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# Precarious life: Zimbabwean undocumented salon workers in Johannesburg

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# PRECARIOUS LIFE: ZIMBABWEAN UNDOCUMENTED SALON WORKERS IN JOHANNESBURG

Masters Research Report

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**DECLARATION**

I, BUKIWE ALIYAH TAMBULU, hereby declare that “PRECARIOUS LIFE: UNDOCUMENTED SALON WORKERS FROM ZIMBABWE IN JOHANNESBURG”, is my original work in design and execution, and that all sources cited have been duly acknowledged.

_____ _____

(Signature) (Date)

## ABSTRACT

Large numbers of Zimbabweans continue to flock to South Africa for various reasons, some looking for work and others for educational purposes. It is no secret that some of the push factors are poverty, environmental catastrophe, economic decline and political instability hence there is a crisis of influx of migrants, some “illegal” from Zimbabwe. However, the transition from Zimbabwe is not smooth sailing for everyone, some have papers that allow them to cross borders legally and others do not (Pinedo 2009). Subsequently, Chaudry and Hlatshwayo (2013) argue that undocumented immigrants have the most precarious of jobs with lowest wages and they are often in the informal economy or as casual labour in the informal sector. Thus, this study examines the experiences of undocumented migrant hairdressers, working in informal salon operations in Braamfontein. The study looks at the experiences of these migrant workers through the lens of precarity as a political concept. The claim is that: employment is precarious in South Africa, and more precarious for undocumented migrants whose ‘illegal’ status works as a disciplinary mechanisms. Literature argues that, undocumented migrants are mostly absorbed by the informal economy, thus this study looked at the relationship between migrant status and precarity. But not only looking at precarity as induced by work, but also as politically induced.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

To God be the glory! For in Him I move and I have my being-I am His offspring.

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof Bridget Kenny, your support and guidance is highly appreciated. Thank you for taking me under your wing since 2016 and thank you for believing in me.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIM – Braamfontein Improvement Management

CID – City Improvement District

CJP – City Johannesburg Partners

COJ – City of Johannesburg

ILO – International Labour Organisation

JMPD – Johannesburg Metro Police Department

RID – Retail Improvement District

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**DECLARATION** ..... i
**ABSTRACT** ..... ii
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** ..... iii
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS** ..... iv
**TABLE OF CONTENTS** ..... v
**CHAPTER ONE: 1.1 Conceptualisation of the Study** ..... 1
**1.2 Statement of the problem** ..... 4
**1.3 Rationale** ..... 6
**CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW** ..... 8
**2. Debates on Migration and Precarity** ..... 8
**2.1 The Rise of Precarious work** ..... 8
**2.2 The Precariat** ..... 9
**2.3 Precarity as Political Concept** ..... 11
**2.4 Precarity of place** ..... 14
**2.5 Salon Service Work: A Precarious Space?** ..... 14
**2.6 How Migration and Migrant Status Facilitates Experiences of Precarity** ..... 16
**2.7 Critique of Precarity and a call to Reconceptualise Precarity** ..... 18
**2.8 Migrants in the Informal Economy** ..... 20
**2.9 Dealing with Precariousness: Church Networks** ..... 22
**2.10 Conclusion** ..... 22
**CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK** ..... 23
**3.1 Research Design** ..... 23
**3.1.1 Reflexivity** ..... 24
**3.2 Access to the salon workers in Braamfontein** ..... 25
**3.3 Sample Size** ..... 26
**3.4 Data Collection Methods** ..... 27
**3.4.1 Interview Schedule** ..... 28
**Chapter 4: Precarious Lives: Nexus of Informal Economies, Migrant Status and Experiences of Precarity** ..... 32
**4.1 Overview of the Findings** ..... 32

**4.2 Unpacking the Informal Trading Policy of the city of Johannesburg** ..... 33

**4.2.1. Inclusive Policy for Informal Trading in Johannesburg: What about Braamfontein?** ..... 34

**4.3. Braamfontein as a Space and the Experiences of Informality** ..... 38

**4.3.1 The Concept of Space** ..... 39

**4.3.2 Braamfontein Space** ..... 40

**4.3.3 How is Braamfontein Space Restrictive for the Salon Workers?** ..... 42

**4.4 Conclusion** ..... 44

**CHAPTER 5: Forms of Hair Salon Operations and Experiences in the work Place** ..... 46

**5.1 Description of Hair Salons** ..... 46

**5.2 Working Conditions: Precarious Work?** ..... 53

**5.2.1 Long Hours and Low Wages** ..... 53

**5.2.2 Work Opportunities** ..... 56

**5.3 The Gig Economy and Social Media** ..... 57

**5.4 The relationship between migrant status and precarity** ..... 61

**5.4.1Crisis of Representation** ..... 67

**5.5 Emotional Labour** ..... 69

**5.6 Key arguments: Perceptions of the Informal Economy and Precarity** ..... 73

**5.7 Concluding Remarks** ..... 77

**CHAPTER 6: Precarity as a Political Concept** ..... 79

**6.1 Normative Violence Experiences of Xenophobia** ..... 79

**6.2. The Role of Church: Social Exclusion, Practises of Helping and Seeking and Forming Bonds** ..... 83

**6.3 Conclusion** ..... 89

**CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION** ..... 90

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** ..... 92

**APPENDIX A- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS** ..... 98

**APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET** ..... 101

**APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM INTERVIEW** ..... 103

## CHAPTER ONE: 1.1 Conceptualisation of the Study

Migrant labour has been a definitive feature of Southern Africa and its economy. Colonialism and apartheid are the manifestations of a capitalist system which perpetuated inequality, dispossession and poverty, which have pushed people to migrate in search of a better living. Capitalism is one of the biggest contributors to the migration of people and a principal influence to exploitative labour policies. Moreover, the rise of diamond and gold mining was the critical defining moment in the development of the South African capitalism. Mining required a large labour force, it generalised the wage labour system of exploitation, drawing in large numbers of labourers from the neighbouring countries (Legassick 1974). Furthermore, cheap labour in the South African context was best acquired through the system of migrant labour and that key elements of segregation policy reinforced this arrangement (Wolpe 1972 see also Beinart & Dubow 1995:8).

The migration of people from Zimbabwe to South Africa has been a matter of survival for both the migrant and those who are left behind. The consequence of migrating has been that; families have been compelled to send family members abroad to safeguard basic survival, escape brutal attacks or meet aspirations for accumulation and education (Bloch 2010). Pinedo et al (2009) further state that large numbers of Zimbabweans continue to flock to South Africa for various reasons; some Zimbabweans are looking for work and others move for educational purposes. Some of the push factors for the migration are poverty, environmental catastrophe, economic decline and political instability hence there is an inflow of migrants, some “illegal” in the sense that they do not have legal documents to allow them to stay in the host country.

Waller (2006) further states that the influx of migrants from Zimbabwe in South Africa is no surprise because both countries share a land border, and he argues that the nature of migration from Zimbabwe has been described as a ‘revolving door syndrome’, where migrants are deported and then return. However, Segatti et al (2011: 106) argue that at times deportation is used as a mechanism to control the borders in the sense that Zimbabweans are often deported without ever checking with the Department of Home Affairs. The officials often act outside their legal duty to ensure that the South African territory is protected from migration flows by deporting

people and withholding legal services from them to stay in the country legally (Segatti 2011).

Subsequently, migrants continue to cross illegally into South Africa because there is a market for their labour, especially in the informal sector to meet its demand for cheap and seasonal non-contractual labour (Waller 2006).

Undocumented migrants find it difficult almost impossible to secure work in the formal sector hence they are found in the peripheries, employed or looking for employment in the informal sector which is premised on precarious conditions such as lack of basic securities: certain employment opportunities, union representation, low wages and protection against unfair dismissals (Paret and Gleeson 2016: 279) . It is also argued that; by employing undocumented migrants, employers are able to bypass legal employment rights such as the minimum wage, health and safety provisions and holiday and sick pay which becomes cost effective for the employers but creates precariousness for the workers (Bloch 2013:274).

This research sought to understand the nexus of undocumented migrant statuses of salon workers from Zimbabwe in South Africa and their experiences with precarity. Through immigration laws, the state has managed to create a variety migrant statuses some of which are highly precarious resulting in a differentiated supply of labour that produces precarious workers, precarious employment norms and existential precariousness. The research used “precarity as a political concept” as a theoretical base and a lens through which the relationship and the experiences of workers in the workplace as well as outside the workplace was explored. Precarity as a political concept demystifies the normative claims of the centrality of economic activity and participation in the economic activity as the only space of precarious experiences. Thus, Neilson and Rossiter (2008:51) argue that, the concept of precarity as a political requires freedom from the confinement of the economistic approach which only views social conditions as exclusively determined by means of production, but to be seen as a political issue or outcomes of power relations. Meaning; precarity as a political concept contests the notion of the centrality of work and the progressive promise under capitalism. Precarity does not only focus on the conditions of workers but also the existence of the state and its role on

precariousness (Barchiesi et al 2010, Fudge 2012: 98 Neilson and Rossiter 2008:51-52).

