go around any mode of farming it might be animal husbandry, I feel connected, okay" – Mr. Maruta

Across individuals, perceived traits of social others ("actors") that were frequently reported to feature in good social connections include the perception of availability, trust, authenticity and having shared interests/values. Notably, actors who lacked these attributes were described as unreliable or even emotionally draining.

Cluster 3: Characterization of Interaction (*Table 14*)

This cluster was active in 76% of interviews. Reciprocal and frequent interactions were central to a majority of the descriptions of good or deficient social connections across interviews.

Subtheme	% Mentioned	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Reciprocity	70%	"it's just being a good person to them [as they do to him]," – Young Farmer; "when you are relating with someone you shouldn't look at one side of the relationship only. There should be a balance and both sides should be looked at" – Tatenda; Relationship is, is a real, is a real investment... I believe what you give in that relationship is what you get. – Ngore;
Frequency	66%	"We talk almost daily" – Officer ; "I'm communicating with her, usually it's a night thing" – Vinita; "everyday" – Tatenda; "once per week" – Willow; "We usually interact because we stay close to each other... I interact with my next-door neighbour" – Share
Effort	52%	"I can say is the one that I put an effort to maintain because we are apart so we have to make an effort to communicate" – Mai D
Conflict resolution	46%	"Inasmuch as we try to make our affairs good and perfect there are always internal issues...She will then apologize." – Michalsky ; "I can soon reconcile with my husband " – Connect

Participants consistently emphasized the need for reciprocity, frequency, conflict resolution and effort. Reciprocity was as central, when support was seen as unidirectional, it often led to fatigue or disconnection. Frequency of interactions, whether through virtual or physical means were also frequently cited. The ability to make intentional effort—"checking in" or "finding time" despite busy schedules—was also distinguishing mark of stronger bonds. Conflict resolution was also present as a critical feature, though less frequently cited. Where it existed, it was often reported to enhance the bond (e.g., Bindura, Rubatsiro)

Cluster 4: Interactional Functions (*Table 15*)

This cluster was coded in 74% of cases. Functional support was most often discussed around emotional support, general support or the notion of someone “jut being there” as well as instrumental support.

Subtheme	% Mentioned	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Emotional Support	70%	"I have my own sister who is quite close to me. She is a close relative and she is the one I talk to when I have some issues in my heart." – Share; "
General Support/ "Just Being There"	68%	"From my circle, I think also financial support " – Vinita; "we support the 'Vabvuvi' through helping a member who is sick or supporting a member who has lost a loved one or has died." – Zula
Instrumental Support	62%	"She also cooked for these children and left after they ate. She would bring some relish from her home so that those children would have relish to eat with the sadza." – Gogo; "we had a cousin brother who was sick so we wanted to contribute some money so that we would take him to the hospital. " – Karoi

Cluster 5: Self States (*Table 16*)

Noted in 64% of interviews, this cluster included feelings of being valued, understood, or respected as the outcomes of good connections.

Subtheme	% Mentioned	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Feeling valued	60%	"wants to hear your opinion, it means the people are taking note of you as a family member and that member is imperative or essential." – Michalsky
Accepted	58%	"Wherever we are with my peers they accept me and we are quite close to each other." – Damba
Satisfaction and other Positive Emotions	56%	"I felt so much connected to her. Even though I was in pain, I felt that I was free." – Gogo
Feeling understood	48%	"I feel understood by the people I know... They understand me because they know me. They understand that this is who I am." – Rubatsiro

Individuals from Zimbabwe also often refer to various self-states when referring to characteristics of a good social connection. This include feelings of being valued, being accepted, feeling satisfied (and various other positive affect, such as happiness, contentment or peace) as well as feeling understood. Positive social connection was affirmed by participants not merely when help was offered, but when their identity, experiences, and presence were acknowledged as meaningful.

Cluster 6: Contextual Variables (*Table 17*)

This cluster was sparsely coded (18%), but when it occurred, it usually involved financial interdependence or religious duty.

Subtheme	% Mentioned	Illustrative Respondents and Quotes
Finances	14%	"you're supposed to have money for transport, transport fares, you're supposed to have money for buying gifts. But if you are unemployed, you don't have that money. So you find yourself just giving excuses. Even if you really wanted to go and attend that event." – Lonely Lady
Religion	12%	"At church, we support each other because it is expected" – Mwaza (ZW_SL_60_Single_Female_Hre_Gift).

While not central to most definitions, contextual factors like economic hardship often shaped how relationships are situated or sustained. For instance, some participants observed that relationships falter when financial means are limited.

What are the facilitators and barriers to initiation of social connection among the target population?