The research looked at the undocumented migrant salon workers who worked in three different salon operations in Braamfontein from Zimbabwe to see if their undocumented statuses had any bearing on precarious experiences at work also in the communities which they belong to. Research has shown that undocumented migrants seek employment with co-ethnic employer places and worker dominated places in which their own ethnic group dominates a sector (Schover 2007 see Bloch 2013:274). Also, the literature shows that undocumented migrants are absorbed by the informal economy because of the statuses. As a result, the research focused on hair salon operations in Braamfontein operating informally.

The findings of this qualitative study grounded on precarity as a theoretical framework have led to a conclusion that, the undocumented migrant status has a bearing in the nature of employment that the migrant worker will find themselves in; which is mainly in the informal economy. Literature describes the informal economy to be the most precarious, therefore undocumented migrants are precarious in work place merely because they can only be absorbed by the informal economy which is inherently precarious. Thus the study argues that, in agreement with literature, that; salon workers were found to be working in precarious jobs. However, the research also argues that the narratives of the salon workers show that these migrant salon workers are in two minds about the way they interpret their experiences. They compare their experiences in South Africa to where they come from and conclude that the situation here in South Africa, however bad it is, it is way better than where they come from. This dual positionality then calls for a reconceptualization of the concept of precarity. Subsequently, broadening the conceptualisation of precarity.

The core findings of the research are covered in Chapter four, five and six. Chapter four unpacks the Informal Trading Policy of the City of Johannesburg and contextualises the policy for the informal economy as experienced in Braamfontein, which I argue that is different from CBD for which the policy has been constructed. Differences in how the informal sector works in this area (CBD) help to explain the experiences of informal salon hairdressers in Braamfontein, which assist us to see the ambivalences around their status as precarious. This chapter also gives a brief

history and maps out Braamfontein as a space that went through gentrification processes which influences the different kind of informality than the one experienced in the COJ.

Chapter five provides the description of the different salon operations in Braamfontein in which I conducted the field work. Furthermore, the chapter looks at the experiences of the migrant workers in the workplace: their salaries, the number of hours they work and the worker-employer relations. The chapter also explores whether there is any relationship between their undocumented migrant statuses and their experiences with precarity, and discusses the concept of emotional labour as a component of the service work.

Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the informal salon operations which are the focus of the study as part of the gig economy which is understood to be organised around some form of digital mediation, like a web-based platform to offer services; and is known to be the dominant form of freelancing and self-employment (Lewchuck 2017, Flanagan 2017). The study locates the self-employed salon workers in the gig economy because the strategies that the self-employed workers use to run their businesses and how they maintain relationship with their clients is similar to the way in which the virtual business of “gigging” operates. Furthermore, in the context of the migrant salon workers; social networking is intrinsically linked to the invisibility of undocumented migrants; it gives them (migrants) presence which does not necessarily manifest physically. They have a virtual presence. This virtual presence ties in with their “undocumented status” that gives the impression that they are not here in South Africa yet they are. It allows the migrant workers to stay off the radar while running their businesses and virtually.

Chapter six shows ways in which migrant workers’ social relations mediate their precariousness. Furthermore, this chapter explores how church creates spaces of inclusion and integration, which counteract some of the exclusions the workers experience at work and also outside the workplace.

### 1.2 Statement of the problem

A number of factors identified contribute to the precarious existence of migrants. The transition of migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa is not smooth sailing for

everyone: some have papers that allow them to cross the borders legally and others do not. The fact that they do not have papers to an extent pre-determines and defines the kinds of lives they will lead in South Africa. Segatti et al (2011 :115-116) state that for a great number of Zimbabwean migrants without valid permits, life in South Africa is an ongoing game of hiding and seek with the police and officials from Home Affairs. This means that one's migrant status to some extent has a bearing on the livelihoods of migrants in the host country. Furthermore, Pinedo (2009) asserts that migrant 'illegality' is a state of existence which works as a disciplining mechanism for undocumented migrants. Pinedo further states that migrant illegality is a condition ascribed to the illegal/unlawful entry (into a particular country) and working/staying without any official documentation authorising them to do so.

Subsequently Bloch (2008:7) argues "By virtue of being undocumented, migrants are particularly powerless, being subject to removal and possible persecution for immigration violations", Bosniak notes 'They usually lack access to many, if not most, civil and labour rights and social benefits, and they are afraid to avail themselves of the rights they may enjoy for fear of exposure to immigration authorities" (2004: 323). Consequently, in the Immigration Act of 2002 (amendment 2004), it is argued that employers have paid illegal immigrants low wages, deprived them of employee benefits and have dismissed them at will based on the notion that 'illegal employees' are unable to use the law to take the employer to the task. However, it has recently been confirmed that this type of employer is operating under a dangerous misapprehension and false assumptions that illegal migrant employees without work permits have no legal rights in South Africa. Hence they live precarious lives as produced by the precarious labour and precarity as induced by their illegal status even though under labour law illegal immigrants are protected however under the Immigration Law Section 38(1) Act of 2002(amendment 2004) states that no persons shall employ an illegal foreigner. The Human Rights Watch (2006) asserts that there is legislation in the Immigration Act to arrest and deport (illegal) undocumented migrants. Finally, Munakamwe and Jinnah (2014:1) posit that there are underlying forces which seek to limit the migration of lower skilled workers to South Africa. Their argument is that the nature of immigration policies and the way in which they are implemented is restrictive towards low skilled workers. To a certain extent, these are some of the factors which inform this study.

## 1.3 Rationale

There is a gap in the existing literature which documents subjective experiences of precariousness of undocumented migrants in the salon sector as migrant workers are mostly found to dominate other sectors such as: agriculture, construction, domestic work, and the service industry" Kiwanuka (2009:8) .

Consequently, this research contributes to the scholarship of precarity and labour migration by documenting how undocumented migrants experience precariousness as result of their illegal status. This research further contributes to the scholarship of precarity by documenting the salon worker's experiences of precarity from their point of view. Some of the literature reviewed for this research such as Banki et al (2013) argue that the illegal status of migrants contributes a great deal to their precarity. Through an in-depth study of the various structures in which undocumented migrant salon workers act and react, the research produced offers insights into the lives of these workers from their own perspective.

In addition Hill and Bradley (2010) assert that the substantial growth of employment in the service sector of the economy has stimulated a great deal of sociological research over the past few years, with much of research connecting service work to a variety psychological and sociological analysis. The various studies done on beauty hair salons have been useful in grounding this research. These studies on beauty hair salons have covered grounds on the migration of women and body politics (see Chireka 2015) and experiences of service work in the informal economy and emotional consequences of service work (see Mpye 2013) and Hill and Bradley (2010). This research contributes to this body of knowledge and closes the gap by providing experiences of precarity of undocumented migrants within the salon sector. The research not only focuses on the experiences of these salon workers in the workplace but also experiences outside the workplace.

Thus the aim of the study was to understand how undocumented migration status relates to precarity of salon workers as guided by this key question: **What is the relationship between undocumented migrant status and precarity of salon**

**workers?** According to the literature reviewed for this study, as will be seen in Chapter Two, migration status to a greater extent deleteriously influences experiences of precarity (see Schierup, Alund and Likic-Brboric 2014), Paret and Gleeson 2016) and Jinnah & Munakamwe 2014). This research confirmed these studies to some extent. However, due to particularities of informal salon work in Braamfontein and by also examining social networks outside of work, the research found that informal Zimbabwean hairdressers' precarity was moderated in important ways.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2. Debates on Migration and Precarity

This chapter will explore several frames of literature useful to conceptualise the aims of this study and the literature will be viewed under the frameworks of the informal sector, migration, salon sector and precarity. Furthermore, the relevant background to scholarships on migration, precarity, informal sector will lay a foundation for presenting the findings of this study that highlights the disparity between the academic debates on precarity and the way precarity is understood, interpreted and responded to by Zimbabwean migrant salon workers as they pursue various socio-economic and political objectives.

### 2.1 The Rise of Precarious work

Precarious work is not a phenomenon that is new. It began at the beginning of paid labour as a source of sustenance and the growth of it became more evident in the 1970s and has shown to be a matter that cannot be ignored. Precarious work refers to employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, insecure and perilous from the worker's point of view and results in stress and exposes workers to vulnerability (Kalleberg 2009)

Furthermore, Kalleberg (2009) argues that the growth of precarious work produces challenges which call for a sociologist to explicate the phenomenon. He asserts that there is a disparity in the academic debates regarding precarious work and argues that the existing literature on precarity falls short in expressing the subjectivities of precarious lives. Kalleberg proposes; to meet these challenges, sociologists are needed to revisit, reorient, and reconsider the core theoretical and analytic tools used to understand contemporary realities of work, workers, and the workplace (Kalleberg 2009:10). This to a certain extent speaks to the argument of the study that as much as the theory is imperative to understand experiences of people, on the

same breath we need to be cognizant of the subjective experiences of people. This will prevent scholarships from prescribing what people's experiences are.

Simultaneously the essence of Kalleberg's (2009) argument is that employment relations are embedded in other social institutions, such as the family, education, politics, and the healthcare sector. Employment relations are also embedded in communities and are also intimately related to gender, race, age, and other demographic characteristics of the labour force which need to be examined holistically not as separate entities. This is one of the aims of this study; to produce holistic scholarship of the precariousness of undocumented salon workers. Furthermore, the social location of migrants which to a big part include the migrant status provides an important empirical and conceptual bridge to understand how the migration status of these migrants contributes to precarious employment (Fudge 2012:100)

Subsequently the existing scholarly debates on precarity only articulate objective views of precarity; precarious people are defined by things they lack and things they do not participate in; such as workers lack access to paid employment, protection from arbitrary firing, possibility for advancement, long-term job stability, adequate safety, development of new skills, living wages, and union representation and doesn't talk about their agency as workers. As a result, Kalleberg (1989) argues that workers are not just passive victims of social structure, they are active; and this calls for rethinking the workers agency by looking at how workers influence the terms of their employment relations and give meaning to their work experiences (Kalleberg 1989, Hodson 2001: 50 see Kalleberg 2009:14). As result, this research settled these disparities by exploring the subjective experiences of undocumented salon workers through in-depth interviews and observations to gain a better understanding and a holistic view to the subjectivity of the salon workers and their experiences (Kalleberg 2009:10-12)

### 2.2 The Precariat

There are debates on whether the precariat should be seen as an emerging class as Standing argues for or the precariat should be seen as part of the working class and a politically induced condition as some scholars such as Neilson, Rossiter, Wright and Butler argue for. The research has engaged these various debates on precarity

in the context of Zimbabwean undocumented migrants' experiences in the workplace and outside the workplace. According to Schierup, Alund and Likic-Brboric (2014) migrants make an unequal part of the social category whose experiences in the labour market is marked by precarity, in terms of informal labour, low wage, temporariness, uncertainty and malicious risk. They argue that migrants are a part of the destitute group among a globally growing workforce of casual labour which is also known as the precariat. The precariat according to Standing (2011:7) is the distinctive socio-economic group which constitutes a multitude of insecure people, living in bits and pieces lives, who are in and out of short-term jobs without an account of work development.

The precariat denotes a group of people who are in precarious conditions as stated by Standing (2011:1). He defines precarity as a condition of short-term, flexible, casual work in post-industrial societies brought about by neoliberal labour market reforms which have fortified the employers' ability to "manage" workers and weakened the bargaining power of the workers since the late 1970s. The theme at the time was that countries should increase labour market flexibility, meaning a plan to transfer risks and insecurity onto workers and their families producing the global precariat. This constituted millions of people around the world with no stability and security.

Furthermore, Standing (2011) asserts that the precariat materialised from the liberalisation that reinforced globalisation, and it is a dangerous class, not yet what Karl Marx would have described as a class-for-itself, but a class-in-the-making, internally divided into angry and bitter factions. These millions of people are not a working class but participate in emerging market economies where they don't know who they work for or what the future has for them.

Standing posits that the precariat is a distinct class and he shows this by conceptualising different classes or class groups namely the "elite – the top tiny minority who are absurdly rich", followed by the "salariat" – those in full-time employment who are contracted by huge multi-corporations and governments, some hoping to move into the elite group". Below the "salariat" is the "proficians" – the people who are having professional and technical skills earn high salaries as consultants. Below the "proficians" is what Standing calls shrinking old typical

working class of manual labourers. Lastly is the increasing precariat, which Standing has characterised as “flanked by an army of unemployed and a detached group of socially ill misfits living off the dregs of the society” (Standing 2011:7-8).

However, Wright (2016:128-129) argues that the precariat is not a class on its own. For Wright (2016:128) using material interest and the slogan that was popularised in 1979, he argues that the precarity is part of the working class as opposed to it being a class on its own. It could be further argued that the precariat is the worst group with the working class concerning their relations to the state and the working class.

### 2.3 Precarity as Political Concept

I find Standing’s notion of precarity very useful but limited for the scope of this research because I want to study the experiences of the undocumented migrants not as a “class on its own” but as part of the working class and as bearers of the sharpest grievances against capitalism (Wright 2016:134). Hence the study will employ “precarity as a political concept” as it will give all-inclusive experiences of the undocumented salon worker’s experiences in the workplace as well as outside the workplace. Lewis (et al 2015:2015) states that precarity is a dominant concept which captures the emergence of insecure employment caused by the neoliberal labour market model, also (see Neilson and Rossiter 2009) capturing feelings of insecurity beyond the workplace.

Precarity has been used by other scholars in a restricted way as only referring to the sphere of work, as a characterization of a condition of how large parts of the population are subjected to low pay which leads to social exclusion Neilson and Rossiter (2008). However precarity transcends work experiences and it becomes a ‘state’ of existence, a state of “being” in all spheres of life. Neilson and Rossiter’s notion of precarity best captures what this study aims to do, which is to look at the experiences of undocumented migrants in the workplace as well as outside the workplace hence precarity as a political concept will give substantial context for the study.

The political concept of precarity as mentioned by Neilson and Rossiter (2008:51) explains how the formulation of precarity not only constitutes conditions of precarious workers but also the general existential state which is the source of political subjections raising questions of housing, debt, welfare provision and social

protection from the state. Also, within the context of the workplace Standing (2011:10) argues that the precariat falls short in labour security under the industrial citizenship such as labour market security, employment security, job security, work security, skills reproduction and income security. Neilson and Rossiter will be useful in studying the holistic and contextual experiences of these undocumented salon workers because their illegal status plays a pivotal role in their experiences as literature has indicated.

Paret and Gleeson (2016) argue that precarity affects everyone particularly migrant populations, who frequently experience multiple forms of vulnerability. The dominant trend in contemporary migration emphasizes the vulnerability associated with 'illegality' and 'deportability,' which centres on the power of nation-states to detain and remove migrants from their respective territories. The fear of being deported is one of the reasons these migrant workers are subjected to exploitation because they do not have proper documents which allow them to stay in South Africa thus not protected by the state and considered as "people with no rights" subjecting workers to worse conditions, as they are not only precarious as effects of the labour market but also as results of their illegal status in South Africa.

Moreover, migrant workers can be precarious like everyone with regards to work: low wage pays, long hours of work, hazardous environment and being exploited, however, their precarity is also in their relation to the state. Standing (2011:13) argues, there is a variety of the precariat, "…the teenager who flits in and out of the internet café while surviving on fleeting jobs is not the same as the migrant who uses his wits to survive, networking feverishly while worrying about the police". This shows the antagonistic relations between the migrant workers and the state as the source of precariousness.

Pinedo (2009) asserts migrant 'illegality' is a state of existence which works as a disciplining mechanism for undocumented immigrants, it is a condition ascribed to the illegal/unlawful entry (into a particular country) and working/staying without any official documentation authorising them to do so. Lack of documentation for the migrants to an extent is a defining factor for the kinds of experiences the migrants have in the host country.

Judith Butler (2009:2) further states that precariousness is a social condition from which clear political demands and principles emerge, and a condition in which certain populations suffer from lack of social and economic networks of support which leads them to be vulnerable to injury, violence without protection, displacement and starvation. She maintains that all lives are vulnerable to the possibility of injury and destruction, but it is imperative to note that precariousness does not merely gesture towards an existential condition but as a social condition from which clear political demands and principles emerge.

Explicit in Butler's work is the notion of "norms"; which best capture ways in which people can be seen as precarious. She uses an analogy of gender performativity, that if people fail to perform according to the "norms" which is according to their "sexed" gender they stand a chance of being excluded, heightened risk of harassment, violence and they are not protected. Precarity is encompassing of risk and insecurity, however, norms stipulate who will be protected by the law and in their homes. Hence, if one exists outside the 'normative system' (such as being citizens, have job security, workers who are represented-trade unions, skills security) that means their lives are at risk of violence, harassment and exclusion (Butler 2009:2).

In the context of South Africa, this can be seen in the various attacks on workers who have been living outside 'normative system' such as migrant workers who were victims of looting and xenophobic attack. Solomon (2000) argues that South Africans as a whole are becoming more xenophobic in their attitudes towards migrants generally and particularly illegal immigrants.

Hart 2002 (see Jinnah and Munakamwe 2014) asserts the effects of GEAR policy post-1994 in South Africa produced precarious conditions, particularly amongst the low skilled workers. This policy ushered an increase in unemployment, informality, precarity of workers and withdrawal of organised labour. This is also a time when there was an increase in the number of immigrants entering South Africa and development of exclusion based on one's nationality.

This facilitated a reordering of labour supply building on historical forms which constituted new dynamics in which migrant workers faced double precarity; precarity in relation to labour from the work they engaged in, often in low-wage, poorly protected industries such as security, farm work and domestic work; and from the

status they held to be non-nationals (Jinnah & Segatti, 2013; Jinnah & Munakamwe 2014, Peberdy 2001; Landau 2008).

### 2.4 Precarity of place

Banki (2013) further states that undocumented migrants are vulnerable to removal from a country and she refers to this vulnerability as precarity of place. She argues that the concept of precariat originated to describe precarious work, however, she finds it suitable and useful in the context of undocumented migrants and that is captured well by Standing (2011) when he articulates the way in which undocumented migrants fuel the neoliberal engine at the same time are its primary victims. The argument is that a lot of socio-economic benefits are from the pool of illegal migrants because they can be easily exploited and cannot fight for their rights as they are enclosed by their illegal state.

### 2.5 Salon Service Work: A Precarious Space?

Migrant hair salons have taken the South African hairdressing sector by storm, hair salons have taken an imperative role in our daily lives; “Either you visit them regularly or you pass by them, in the midst of your daily routine” (2015:13). Furthermore, Mpye 2013) states that the hair salon and barbershops have taken a pivotal role in the structure and economy of the city of Johannesburg particularly Braamfontein. She argues that it is impossible not to notice the number of hair salons and how busy they are, and also states that remarkable amount of time and money is poured into hair, with market research into the personal care industry which shows that the South African black haircare market is worth R9.7 billion a year (Durham, 2011 see Mpye 2013).