Ease or Difficulty in Initiating Social Connections (*Tables 17, 18*)

Ease of Initiating	Frequency
Difficult	33 participants
Easy	17 participants

Most participants (66%) find it difficult to initiate social connections. This suggests widespread social hesitancy, possibly tied to stigma, trust issues, or conflict.

Facilitators	Barriers

Key Facilitators of Social Connection Initiation (*Table 19*)

Facilitator	Count
Church	13
Shared work / chores	8
Mutual goals / interests	7
Community involvement	5
Events (e.g., birthdays)	4
Trust / familiarity	4
Kindness / openness	3

These results show that shared environments, especially faith-based and work-based settings, offer safe and structured openings for connection. Across participants, shared values, institutional settings, and trusted introductions emerged as key facilitators of social connection initiation. Churches, schools, workplaces, and community gatherings offered safe, structured spaces for meeting new people. For example: Wonder stated, “church services that are done here in the rural areas promote connections amongst people.” Pianist credited his music role for helping him meet fellow

youth: *“So, the moment I started going to this local church, I started helping them and they started believing in me and we worked together and managed to achieve what we wanted to achieve.”*

Where these facilitators were present — especially religious networks, referrals through trusted figures, and shared activities — new bonds emerged more easily.

Key Barriers of Social Connection Initiation (*Table 20*)

Barrier	Count
Mistrust / distrust	9 (combined)
Fear of judgment / gossip	6
Betrayal / past trauma	3
Poverty / class divide	3
Social pride / stigma	2
Distance / physical separation	1

However, fear of judgment, past traumas, economic shame, and mismatch of values posed strong barriers to forming new relationships. For example **Mutorido** said, people see her alone and assume she is strange, It’s hard for her to remarry. Having own children caused mismatched value: *“The main reason why I would turn down their proposals was because they didn’t want to stay with my children. One guy who proposed love to me told me that he wanted my children to stay with his father so that their father would take care of them. I didn’t want him to tell me what to do about my children. I am the one who was supposed to explain to him about why I was the one taking care of these kids.”*

Alone revealed that “economic status” prevented him from reaching out: *“It’s difficult, yes, especially when you are trying to make it so for the people that is not of your class,”* Lisa shared that after being betrayed by friends, she now wait for others to come to her first. After divorce most friend unfriended her, *“the couples that were your friends, they really don’t want to have you.”*

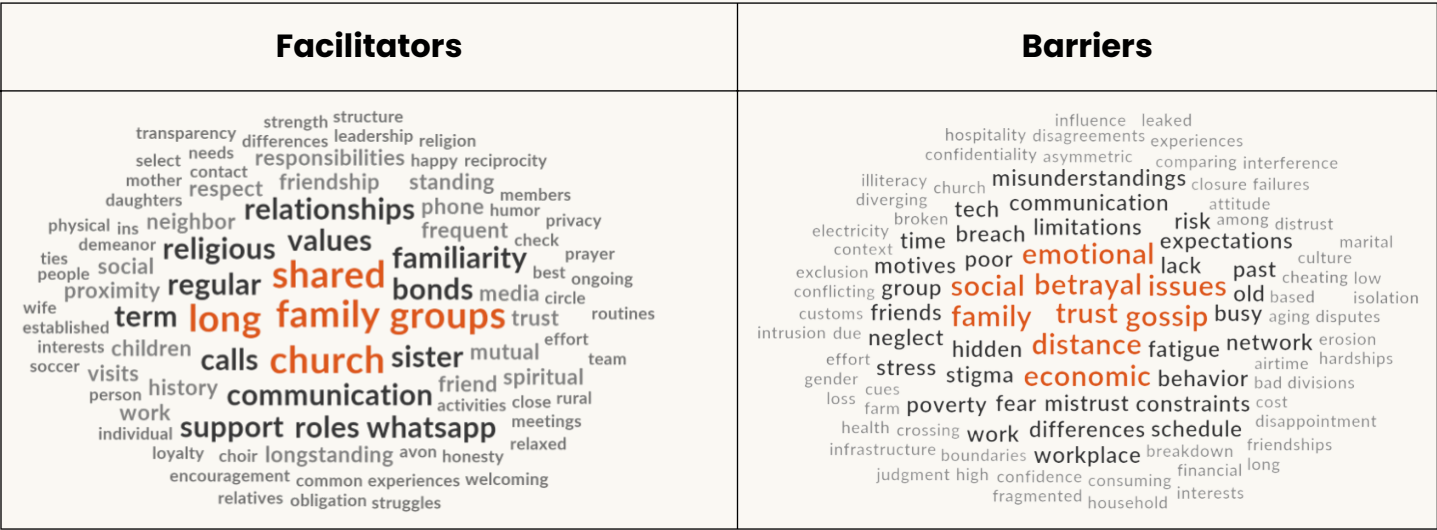
These cases reveal that trust, perceived social value, and emotional readiness are central to overcoming initiation barriers. Trauma, stigma, and fear of manipulation heavily inhibit openness to new connections. These reflect that fear of being misunderstood, judged, or harmed emotionally undermines willingness to initiate relationships. Socioeconomic hardship also plays a critical role in exclusion.