Chireka (2015) holds the same views by further arguing that African immigrants are pioneers of the new hair care industry and is predominantly a space filled by women. She adds, however as a group marginalized based on their gender, nationality, class and race, many migrant women hairdressers assume what she calls “complex locations of invisibility”, “visibility and hyper-visibility”. They are constantly “policed” discriminated against as “foreign”, poor and black people even though they are forerunners of the salon industry, they are faced with so many challenges as women and also as migrants.

Moreover, these migrant women face a number of challenges at work because of the nature of the work they do. The migrant workers for this particular study are salon workers, which means service workers. Mpye (2013) puts forward that in the service work there is an expectation placed upon workers from the customers as well as the employers to be emotionally invested on to the work they do. The workers need to be emotionally invested particularly towards their customers. The hairdressers are expected to be polite, patient and understanding to their customers. It is argued that this can have negative and positive effects on the salon worker because these expectations can lead to strain and physical stress resulting from emotive dissonance and self- alienation that service workers experience. But also at the same time might have positive consequences such as self -satisfaction with the job (Hochschild 1983, Schuler and Sypher 2004 see Mpye 2013).

The emotional investment demanded by clients and employers from these workers is referred by Hochschild (1983) as emotional labour and Mpye (2013:47) focuses on the experiences of service workers in urban informal workplaces using Hochschild's concept of emotional labour as lenses through which to explore salon workers experiences. Hochschild (1983) concept of emotional labour denotes the duty that the service worker assumes in order to align their emotions and display what is expected of them in the workplace and of their roles.

Furthermore, Hill and Bradley (2010) cover similar themes of worker's emotions being part of labour. Hill and Bradley's work focuses on the emotional consequences of service work. They argue that the management of personal feelings and emotions of service workers have become a standard and often a requirement feature of their work, especially when the worker is called upon to have contact with the general public. It is upon the responsibility of the service worker not to only perform their work at the best level but also to do it in a manner that will convince the customer that they love what their work, which makes the service worker's every move become part of the economic product. This aids the notion of the emotional labour as a major factor in service work (Leidner 1993, Bulan, Erickson, and Wharton 1997 see Hill and Bradley 2010)

Chireka's (2015) work further engages the complexities that are found in the salon work and how women navigate and negotiate these complexities and the kinds of

challenges they face. She uses the feminist political economy to explicate the experiences of migrant women working as hairdressers on the streets by investigating how as marginalized women locate their bodies, how others perceive their bodies and their own occupational roles in working on other people's bodies through hairstyling. Furthermore, she explicitly interrogates the effects of migrations linking race, class, culturally constructed notions of gender, communal belonging, nationality, citizenship and sexuality. She explores these interconnecting identities in relation to the working body and the experiences of migrant women. These experiences include "the problems they encounter their coping or survival strategies and fashioning of their identities and attitudes" (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003: 8; see Chireka 2015:3).

Subsequently Chireka (2015) found that the lack of a gendered analysis of migration has propagated stereotypes about the identity and belonging of migrants, what access they can have in a foreign country, in what ways they are considered "other", and how they respond to their experiences of being "othered" and political marginalization. She further states that there are emerging arguments that patterns of migration have been constantly changing, as a result, many contemporary migrant women are driven by adventure, desire and spirit, and not by famine, war, spouses and poverty (Chireka 2015)

### 2.6 How Migration and Migrant Status Facilitates Experiences of Precarity

As stated already, the salon sector in South Africa is mostly taken up by migrants, for the relevance of this study it is important to note that not all the migrants that in South Africa are legally here, and legally operating in those salon operations. It is the case that some migrants cross over to South Africa from Zimbabwe without any official documents. Meaning, in the case of Zimbabweans when they come to South Africa migrants are expected to have proper documents from the Zimbabwean Home Affairs.

Kupakuwana (2017) put forward that it takes US$315-$253 to apply for a passport and without any employment and access to adequate finance getting a passport becomes a difficult process and in most cases, ordinary citizens of Zimbabwe cannot afford them. An average Zimbabwean earns an average of $US 253 and only 30% Zimbabweans are employed (Kupakuwana 2017: 75). It then becomes clear that the

Zimbabweans are under a lot of financial stress to afford to cross to South Africa using the legal route because it is costly. As result, Zimbabweans opt to cross the borders illegally, without any proper documentation. Even though Zimbabwean migrants manage to cross over to South Africa that is not the end to their problems because they are met with more challenges and one of them is not being able to find work.

Crush and Frayne (2010: 72) argue that; it is the case that getting proper documents does not necessarily ensure social inclusion and that migrants won't be discriminated upon, however it ensures accessibility to social services and finding employment in the formal sector.

The argument is that the journey of migrants from their home (Zimbabwe) to South Africa, the cause of their move, encounters in the borderlines, experiences when they first land in their place of hope, and the brutal encounter with their first reality with the status of illegality and their relations to the state is a precarious journey. Hlatshwayo and Choudhry argue that the borders are a brutal space especially for women as they are the ones who suffer violence the most as about 3 out of 10 women are gang raped while trying to illegally cross the border to South Africa (Hlatshwayo and Choudhry 2013: 26).

Moreover, Kihato (2009) puts forward that women in their journey to South Africa, particularly Johannesburg, face a number of Borderlands; the physical borderland, psychological borderland, sexual borderland and spiritual borderland. She further states that these borderlands are socially created, they are dividing lines between groups of people and individuals based on gender, ethnicity, nationality and sexuality. Also, the borderlands are political lines separating South Africa and Zimbabwe or Botswana. Furthermore, in the communities migrants find themselves in, these borders still exist. They are mistreated by South Africans and given derogatory names.

The migrant workers even when they have crossed the borders are continuously met with borders that prohibit them from accessing basic human needs: like proper housing, aiding from the state to have access to good education, and social protection. Peberdy et al (2004) assert that "irregular migrants" can have access to the same services offered by the City of Johannesburg to the citizens of South

Africa, cross-border migrants who are permanent and temporary residents, also asylum seekers and refugees. However, irregular migrants cannot access any of the services that require proof of permit.

Consequently, I would like to claim that the concepts of migration and immigration are concepts that emerged with time especially in the context of Africa. I concur with Hlatshwayo et al (2013) argument that immigrant workers are a permanent feature of the post-apartheid South African economy. Post-apartheid South Africa inherited from its apartheid past a more restrictive, exclusionary and class-based labour (im) migration regime based on a system of exploitation. Hlatshwayo et al (2013) further state that the imperialist exploitation which the Global South was subjected to under colonialism and its institutional organisation with regards to labour have fashioned the way labour and migration are understood in today's global capitalism. Colonialism and capitalism perpetuated inequality, dispossession, and poverty which have pushed people to migrate in search for a better living. Capitalism is the main reason behind the migration of people and the influence behind exploitative labour policies to maintain it.

Also, globalisation has played a huge part in this process with its contradictions which are: the ability to dismantle borders when it comes to capital mobility to some extent through policies of liberalisation and deregulations, but have caused major setbacks with regards to labour mobility; "…The majority of the world's people do not experience such freedom to move across borders" (Hlatshwayo and Choudhry 2013:2, Giddens 1990).

### 2.7 Critique of Precarity and a call to Reconceptualise Precarity

As result of the "unfreedom" that migrants experience in South Africa as argued above Murawha's (2016) study on Rethinking Precarity shows how migrants live their lives in suspicion and fear which results from the way they are treated; as criminals and as outsiders. Murawha further states that when he started his interviews he was accused by the participants at first to be a spy. This was the case even though Murawha had worked before as a security guard with the very same people who were his participants. He argues that the suspicion and fear showed by his respondents summed up the precarious conditions in their everyday lives.

Furthermore, Murawha (2016) found that there are various ways in which people perceive their experiences which impacts on the way they view themselves as precarious or not precarious. He argues that there is evidence that life histories with precarious backgrounds provide a different level of interpreting existing conditions particularly for migrant workers working in different sectors of host countries' economies. Subsequently, this calls for a re-conceptualisation of precarity and to question the sting of it. Precariousness by most literature is portrayed as a condition which subjects workers to vulnerability or precarity itself is a vulnerable state for workers.

Barchiesi (2017) critiques and challenges this view precariousness as a state of vulnerability and victimhood resulting from labour conditions. Barchiesi (2017:1) argues that contrary to the belief that precarious work emerged in the neoliberal era, with bad employment conditions and no benefits, harmful consequences for social compacts, historically, work has always been experienced in a despotic form. In colonial and post-colonial Africa it is evident that progressive social compacts for the majority of the working class never counterbalanced.

Barchiesi (2017) further argues that precariousness of wage labour as ordinarily understood in terms of economic forces transcends the economic confines. He states that there are extra powerful economic factors such as the colonial modalities of racialized suppression where Africans were exploited not only as workers but also on the account that they were black. And also the notion of working for wages has always been problematic (in the continent) for blackness because even after the two centuries which followed the transatlantic emancipation, black people continued to suffer coercive and exploitative labour in the hands of capital. This was in contrast to their juridical "free" status. This has continued to be the case with the emergence of violent structural adjustment programs represented as the helping hand meanwhile subjecting the continent and representation of African labour as indistinct black aggregate to socioeconomic violence (Barchiesi 2017: 4-5).

Consequently, there are blurry lines between what theory claims and what wage employment actually offers. In that regard, far from relating to precariousness as a condition of powerlessness, subordination, "insecure" and labour exploitation-precariousness was rather African workers response to wage employment. The way

in which precarity is understood in African work is ‘post’ colonial because it has challenged the set of values, institutions and symbols of rules which emerged in the colonial context and transmitted to independent nation-state to posit wage labour as means to have control over Africans (Barchiesi 2017).

To challenge these issues African commodity producers opted for contingent and casual labour/ self- employment as a way to undermine capitalist work relations. The precariousness of work in African context undermines working for wages as an accepted progressive norm and a social condition through which capital reproduces itself (Barchiesi 2017:2). As result Africans turned precariousness from a condition of vulnerability into a weapon against capitalist discipline and the strategic use of precarious employment which allowed access to multiple sources of income provided, in that case, a better weapon against capitalist discipline than prospects of bargaining within a full-time wage job. Wage labour in the general frame of things seemed to be problematic for Africans which made everything that fell outside wage employment less of a concern, hence they opted for alternative means of making a living outside wage labour. In the African context working for wages was a historical economic coercion, land expropriation and colonially enforced taxations and unequal access to capital and infrastructures (Barchiesi 2017:7-10).

This speaks to Mafeje’s (1988) argument that; sociologists when looking at the issues in the African context need to stop using concepts which are imposed which do not entirely come from the ground, from reality and lived experiences of people– and this ties up to one of the arguments of this study that the theoretical arguments on precarity induced first by illegal status and precarity as induced by the informal economy, in fact, need to be understood in the salon workers subjective experiences. In fact, as much as theory looks at the conditions of workers in the informal economy and prescribes them to be precarious, in the actual subjective view of the workers it is not as clear-cut.

## 2.8 Migrants in the Informal Economy

Though gender is not the focus of the study it cannot be ignored that the sample for the study is migrant women from Zimbabwe. Pendleton et al (2006) noticed that, there was a growing feminisation of migration particularly from Zimbabwe with an estimate of 44% made of Zimbabwean women in South Africa. They further argue

that these women were low skilled and tended to move towards informal, risky and irregular means and part of that group are undocumented and as result can only be absorbed by the informal economies (see Hungwe 2013: 28).

Subsequently, Bosh and Farre (2013:4) further stress that undocumented migrant workers manage to secure jobs for themselves predominantly in the informal sector and also the increase in the informal sector in the developed countries is the result of the massive flows of undocumented immigrants from developing economies, attracted by job opportunities and the dream of a better life. As already noted; undocumented migrants suffer more exploitative conditions as result of their illegal status when compared to legal citizens of a particular country. As result, a big part of the study explores these kinds of issues, whether one's status has an effect on the experiences precariousness.

Furthermore, Comacho, Mariani and Pensieroso (2015) assert that illegal immigrants face high chances of deportation when crossing and when they have reached the destination country, and can only work in the informal sector. For many undocumented immigrants, the underground economy is the only means of finding a job and also immigrants react to wage gaps between where they come from and destination country, considering also how employment opportunities depend on their legal status.

The concept of the informal economy according to the International Labour Organisation (1999) can be categorized into three broad groups: (a) owner-employer of micro enterprises, which employ a few paid workers, with or without apprentices; (b) own-account workers, who own and operate one-person business, who work alone or with the help of unpaid workers, generally family members and apprentices; and (c) dependent workers, paid or unpaid, including wage workers in micro enterprises, unpaid family workers, apprentices, contract labour, homeworkers and paid domestic workers.

These categories of the informal sector will best capture the area of study for this research. According to Mpye (2013), there are various categories of informal hairdressing operations in Johannesburg. There are formal hairdressing salons that informally employs hairdressers, which means that a salon is a business which falls under the formal economy in terms of it being registered and paying tax, but it hires

employees informally in the sense that they do not have a contract, benefits or job security.

Also, there are informal underground hair salons and hairdressers that work on the streets in spaces demarcated for informal trading. According to statistics from Urban Genesis, there are approximately 333 hairdressers working on the pavement of the inner city (see Mpye 2013:35). Furthermore, there are mobile hairdressers that travel to the customer's home. The focus of this study will be on the formal salon that informally employs hairdressers, self- employed hairdressers known as "mirror-renters" (which basically means that hairdressers rent mirrors in a formally running business) who are Zimbabweans and will also look at informal salons. As we will see, I compare experiences of these different types of salon workers which will result in rich data.

### 2.9 Dealing with Precariousness: Church Networks

Hungwe (2010) puts forward that migrants in their processes of settling in host countries church is an imperative element to facilitate that process. He argues that churches for migrants function as, "…an institutional conveyor of ethno-cultural bridging; (b) as a medium of socio-cultural integration; (c) a medium of affirming original culture; (d) a celebration of cultural and religious syncretism and (e) as an engine of non-adaptation" (Hungwe 2010:207). However, for this study will be on the functioning of church as a socio-cultural integration. To be more specific, the study will look at how church is a space of inclusion for those migrants who feel social exclusion in South Africa

### 2.10 Conclusion

This section has provided a number of contesting and supporting arguments on migration and precarity debates. This section engaged with precarity and migration looking at how one affects the other vice versa in the context of work as a space as space of precarity, and also in the context of their existence as migrants in South Africa how their migrant status is the source of precarity outside the workplace. Because the focus was not on the work experiences only, this section employed precarity as a political concept to provide a broader framework of the experiences of the migrant worker in South Africa. The section also reviewed the literature to find

the nexus of precarity with a migrant status, that migrants are mistreated in their workplaces because they are believed to have no rights as per their undocumented status which acts as a disciplinary mechanism. Furthermore, this section has discussed how migrants' especially undocumented migrants are absorbed by the informal economy because of their migrant status which limits them from obtaining formal better-paying employment. The context in which these experiences, experiences of precarity as a migrant in the informal economy, the focus was on the hair salons because they, mostly belong to the informal economy. Also, literature has shown that the hair salon industry is mostly dominated by migrants.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Research Design

According to De Vos et al (2005) research design articulates what data is required, the methods that will be used to collect and analyse the data, and how this will answer the research question. This study will use a qualitative research approach. This approach will give a better understanding of the experiences of the salon workers from Zimbabwe in the workplace as well as outside the workplace using the lenses of precarity as a political concept to explain and describe those experiences.

The aim of this research was to explore the relationship between migrant statuses and precarity of undocumented Zimbabwean salon workers in Braamfontein. In order to examine that relationship, the researcher had to look into the experiences of these migrant workers in the workplace as well as outside the work to find whether their statuses had any bearing on their experiences with precarity. A qualitative research approach was a fitting method to collect that kind of data that would enrich the study. Janesick et al (2000) assert that a qualitative researcher studies a social setting to understand the meaning of participants' lives in the participants' own terms. Furthermore, qualitative research provides an understanding of the phenomena in the natural context and holistically (Bless, Smith and Sithole 2013: 16).

### 3.1.1 Reflexivity

Subsequently, by using the qualitative research method I was able to understand how the salon workers interpreted their subjective experiences in the workplace by also using reflexivity. In the process of conducting the interviews and participant observations, I had to be conscious of my own subjectivity and what I knew going in the field and also be cognizant of the subjectivity of the participants. McCarthy (1994 see Pillow 2010:178) argued that, the nature of social sciences solely depends on providing views from nowhere with all of its rights and privileges and this called for criticism for the way knowledge was produced which was from a "privileged" position of social sciences. The way social scientific knowledge was produced was challenged, as result, the notion of reflexivity as a way in which knowledge can be produced became an important process. The benefits of reflexivity are; it produces knowledge that helps to understand and gain insight into the detailed and authentic workings of the social world and provides insight on how that particular knowledge is produced (McCarthy et al 1994).

Subsequently, what I found after being in the field, after having done a theoretical study on this research was that; precarity as argued in theory and how the salon workers interpreted their experienced was nuanced. In the way in which they narrate their experiences, they are dismissive of them being exploited, or work being a space of vulnerability. However, this is not to dismiss the entire argument about precarity, but to show that they are in two minds about their state of being. They continuously compare what they experience here in South Africa to their experiences in Zimbabwe and conclude that they are better off here in South Africa. Furthermore, salons operate in the informal economy and mostly owned by fellow Zimbabwean (empirical data), as such the migrant's status has less bearing in the workplace. Even in the salons that are owned by South Africans, the salon workers were not affected by their migrant's status per se, but by the fact that they were just generally migrants. The effects of their (migrant salon worker) status were that they were unable to secure jobs anywhere else other than the informal economy because of their undocumented status.