What are the facilitators and barriers to maintenance of social connection among the target population?

Ease or Difficulty in Maintaining Social Connections (Table 21, 22)

Ease of Maintenance	Count
Difficult	30
Easy	12
Moderate	8

The majority (60%) of respondents find it difficult to maintain social connections, often citing emotional strain, distance, or past interpersonal issues.



Key Facilitators of Social Connection Maintenance (Table 23)

Facilitator	Count
Family ties	7
Religious values / spiritual roles	6
Regular communication	5
Responsibility / reliability	4
Close friends / select relatives	4
Truthfulness and emotional safety	3

Maintenance was most successful where there was consistent communication, reciprocal care, and emotional safety. Acts of regular checking in, shared responsibilities, or simply “being there” were key. For example, Gogo Mutoko noted, *“When it comes to my neighbor, that girl who just came to my house is right in my heart. I treat her as my own daughter. We are good neighbors and she is open to me and in turn, I am open to her and we communicate well.”* in contrast, Tatenda reports, *“For you to connect, both of you should be doing something in life. Sometimes in the area where you stay there is no one to connect with. There are just school*

kids and people who are way older than you. So, there is a big difference between you and those other people.”

For Zimbabwe participants, emotional reciprocity and practical reliability were the glue of maintained relationships. These facilitators suggest that continuity, commitment, and value alignment (especially through family and faith) play a major role in sustaining social relationships.

Key Barriers to Maintenance of Social Connection (*Table 24*)

Barrier	Count
Gossip	6
Distance	3
Mistrust	3
Economic stress	2
Emotional fatigue	2
Neglect / miscommunication	2

Connections were often strained or dissolved due to lack of time, changing interests, emotional fatigue, or third-party interference. Several respondents discussed relational decay due to mismatched effort. For example Kizito commented that his current relationship suffered from external interference: *“a lot of influence from... home. They would come and take it any chance they want”*. In Ruru’s case, *“just thought that maybe my situation was too difficult for other people.”* Ngore admitted that work stress prevents him from keeping up with even good friends.

These narratives illustrate how social friction, mobility constraints, and economic burdens can erode even previously strong social ties. Gossip and mistrust remain key threats to long-term relational health.

What are culture specific aspects of social connection among the target population?

Ubuntu and Collective Identity. A core cultural theme that shapes social connection in Zimbabwe is the African philosophy of Ubuntu—*"I am because we are."* Participants emphasize that identity and well-being are inextricably linked to the group. Social connection in Zimbabwe is grounded in deeply held norms of moral responsibility, reciprocity, and service to the community. These obligations are often non-negotiable, reflecting Ubuntu values. Belonging and connection are shaped by moral expectations to be present, assist, or show solidarity in communal life.

As Mai D illustrates, *"I think eh because we are collective with culture being African, uhm we more often than not define ourselves by the people that value us, the people that are around us. If you know Ubuntu, I am because you are."*

Rural Norms of Generosity and Mutual Aid. In rural communities, cultural expectations promote resource-sharing, informal labor exchange, and ritual-based togetherness. Wonder spoke of how they help each other in their fields and take turns to herd cattle. Jana/Dzoro is one of the traditions used to rotate or sharing the task of herding cattle in a village. Xolisani highlighted norms of greeting strangers and cooperative work systems: *"In the rural areas... you greet every person... residents work together to help each other... brew some mahewu and invite a number of people to*

complete the task.” Nhimbe is the traditional name given to this process of inviting community members to assist in one’s work. In addition, there is also Shared material culture; resource sharing is a deeply embedded cultural norm. Even material goods like groceries are shared as a sign of community solidarity: Xolisani again reflects: *“When a certain household receives some groceries from their relatives, that household will give a certain portion of the grocery to their neighbor... That’s how we share here in the rural areas.”* This suggests that material generosity is culturally coded as a form of belonging and relational obligation.

Birth and Kinship Rituals. Customary practices surrounding childbirth and maternal support were identified as critical to cultural belonging. Mai D: *“If a woman gives birth, she should go back to her parents... that should make her feel connected, supported through that new experience.”* Such practices foster intergenerational solidarity and serve as cultural anchors for social support. This is also much seen in the general extended family involvement in one’s social life. The extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins, clan elders) is central to one’s sense of belonging. Social decisions—especially around marriage, dispute resolution, and caregiving—often involve wider kin.