Reflexivity was imperative for this study because I was dealing with subjective views of the salon workers as result reflexivity allowed me to be opened to these nuances,

and not be limited by theory in understanding the experiences of the workers. I also faced some challenges with the managers regarding the deal to conduct participant observations and I had to be flexible to the changes. The agreement with the owner of the salon was that I would have full access to the salon to conduct my participant observation. However, when I went to the salon to conduct the research, the owner assigned me to shadow one salon worker, that I would perform all the duties she undertakes to her discretion and that she will be the one assigning what I could do in the salon without disturbing her work pattern and that of the salon

Furthermore in one of the salons that are part of the study access to them was challenging because they were busy with clients most of the time. As a result, I opted to make a point that I had hair appointments every second week. I would go wash my hair, after two weeks I would go and treat it. I sometimes went to put on braids, and I did most of my interviews when the ladies were doing my hair. This worked in my advantage even though it was costly, because I realised that when I had formal appointments with them the way they responded to the question they were not free and open and also they seemed frustrated in that I was taking up their time, so interviewing them while I was doing my hair created a comfortable environment. Also because I frequently did my hair with them they became more open and comfortable with me, so even when I would do in-depth one on one interviews with them things got better with time as they had gotten to know me and felt comfortable around me.

### 3.2 Access to the salon workers in Braamfontein

It is imperative to acknowledge that I stay in Braamfontein, and I meet one or two salon operations on every street I turn to. Based on empirical observations, it is not hard to see that salon operations play a big role in the micro-economy of Braamfontein. One of the salons that were part of this research sparked my interest to do the study. Sometime in 2016, I went to this particular salon, and I saw how the manager was treating the workers. When I entered the salon, I realised that the workers were not allowed to speak to me and tell me the pricing of the hairstyle I wanted to do which was a bit unusual. I felt the atmosphere was tense in the salon, the manager would walk around as the workers were busy with their clients keeping tabs on them, and this was an unsettling experience for me which I found to be worth studying.

Based on this partial preliminary research I then opted for a purposive sampling technique to look into a particular group of people. Since most of the salon workers in Braamfontein are migrants and this is based on empirical observations, I then decided to look at Zimbabweans as the focus of the study. Purposive sampling technique allows a researcher to choose specific people within the population to use for a particular study or research project (De Vaus 2004:90).

Subsequently, from the preliminary research, I identified three hairdressing operations where Zimbabwe migrants work located in Braamfontein. One of the hair salons which informally employs migrants is owned by a South African which I call Fatou Hair Salon and the other salon constitutes self -employed hairdressers who rent mirrors in a building and this constitutes Zimbabwean entrepreneurs which I call Beauty Hair Salon and the third salon is owned by a Zimbabwean and has Zimbabwean hairdressers which I call Macufe Hair Salon. The researcher has purposefully selected these salons because they characterised the population of the study; which is the fact that they are workers from Zimbabwe who have informally come to South Africa for a better life.

### 3.3 Sample Size

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Paint (2006) define sampling as the process of selecting research participants for the study of the population. In choosing a sample for this study the researcher used purposive and snowball sampling techniques. I interviewed fourteen (hairdressers) participants because it was a manageable sample size that ensured the feasibility of the study and that it was not cumbersome and I interviewed a BID manager which then makes fifteen participants for the study. Also, it helped to ensure quality information which details the experiences of the salon workers. I felt, with a smaller group, I was able to spend more time with each participant and get an in-depth story. Getting access to the population of the study was hard, and accessing undocumented migrants appeared to be a challenge because the only promise I could offer was anonymity.

Furthermore, the nature of the study was sensitive and clandestinely finding participants was a challenge and also keeping a small manageable group was pertinent. Most of the participants were found after I had formed bonds with a few

salon workers; a snowball sampling was administered in order to find other participants from them. Bless, Smith & Sithole (2013:176) posit, snowball sampling is a sophisticated sampling technique best suited to identify people who are difficult to find. It is a process of identifying few participants and depends on them to lead you to the next participant. Through the relationships established with the few participants, I was then referred to other participants.

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

This study is based on a research conducted in Braamfontein. The research involved interviews which took place over a period of five months. The interviews were supplemented by participant observations carried out in the course of the research which involved going into one of the salon's to perform certain duties as those of the salon workers. The qualitative approach that the study took meant that the research will attain meaningful data drawn from perceptions and narratives of the participants. A combination of in-depth interviews and participant observations were used as data collecting methods.

According to Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest and Namey (2005: 13) participant observation is a qualitative method which originates from traditional ethnographic research, whose objective is to help researchers learn the perspectives held by study populations. And this is accomplished through observations and also by both observing and participating to varying degrees in the daily activities of the participants. The process of observing or participant observation need to take place in the setting where the population of the study is located. As already mentioned, I was allowed to do partial participation in my participation-observation. I was assigned to one of the ladies to assign tasks for me to do every time I went to conduct the research at the salon. I prepared the fibre for her when she had clients for braiding. She also gave me a task to undo hair for clients that came to change their hairstyles. I also helped her with plaiting braids because I can plait.

Collecting data through observations allowed me to access information that cannot be retrieved through merely interviewing participants. The observations were accompanied by informal conversations and interactions with the salon workers.

Another data collecting method that was used for this research was in-depth interviews. An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting concentrated individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on phenomena Johnson (2002: 104). In-depth interviews complemented the participatory observation by conducting one on one semi-structured in-depth interviews. This was the best data collecting method as it allowed me to pursue deep information and knowledge and also access to personal information of the participants, work-related ideologies, values, perspectives and their lived experiences. Furthermore, this method allowed me to unpack issues of work organisations, wages, hours of work, relations at work, particularly owner /employee relations, matters of deportations and contacts with police. As result, I was then able to able to draw the link between precarity and illegal migrant status.

### 3.4.1 Interview Schedule

The interviews that were conducted were semi-structured in-depth interviews. The time that the interviewed lasted varied, but it was between 45 minutes to 60minutes.

**Table 1: Interview Schedule**

**Fatou Hair Salon[1]**

| Interviewee | Date | Place |
|---|---|---|
| Aneni | 15 September 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Vimbo | 29 September 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Mudiwa | 07 October 2017 | Braamfontein |

**Beauty Hair Salon**

[1] Names given to the salon operations as well as the hairdresser's names are not their real names for ethical reasons. The study has used pseudonyms.

| Interviewee | Date | Place |
|---|---|---|
| Sbusiso | 19 September 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Bola | 19 September 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Sethu | 25 September 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Gillian | 03 October 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Tanaka | 03 October 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Rudo | 03 October 2017 | Braamfontein |

**Macufe Hair Salon (Mirror Renter)**

| Interviewee | Date | Place |
|---|---|---|
| Zaho | 10 November 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Thoko | 16 November 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Sne | 01 October 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Debbie | 05 December 2017 | Braamfontein |
| Noni | 05 December 2017 | Braamfontein |

**South Point Central**

| Interviewee | Date | Place |
|---|---|---|
| Mikhaela (BID Manager) | 12 January 2018 | 17Melle Street-Braamfontein |

Fatou Hair Salon (South African Owned)

I managed to interview three participants from this salon because it was hard to get access. The owners told me that I could only interview the participants after hours when they were done with their work so that I would not disturb them. As result, I had to meet with them in the morning on their way to work to conduct the interviews. At

other times, when they would knock off early at work they would WhatsApp me so that I can do the interviews after work.

Macufe Hair Salon (Owner Zimbabwean)

A total number of five salon workers were interviewed from this salon and the owner. I did my participant observations in this salon, working side by side with one of the participants. Access to this salon and doing participation observation was quite easy because they were familiar to me because I have been doing my hair with them since 2016. The participants' responses were written down, and I interview them when they were not busy with clients. Even if they were all busy with clients I would take that time as observation time.

Beauty Hair Salon (Self- Employed Mirror renters)

I interviewed five salon workers from this salon. Getting access here was a bit challenging because I had to make sure I had hair appointments with the salon workers for them to afford me their time and trust to conduct the study. As mentioned from the reflexive piece, I conducted most of the interviews while they were busy with my hair as results the interviews were conducted in the salon.

South Point Central

I interviewed one of the managers of the Braamfontein Improvement Management who offered information about the operation of Informal Trading in the context of Braamfontein.

3.5. Interview Design

Regarding the structure of the interviews, I used a combination of standardised – open interview questions, informal conversational interview and general interview approach. The reason behind using all three interview structure was to make up for the limitations of the other. I also realised in the field work that it was challenging to only focus on one structure.

The standardised open interview has open-ended- questions which allowed the participants to provide detailed information and fully express their experiences and their views about their experiences. Also, I ensured that my questioning style was more of an open-ended questioning approach, the manner in which the questions

were asked was for example “What are your thoughts on your salary” instead of “Do you think you get paid enough “. The limitation to this structure of interview was that the respondents provided information that was too similar which would have created difficulty coding, which is why it was important that I complement this interview structure with the other designs to balance out the data (Turner 2010). This design was beneficial as it allowed me to probe a bit more form the participants from their responses.

I also used the informal conversational interview (McNamara 2008 see Turner 2010) put forward that the researcher does not have to ask specific types of questions, but relies on the flow of the conversation. This was the best because it exposed me to information that I was not even aware of, it brought more insight into the salon worker’s experiences. Furthermore, the participants would interject one another to provide their own views which helped me to gain more details when they debated the responses amongst each other.

In the general interview guide, the process was more formal than the others. I was more structured in the questioning in order to iron out what I think I might have heard in the informal conversation, what I might have noticed while I was observing and also to be more specific in the questions that I might have been when the line of questioning was open-ended.