Totems (Mitupo) as Cultural Anchors of Social Connection. Totems, or *mitupo*, emerged across several interviews as deeply embedded cultural markers shaping kinship, relational etiquette, and broader community belonging among Zimbabwean participants. While the influence of totems is waning in certain urbanized and Christianized spaces, several participants highlighted their ongoing relevance. Gogo offers the most elaborate reflection on the social salience of totems:

“Totems have something to do with social connection. Some people value their totem and if they meet someone who has the same totem then they consider that person as their own close relative... they say that someone who is from the

Maphosa clan is not supposed to marry someone from the same clan. The Maphosa clan do not eat a porcupine."

Gogo further elaborates on how this extends beyond mere identification to structured social obligations. For instance, someone who shares a totem with the bride can stand in for absent relatives at traditional ceremonies, effectively legitimizing surrogate kinship roles.

"If a certain lady got married to a man who shares my totem, she will address me as her aunt... Then the actual aunt will continue from there... because she knows that the aunt who lives close by belongs to their totem."

Totem (mutupo) references are a deeply embedded form of identity—often defining marriage boundaries, clan obligations, and respect rituals. Totems function as ancestral social networks, instantly linking people across time and space. They are a form of inherited belonging. Totemic norms not only shape social bonds but act as informal regulatory systems on moral and marital codes.

While some participants uphold totems, others show evidence of their erosion or complication in contemporary Zimbabwe. Youth disinterest, urban anonymity, and religious shifts (especially Pentecostal Christianity) are cited as drivers of cultural erosion. Yet for elder participants like Gogo and Tsuromagen'a, *mutupo* still encapsulates core values of identity, respect, and social cohesion.

Gender Roles. Participants emphasized gendered expectations, especially around marriage, emotional expression, and domestic roles. Gender norms define who should initiate, who should serve, and who should endure. Women are often expected to be resilient caretakers, while men are expected to be silent providers. As Madyira narrates, *"Women have more*

things that limit them in their day to day living such that the eyes of the community will be on them. The community will be watching to see how they are behaving now that the husband is away... I think women are more vulnerable than men."

These roles deeply influence how social connection is formed and maintained, particularly within marital or intergenerational spaces. Gender roles shape emotional expression, labor expectations, and even patterns of connection (e.g., who speaks, who listens, who appears in public rituals).

Religious Expectations. Faith-based values were described as both moral guidelines and social anchors that foster belonging. Religion provides a structured space for connection, especially in rural and peri-urban areas. As Gogo narrates *"When I am in church, I feel a sense of connection with those who will be leading the church program and others who I fellowship with at church. I really feel in my blood that we have surrendered all and everything is going on well. Life is going on well whilst I am here in church. I really can't explain it but, in my blood, I feel a strong connection when I am praising God in church together with my relatives and my friends."*

Cultural Tensions: Urbanization, Modernity, and Erosion of Tradition. Several respondents described urban alienation, the decline of kin-based rituals, and the rise of social media as diluting Zimbabwean cultural norms: Ngore noted that Zimbabweans *"They bring you closer when they stage to benefit"* while Mai D observed: *"social media is affecting the one-on-one relationships where now a lot of people focus on the social media relationships more than the immediate physical relationships that they have and should have with their immediate family. You see someone spending*