## 3.6 Ethical Considerations

It has been made a compulsory exercise by the Institutional Review Board (IRBS) for researchers to obtain informed consent from their participants. This initiative was to ensure that respondents are protected from invasion of privacy, breaches of confidentiality and also the stress that might be caused by the topic.

The researcher ensured to get permission from the owners before I conducted the interviews. Before the researcher conducted the interviews the researcher made the participants sign the informed consent form which had details of what the study is about. This was to ensure that they fully understood what they were getting into. The researcher made a point to mention that the research was for academic purposes only and there is no way that it would help them in any of the issues that will be discussed in the process of the interviews.

Furthermore, the researcher made sure to explain what was written in the form in simple terms that would be understandable to the participants and in a way that sense to them. The researcher informed the participants that for ethical reasons and the sensitivity of the information they will provide, they will be protected. The researcher tabled out to participants that the information that they provide might be incriminating for them, and to protect their identities the researcher will not use the real names of the salon operations they work in, and also their real names will not be used in the report. The informed consent allowed the respondents to gain an understanding of the intent and the purpose of the research as will be explained in the consent letter (Warren 2002:88-89).

## Chapter 4: Precarious Lives: Nexus of Informal Economies, Migrant Status and Experiences of Precarity

### 4.1 Overview of the Findings

The purpose of the following chapters is to provide the findings of the study and the analysis of the data that was collected. The themes and sub-themes that materialised from the study are; rethinking precarity by paying close attention to the subjective articulations of salon workers experiences in the workplace. Chapter 4 focuses the informal economy, first as the only sector that mostly absorbs undocumented migrants, also as the kind of economy in which the salon operations for the study operate under. Also, chapter 4 reviews and interrogates the inclusiveness of the CoJ Informal Trading Policy and how it is not inclusive in the context of Braamfontein which is the main focus of the study.

The last two chapters 5-6 are interrelated. Chapter 5 focuses on the precarious experiences of the salon workers in the workplace whilst chapter 6 is looking at the precarity of salon workers outside the workplace and both chapters are linking these precarious experiences with the migrant statuses of the salon workers. In discussing

my findings I stress the point that I have used pseudo names for the participants of this study to protect their real identity as per ethical considerations.

### 4.2 Unpacking the Informal Trading Policy of the city of Johannesburg

The chapter will briefly unpack the city of Johannesburg Informal Trading Policy regulations and the way it seeks to attend to the informal trading operations. The chapter will also argue that the CoJ Trading Policy (2007) focuses only on setting out the broad context of how the informal sector is viewed in Johannesburg. Also, the chapter will discuss the informal economy in the context of Braamfontein and how Braamfontein as space, with; the emergence the emergence and developments of gentrification influences the difference in the way informal economy operates. The relevance of reviewing the informal trading policy of the city of Johannesburg is that it will provide a lens through which we can look at how informal economy in the city of Johannesburg operates juxtaposing that with how it operates in Braamfontein, where the informal economy is not predominantly defined through street hawking, as in the COJ policy focus. Also, the policy review is important because the salon operations which are the focus of this study fall within the informal economy, but the COJ policy is directed at supporting other types of workers within the informal economy such: street traders.

The city of Johannesburg has always been a place of attraction especially to those looking for opportunities to better their lives. This dates back to the 1800s with the discovery of gold with Johannesburg being one of the mining cities (Legassick 1974). Subsequently, the Integrated Development Plan 2013/14 reviewed that informality which resulted from high migration and urbanisation was to become a permanent feature of the city of Johannesburg. The rise in the population growth in urban spaces outstripped the national population growth which meant that there was an urgent need for the development of infrastructure within the city which supports the population growth- (IDP 2013/2014).

Subsequently, the city's government was then assigned to construct and maintain a range of infrastructure which will facilitate local economic growth. The significance of understanding the management of the local economy which is the informal trading within the city extends to the context of the whole of South Africa, wherein informal trading or street trading is the big part of the economy. In any place where informality

occurs certain levels of regulation and management are imperative. Thus the informal trading policy of the city of Johannesburg was adopted in 2007 and the outlines of the policy were; management of spaces in the CBD which are demarcated for trading by issuing smart cards to traders, allocation and collection of rent and offers mentorship programme (Benit-Gbaffou 2012, CoJ 2007, IDP 2013/2014:29).

Furthermore, the policy stresses that the informal economy is important because it contributes 4.5% to the GDP and it helps to alleviate poverty by creating jobs for people who cannot be absorbed by the formal economy. Subsequently, the policy document has put down rules that allow participants of the informal economy to become commercially viable in order for the whole sector to contribute to the city's vision for the total economic growth. This economically viable environment is created through progressive policies, strategies and laws, integrated spatial planning, development of appropriate infrastructure and support services, organisation and management of public spaces and growth, and development of informal traders (CoJ 2007: 5-6).

The legislation of the policy is premised on section 22 of the Constitution of South Africa which recognises the rights and the freedom to participate in trade and for traders to choose their own profession freely. Furthermore, the legislation of the policy is also cognizant of a number of issues such as fair administration, air pollution, ensuring that the buildings assigned for the trade are up to standard as per National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act 103 of 1977 (COJ 2007:6-7).

### 4.2.1. Inclusive Policy for Informal Trading in Johannesburg: What about Braamfontein?

The city of Johannesburg trading policy was an initiative to provide an inclusive environment to those in the informal trading and also to provide a link between two economies: the informal and the formal economies (CoJ 2007). The policy has its own contextual definition of informal economy which will be used for this section. The policy defines the informal economy as a sale of legal goods/or services by individuals and or group of people in sites designated for informal trading (CoJ 2007).

Related to this particular study, in the jurisdiction of the inner city the policy also accommodates informal hair salons that operate in the CBD. There are estimated 333 hair braiders working in pavements of the inner city spreading out through the streets of Johannesburg (Mpye 2013). Though in terms of the by-laws of the environment the hair salon operations are not supposed to operate in open spaces in town, because hair pollutes the environment and the air, and there is a high risk that it can be blown by the wind into displayed food. On the same the city of Johannesburg recognises the hair salon industry as imperative in creating jobs for people and alleviate poverty. Thus the city came with a plan to accommodate salon workers in the inner city by allocating spaces for the hairdressers at linear markets and close to the taxi ranks (Mpye 2013, CoJ 2007).

However, the challenge regarding the operation of salons in the streets and open spaces is that it seems as though the salons were not in mind when the policy was drafted. Because the hair salons were allocated in the linear markets as a short-term goal. The city management has plans to move the hair salons inside buildings, where it will be hygienically viable for everyone. The fact that the policy did not directly speak to hair salon operations, resulted in the challenges that the salon workers faced with the JMPD. The salon workers at times were detained by the metro-police because they were breaking the by-laws of the city as per environment by-laws. Furthermore, the street traders are seen as the source of city disorder, they are said to be obstructing traffic flow and they are a threat to the environment. Consequently, the policy is inclusive in so far as it recognises the salon operations as part of the informal economy, however, the same city manager responsible for the policy is the same management that mandates the JMPD to ‘police’ the street traders especially salon workers as mentioned above. The street traders appear to be secure in terms spaces secured for them to trade. But they are also subjected to harassment from police and women face harassment also from men (CoJ 2007, Mpye 2013: 38, Matsipa 2014: 44).

Subsequently, Chireka (2015) further argues that migrant women are sexually harassed in street trading by men who see these women as sexually available for them. The study argues that, the policy does not accommodate the operation of informal trading in the context of Braamfontein as it is in CBD as will be discussed.

Furthermore, though the policy appears to be inclusive in nature, the policy is applicable only to a certain type of operation of the informal economy which is: an informal economy which operates as informal trading in the streets of Johannesburg. It only caters for informal traders that are operating in spaces demarcated for trading. Subsequently, having cross-examined the informal trading policy of the city of Johannesburg, it is evident that the way in which the informal economy operates in Braamfontein which is the geographical focus of the study is different than it is in the inner city. The way the informal economy in the city operates is fixated on the demarcated areas for trading. Based on the empirical research there are no trading stalls for informal trading in Braamfontein which means that the context of the informal economy will be different from the one covered by the trading policy. Also the Braamfontein Improvement Management has ensured that no trading takes place on the streets of Braamfontein by placing notices all over Braamfontein.

**Figure 1: No Trading Sign: De Korte St.**



The above sign is found in De Korte Street, and there are more situated in the streets of Braamfontein. The Braamfontein Improvement District set the above sign in all the streets to show that street trading is not allowed in Braamfontein. The BID manager stated that they use these “no trading” signs as a way to let the residents know that they are not allowed to trade in the pavements in Braamfontein. To ensure that the residents adhere to these signs the BID manager further stated that; as it was part of both the CID and BID initiative to have security guards on the streets to patrol, the security guards in Braamfontein were given a specific mandate to ensure that no trading takes place in the pavements .I then asked the BID manager, what is it that separates the security guards in Braamfontein from the ones in the inner city, she then stated that, they are all given the same mandate to patrol the streets. However the ones in Braamfontein have an extra task of keeping the streets clean of informal traders.