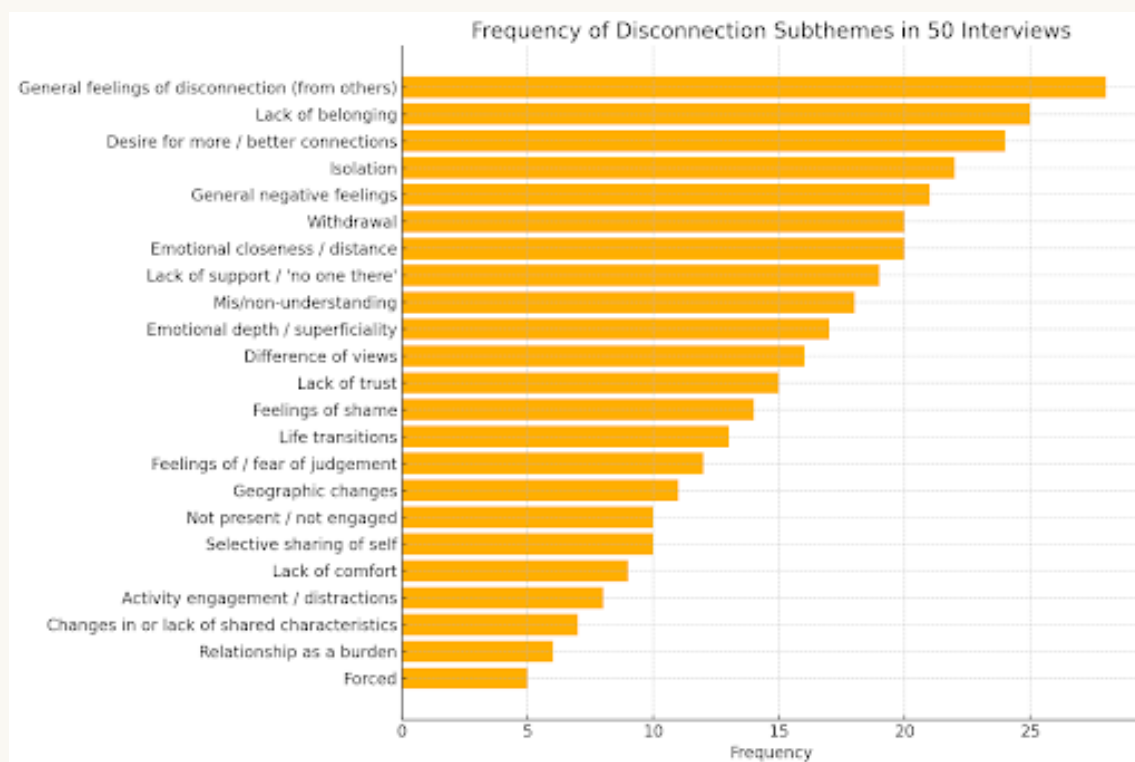
time on Facebook with someone else and yet he doesn't talk to his wife and children. He doesn't have time for his own children. The physical immediate connections are dying and people are busy sustaining or grooming social media relationships or connections with strangers sometimes." Thus, participants lamented a shift from physical proximity and familial duty to digital connection and individualism.

Experiences of disconnection

Theme 4: Experiences of Disconnection (Figure 1)

This theme explores the **lived experiences of disconnection** among participants, including both emotional and structural disconnection. The analysis is grounded in three major clusters of subthemes:

1. **Self States**
2. **Characterization of Actors**
3. **Characterization of the Relationship**



Each subsection below highlights key codes, their frequency of appearance, and is supported by multiple quotes from participants across diverse demographics.

1. Self States (*Table 25*)

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
General feelings of disconnection	28	"Sometimes I feel like I'm with people but not really with them." – Alone
		"I felt disconnected from everyone around me.." – Lisa
		"For the first month it was really difficult and I felt so, so disconnected" – Byol
		"I really, really felt very much disconnected from the community." – Mr Lonely
		"I feel left out, like when others gather for tea breaks or chat and I'm alone." – Monitor
Lack of belonging	25	"now half of those people, suddenly they, they are insecure about having you around" – Lisa
		"I start to really look at it like I am an outsider.." – Mai D
Desire for more / better connections	24	"my children are all grown up and most of the time they are at work so I may skip a day or 2 without talking to all of them. " – Mamoyo
		"I just need one true friend." – Alone
Isolation	22	After retirement, social connection reduced – Mamoyo
		I am thankful for this small radio that I was given as a present. – Tsumagen'a
		"I was left all alone and he took all our children... I think it was that time because by that time I was living with a lot of children from the extended family. He took all of them and I was left alone.." – Mwaza
		" she took away the children... I'm missing them a lot." – Kizito
		"There is no support that I get. I support myself as an individual.." – Mike

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
General negative feelings	21	"Sometimes I would be happy but then I would think that I am just alone. In most days I would think that way and on a daily basis." – Willow
Mis/non-understanding	19	"The true church existed some time back. Nowadays if you share certain stuff with someone then next Sunday your issues are likely to be the day's sermon and so, it's difficult nowadays.." – Filo
		"Even those close to me say 'you're strong' – but I'm not." – Nyundwa
Activity engagement / distractions	18	"I would avoid loneliness through reading novels.." – Saru
Withdrawal	17	"last time I was invited at some social gathering for women but then you would see that the people there were pinching each other and pointing at me. Probably they were saying to each, "Did you see her?" This didn't go well with me and so I had to excuse myself. I waited there until that function came to an end but I was no longer comfortable to remain at that gathering because it was like all eyes on me. People have certain expectations in someone's situation and sometimes they see what is there and sometimes they see what is not there." – Ruru
		"You will be alone and will be happy and reading and singing." – Mr. D
Life transitions	15	"When you retire from work to go and stay home it's a change of life. You leave that public life and go to your life that you are not used to." – Zula
Selective sharing of self	15	"I don't open up unless I'm sure it's safe." – Connect
Feelings of shame	14	"family members didn't knew about it after maybe after 6-6 years...Were just think that things are normal." – Kizito
Lack of trust	13	"There are times when you think that you are connected with someone yet he/she doesn't speak the truth." – Zula
		"During marriage issues... due to infidelity." – Connect
Fear of judgment	12	"People have certain expectations in someone's situation and sometimes they see what is there and sometimes they see what is not there." – Ruru
Geographic changes	11	"I think that was 2008 or 2009 at a time when I moved out of town and I stayed faraway from my family. Back then people would leave their jobs and tried to do various things in order to survive because things were so bad. So, I left family in town and went outside to try some luck so that we could earn a living. I felt so lonely even though I had people around me" – Madyira
Not present / not engaged	10	"I'm there physically, but my mind is far." – Tatenda

2. Characterization of Actors (*Table 26*)

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
Lack of support / 'no one there'	20	"I felt sick and I thought I felt disconnected because. I was expecting to see people helping me, coming to see me, coming to encourage me, but I felt lonely so that I felt disconnected because no one seemed caring for me. ." – Officer
Difference of views	12	"So actually he did fight over [Baby mamas]" – Lonely Lady
Changes in/lack of shared characteristics	11	"We no longer have that kind of friendship that we used to have with my friends." – Karoi

3. Characterization of the Relationship (*Table 27*)

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
Emotional depth / superficiality	18	"On her side there was a time she mentioned that she was not serious about us.." – Tatenda
Emotional closeness / distance	17	"... people were no longer coming to my house and even my relatives. Before that most people came to my home. When I stopped going to work my sisters stopped calling me and some of my good friends disconnected from me." – Mutorido
Relationship as a burden	6	"I didn't get married again because this was stressing me and even up to now, I am still stressed about what happened." – Mutorido
Forced	5	Mai D shared living with husband, but their relationship is now a formality. There's no closeness, "[disconnection] always with my husband. Ah there is very little connection there. We live together but the connection is very minimal."

How do the target population define disconnection?

This thematic analysis explores how disconnection is defined by participants across the 50 transcripts in Zimbabwe. Participants described disconnection not only as a lack of relationships but also as an emotional and psychological state with deep consequences for identity, trust, and wellbeing. Responses were clustered across four key domains: self-states, characterization of the relationship or group, interactional patterns, and other descriptors. Frequencies and selected quotes are included for each subtheme.

Self States (*Table 28*)

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
General disconnection / inability to connect	29	"Disconnection to me means not being part of what you thought you were part of." – Xolisani
General negative affect	25	"there was a time I went to the Arab world. It was difficult there and so I felt a little bit uneasy there." – Zula
Feeling lonely	24	"Feeling isolated, left out of social moments." – Monitor
Lack of belonging	22	"I always feel like I don't fit in." – Alone
Isolation / sense of being alone	21	"you can be with people and still feel lonely." – Byo1
Withdrawal	19	"During the early days when I was diagnosed with cancer I felt so disconnected. A lot of people I was talking to were no longer talking to me.." – Ruru
Mis/non-understanding	18	"sometimes we may end up having some misunderstandings" – Lonely Lady

Not loved	14	"We separated, a sort of divorce." – Kizito
Feelings of failure / self-worth	13	"I was feeling very useless and lonely and so forth...I was then thinking that I am a failed person." – Mike
Feeling unseen	12	"Sometimes you go where there are people and you listen to what they are saying and then when you want to say something they will just cut you off and they decide to talk about other issues. They will even tell you that they were about to do other things." – Michalsky
Feeling not present / disengaged	11	"Yes, you will be with other people but you feel lonely. Other people will be concentrating on their business and none of them is talking to you." – Rubatsiro
Feeling like a burden	10	"They will remain your burden. If you don't take him/her to school then he/she might grow up in poverty and if he/she then comes to your home you won't chase him/her away since the burden will be yours.." – Mamoyo
Lack of authenticity	9	"I have to pretend to be okay." – Connect
Not liked	8	"we are no longer very close." – Karoi

Characterization of the Relationship / Group (*Table 29*)

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
Emotional closeness / distance	20	"We are quite close. When one of us falls in a problem, we help each other." – Rubatsiro
Not disclosing / sharing	17	"people will always judge me so sometimes I wouldn't want to but if it was very possible, I would share my problems with new people who don't know anything about me then I will just share with them. Those who know have some information about me and they will judge me with that information but if I could meet new people, they will just say we will start from here." – Ruru
Not socializing	15	"I want to be in between. Like at times. I. What happens is if, if. If I go into, or maybe if I want to involve myself in other gatherings, sometimes I get overwhelmed or totally irritated.." – Byol
Group cohesion	14	"I also have a church event but they have just attended" – Wezhira
Conflicts / harmony	13	"You will end up fighting." – Mr. Maro

Experiences of loneliness

This theme captures the range of emotional, cognitive, and social experiences that participants identified as part of their loneliness. The analysis is organized across three major clusters:

Self States (*Table 30*)

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
Isolation / sense of being alone	26	"I think I feel disconnected on a daily basis because I sleep alone so every night I long for someone to sleep with" – Willow "I lost my marriage and at one point I thought I was with my cousins and their husbands. And you know how it is when you are around people who are married or who are couples and you are not a couple. You are just by yourself and sometimes there are a lot of things that they share as couples and you don't have anyone." – Xolisani
General negative thoughts / beliefs	22	"the church usually doesn't give leadership positions to those women who are single" – Mutorido "very difficult situation for quite a long time and it was now difficult to accept this kind of life." – Enia
Withdrawal	18	"I disconnected from the social media platforms." – Damba "Sometimes I sleep. The whole day I sleep. My mum will then come to check on me because my bedroom door will be closed the whole day. She will ask, "Are you okay?" – Xolisani

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
Anxiety and Depression	14	"When I lost her, I thought I was falling into depression." – MHA "Even my sleep disappeared." – Mr Chacha

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (*Table 31*)

Subtheme	Frequency	Illustrative Quotes
Unavailability of friends / partners	20	"I lost her." – MHA "Sometimes you want to go for horse riding and you would need someone to help you ride the horse and there is no one to do that" – Xolisani "The person I used to date cheated on me." – Young Farmer
Lack of support / No one there	19	"I am not getting any support from my relatives. I am supporting my children on my own" – Filo "I would have expected them as women to support me... but they don't." – Mai D "I had encountered a certain challenge and no one helped me." – Mr D
Lack of reciprocity / attention	13	"my young brothers don't value me because they now have their own families." – Mike "Let me say that there is a breakdown of communication. They don't call me and they don't visit me at home. If I ask them how they are with their families, they will just say they are fine and that's the end of the conversation" – Wonder "If you greet that person, he/she doesn't respond." – Share
Departure of loved ones	11	"when he died life became so hard for me ." – Gogo Mutoko

Definition of loneliness

For Zimbabweans, loneliness is fundamentally the absence of someone to share with. Across nearly every definition in the sample, the core complaint is not being alone in a physical sense, but lacking a person to confide in, talk to, or turn to in moments of difficulty. The word "share" recurs with striking consistency — sharing problems, ideas, small things, deepest concerns — suggesting that for this population, the basic relational unit is not companionship or proximity but communicative intimacy.

A second, distinct layer is disconnection despite presence. Several participants explicitly articulate that loneliness is not about solitude: it is feeling isolated even when surrounded by people, having emotional needs unmet even when others are physically there, being around people but unable to fully connect. This is a meaningful distinction — it locates loneliness inside the quality of relationships, not their quantity.

A smaller cluster defines loneliness through its functional and cognitive consequences: the brain becoming passive, life lacking satisfaction, psychological pain and stress, potential mental breakdown. Here loneliness is framed as something that happens to the person — a deteriorating state rather than a deficit.

Finally, several participants define loneliness causally rather than descriptively: poverty and not fitting in, migration and death, betrayal and broken trust, displacement into unfamiliar environments, the absence of a partner.

Why is loneliness difficult to be spoken about among the target population?

Barriers to Speaking About Loneliness (Table 32): A striking finding from the dataset was the widespread difficulty participants reported in speaking about their loneliness—both in general terms and at a personal level. Social norms, emotional safety, and past experiences strongly influenced whether individuals could disclose their feelings of disconnection.

Theme	Freq	Description
Fear of Gossip or Judgment	34	Participants feared being ridiculed, misunderstood, or becoming a topic of gossip.
Lack of Trust / Trusted Listeners	17	Many lacked confidants or felt previously betrayed after sharing personal struggles.
Stigma and Silence	13	Loneliness was perceived as shameful or taboo, linked with weakness or madness.
Fear of Burdening Others	9	Some chose silence to avoid 'bothering' others with their issues.
Cultural Norms and Gender Expectations	7	Men, in particular, felt pressured to appear strong or stoic.

The majority of participants expressed that loneliness was difficult to disclose due to fear of gossip or being misjudged—particularly in tightly knit communities. These social dynamics were compounded by cultural pressures to appear emotionally resilient, especially among men.

Personal experiences further complicated expression. Several participants described how past attempts to speak out were met with minimization, unwanted advice, or even betrayal. As a result, they opted for silence or confided in only one trusted person. This silence deepens emotional isolation, creating a self-reinforcing loop.

Stigma surrounding emotional struggles—particularly mental health—persisted across age, gender, and locality. This highlights the need for safe communication spaces, trust-building, and public education that normalizes emotional vulnerability.

What are culture specific aspects of loneliness among the target population?

Cultural Specific Dimensions of Loneliness (Table 33): Across nearly all provinces, participants emphasized that loneliness in Zimbabwe is not merely a private experience but is shaped, amplified, or masked by cultural beliefs, norms, and community expectations. These cultural influences range from stigmas surrounding emotional vulnerability to shifts in social rituals, family systems, and expectations around masculinity and femininity.

Cultural Factor	Frequency	Description
Stigma Around Emotional Expression	14	Fear of being seen as weak, dramatic, or attention-seeking inhibited open sharing of loneliness.
Erosion of Communal Structures	12	Decline of practices like <i>nhimbe</i> , <i>kurova guva</i> , or burial societies removed protective communal buffers.
Spiritual and Traditional Beliefs	10	Belief in charms, totems, or prophets shaped emotional behavior and influenced whom one could trust.
Impact of Migration and Urbanization	10	Shifting family patterns and economic survival strategies eroded support networks and visibility.
Gendered Cultural Norms	9	Men expected to remain stoic, women judged harshly for emotional openness or post-divorce independence.
Customs Reinforcing Isolation	7	Practices like polygamy, witchcraft suspicion, or rigid patriarchy created exclusion and mistrust.



Notes

P1_ZW_ML_60_Any_Female_ME_Gift_Gogo Mutoko
P2_ZW_SL_35-60_Single_Female_ME_Gift_Filo
P3_ZW_NL_35-60_Partnered_Female_ME_Gift_Enia
P4_ZW_ML_35-60_Partnered_Female_ME_Gift_2_Connect
P5_ZW_SL_35-60_partnered_Male_ME_Gift_Wonder
P6_ZW_ML_35-60_Partnered_Female_ME_Gift_Saru
P7_ZW_NL_60_Any_Female_Hre_Gift_Gogo
P8_ZW_NL_18-35_Single_Male_Hre_Gift_Alone
P9_ZW_NL_60_Partnered_Male_Hre_Gift_Zula
P10_ZW_NL_35-60_Partnered_Female_Hre_Gift_Wezhira
P11_ZW_NL_18-35_Single_Female_Hre_Gift_Ruru
P12_ZW_ML_35-60_Partnered_Male_Hre_Gift_Ngore
P13_ZW_SL_60_Single_Female_Hre_Gift_Mwaza
P14_ZW_ML_35-60_Partnered_Male_Hre_Gift_2_Madyira
P15_ZW_NL_18-35_Female_Byo_Gift_Byo1
P16_ZW_SL_18-35_Female_Byo_Gift_Lonely Lady
P17_ZW_SL_18-35_Any_Female_Man_Gift_Monitor
P18_ZW_SL_60_Any_Male_Man_Gift_Mike
P19_ZW_SL_35-60_Single_Male_Man_Gift_MHA
P20_ZW_NL_35-60_Single_Male_Man_Gift_Kizito
P21_ZW_NL_60_Any_Female_Man_Gift_Tsuromagen'a
P22_ZW_ML_18-35_Any_Male_Man_Gift_Pianist
P23_ZW_ML_35-60_Single_Female_Man_Gift_Mutorido
P24_ZW_SL_18-35_Single_Male_MW_Gift_Tatenda
P25_ZW_NL_35-60_Partnered_Female_MW_Gift_Nyundwa
P26_ZW_ML_35-60_Partnered_Female_MW_Gift_Teacher
P27_ZW_NL_60_Partnered_Female_MW_Gift_Mamoyo
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P37_ZW_MML_35-60_Single_Male_Masv_Manu_Young Farmer
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P40_ZW_SL_35-60_Single_Female_MS_Gift_Lisa
P41_ZW_NL_18-35_Any_Male_MS_Gift_Mr Lonely



Notes

P42_ZW_MML_60_Any_Male_MID_MANU_Mr Chacha
P43_ZW_SL_60_Any_Female_MID_Manu_MID1
P44_ZW_NL_35-60_Single_Female_MID_Manu_Xolisani
P45_ZW_MML_60_Any_Male_MID_MANU_Mr. Maruta
P46_ZW_NL_35-60_Partnered_Male_MID_Manu_Mr Mayere
P47_ZW_SL_18-35_Any_Male_MID_MANU_Mr. Maro
P48_ZW_NL_35-60_Partnered_Male_MN_Gift_Officer
P49_ZW_NL_18-35_Any_Male_MN_Gift_Wilton
P50_ZW_NL_35-60_Partnered_Female_MN_Gift_Success



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*Multi-Country Investigation into the Conceptualization and
Experience of Social Connection, Social Isolation, and Loneliness*