**Figure 2: Braamfontein Security Guards :Stiemens St**

[2]

Furthermore, when I asked the BID manager if they were aware of the informal hair salons operating in Braamfontein, she stated that as management of Braamfontein they were aware of them, however, they had no way of regulating it the way it is regulated in the inner city (BID manager*). The BID manager further stated that in the context of Braamfontein it is hard to regulate the informal economy because hair salon in the Braamfontein operates informally within buildings that are formally operated. The BID manager stated that the reason they try to keep the pavements clear of traders unlike in the inner city was that Braamfontein was part of the inner city's improvement project. As result, the way Braamfontein's space is treated is different from the way the inner city is treated. As management, they have to keep Braamfontein clean of street traders as part of the improvement processes (BID Manager).

### 4.3. Braamfontein as a Space and the Experiences of Informality

Exploring Braamfontein as space is imperative for the research because it will enrich the study by contextualising the experiences of migrant salon workers in Braamfontein. One of the factors that stands out in the COJ trading policy is the subject of space; the regulations of the policy are based on informal trading which is spatially contextualised. As discussed already, the focus of the policy is on trading

[2] Consent was given to take the photo and use it for the research

that takes place in demarcated spaces, the document states “Informal trading taking place on private property does not fall within the scope of this policy”, also “Trading in private residences in a form of spaza shops,shebeens and taverns is not subject to this policy …” (COJ 2007:9).

This clearly shows that there is a specific form of informal trading that the policy accommodates which is the one that takes place in spaces demarcated for informal trading only. Furthermore, part C of the policy states that spatial planning and development in the city will be cognizant of the needs and requirements of the informal trading sector as such spatial planning will be an obligation for the informal trading as a whole (COJ 2007:10). This then raises questions about what does this focus on spatiality mean for Braamfontein informal economy regarding “inclusiveness” of the policy. Thus looking at spatiality for Braamfontein should provide necessary data to understand how the informal economy in Braamfontein operates and what that means for the experiences of migrant salon workers.

### 4.3.1 The Concept of Space

The study has established the significance of space as a primary factor in the experiences that people have, in the workplace and social life. To be specific, the way in which the informal trading policy of Johannesburg was spatially oriented shows how imperative space is. Also, the legislation of the policy is very specific in how the policy should be applied and detailed about the spaces that it is applicable in. The very spaces that the policy focuses on are the focal point of the “difference” in the way the informal economy operates in Braamfontein. Thus thinking about space becomes a necessary exercise for the study to provide a contextual experience of the salon workers in Braamfontein as compared to the salon workers in the inner city.

Gans’ (2002) conceptualisation of space is resourceful in the process of conceptualising space. Following Gans’ (2002) ideas of space, the study will theorise about Braamfontein’s space in order understand how space affects the way in which the informal economy operates in Braamfontein and what that means for the migrant salon workers who are part of the informal economy. Gans’ further asserts that in the processes of imagining space what becomes relevant is to look at land use, location, density propinquity, public space, neighbourhood, community and political economy.

He asserts that in each case of the above mentioned the users and the uses involved determine what takes place in the natural and the social space, and the effects are brought about by the social agents and their actions (Gans 2002:330).

Subsequently, for the relevance of the study, the focus will be on Gans conception of 'use of land' since it reveals the way in which the use of land is central to social life which becomes relevant for the purposes of looking at the experiences of migrant salon workers in Braamfontein. In the context of the salon workers as will be shown in the following chapter, the issues of rent for migrant salon operations is one of the dominant issues which determines whether/if the salon workers are able to provide for their families, and in the case of migrants it also determines if they would be able to send money to their families in Zimbabwe. Gans (2002) puts forward, in a case where there is a demand for land in most cities drives not only the poor but many into spending half of their income on rent which then brings focus on the notion of how space indirectly shapes the lives of people, family budgets and decisions (Gans 2002:330).

In comparison to the salon operations in the inner city that operate in demarcated spaces for trading, the way space is used and integrated with the informal trading is in the favour of the salon workers because they do not have high rent cost that they have to worry about unlike in Braamfontein. What the study takes out of this conceptualisation of space is the influence of space in the general context of one's life and also how space can 'precarize' the experiences of people.

### 4.3.2 Braamfontein Space

Primarily Braamfontein was birthed as a business node. Braamfontein has always been part of Johannesburg since 1886 and it was originally a farm which was later changed into a township which was the extension of Johannesburg. A big transformation took place in the 1950s when the then council made a decision to relocate the seat of the city of Johannesburg from the CBD to Braamfontein and also when the rezoning of land in Braamfontein took place to allow commercial rights and development. This was an attraction for big corporations like ESKOM, SAB, ICI, SAPPI, LIBERTY and SHELL (Burocco 2013:36-38).

Burocco (2013) asserts that over the years Braamfontein developed into an “up-market” trendy place with a number of expensive sneaker shops, coffee places and renovated buildings which are an attraction to student accommodation. Burocco further states that this transformation was pioneered by key actors both from the public and the private communities such JDA, Art Culture and Heritage, Constitutional Hill, Witwatersrand University and Urban Genesis and also the private sector, South Point, Play Braamfontein, small businesses and restaurants (Burocco 2013:56-77).

Subsequently, the BID Manager put forward that Braamfontein precinct is one of the City of Johannesburg’s Improvement regeneration projects. The regeneration project was a private sector together with the public sector initiative. The Johannesburg Development Agency in 2002 upgraded the public environment creating a safe pedestrian environment and vibrant public spaces which had a line of retail and social activities, with public art, coffee shops, restaurants, art galleries and theatres. This project was managed by a City Improvement District which is a private sector-led mechanism for urban revitalisation and the CID ensured that Braamfontein was a restricted area in terms of informal trading (JDA site Johannesburg Inner City Investment Trends 2015, BID Manager).

Burocco (2013) further states that Braamfontein is one of the places that is a perfect example of showcasing the Johannesburg City regeneration project, after bringing the by-laws and legislation to control the numbers of informal traders in the area (Burocco 2013:35). Consequently, the hair salon operations for the study are located within Braamfontein which has a different demographics and space of operation than the ones found in Johannesburg Central Business District, to which the CoJ policy is mostly for. The by-laws of the ITP are for informalities that take place in public spaces demarcated for street traders which are not found in Braamfontein. The informal trading in Braamfontein is more restricted than it is in the Central Business District. It is restricted in the sense that informal trading in Braamfontein takes place within formal private property enterprises and the hair salons for this study operate within buildings that are rented out as part of formal business enterprises, but the way in which the salon business is operated does not fall within the formal business economy.

### 4.3.3 How is Braamfontein Space Restrictive for the Salon Workers?

The operation of salons in the demarcated spaces in the inner city, their accessibility and visibility to clients is an advertisement in itself. As a result, the salon workers in the city of Johannesburg were unhappy about the city manager's plan to move salon workers into buildings instead of operating in the pavements. The salon workers argued that; the buildings were far and closed off from their client base and that operating inside the building it would be a risk for their business. The hair stylists also complained about the rent costs that they will have to pay once moving inside the building.

Subsequently, based on the above assertions from the salon workers operating in town, I then observed the salons in Braamfontein to examine how space was affecting these migrant salon workers. Based on those observations, I noticed that the hairstylist indeed within buildings seemed far and unreachable from their clients. To a certain point, the buildings where the salons operate have pictures on the wall that advertises to the people that pass by that there is a salon inside. However, in all the salons whenever a hair stylist doesn't have a client they are busy with, there is a chair outside that one of them sits on with a board in the hand calling people as they pass to come inside to do their hair. This clearly shows that they feel invisible from potential clients even with the advertisements on the walls they still feel the need to be on the streets to make themselves visible to clients. Furthermore, the issue of rent comes up in the responses of the hairstylist and salon owners that it's a challenge because they are not making a lot of money for their expenses and they feel that the rent to a large extent puts a dent on the money they make. Subsequently Braamfontein as a space is restrictive when it comes to the operation of the business based on accessibility to their customers. Salon workers operating in Braamfontein are not as accessible as those in the city. Also the rent in comparison to the salon workers who trade in town is another factor which affects their informality negatively compared to the inner city traders.

However, there is less violence and vulnerability that these migrant salon workers in Braamfontein experience in comparison to the ones in the city of Johannesburg. Palmary, Hamber and Nunez (2014:5) put forward that the precarious people that

are in the streets of Johannesburg the state [through the police] is the greatest threat to them. Palmary et al(2014) further state that in 2013 the CoJ had a campaign of removing street traders in the inner city whom most of them were migrants in the name of cleaning the city. As result, to a certain extent this alludes the less vulnerability, less violence and less insecurity which becomes evident in the way that Braamfontein salon workers narrate their stories. Perhaps, the way in which informal economy operates in Braamfontein feels different, less despotic because workers might easily feel like they are part of the formal economy since the salon operations vastly operate within the formal. The fact that the informal economy in Braamfontein operates within the formal economy makes the harsh reality of the informality less painful as compared to how informality operates in the inner city. These migrant workers are not exposed to harassment by police like the salon workers in the city.

Terms of Informality

As discussed above there are differences between the CBD and Braamfontein regarding how informal economy operates. The way in which informal economy is regarded in the inner city is through informal trading which takes place on the pavements as per informal trading policy of Johannesburg (2007). However, in the context of Braamfontein, the informal economy which encompasses the migrant salons for the study operate within rented spaces. Trading occurs within buildings; there are no demarcated places on the streets for trading or any activity which involves services of good. The BID manager stated that the way in which informal economy operates in Braamfontein corresponds to the inner city by laws as per ITP of COJ however, the by-laws are tweaked to fit the context of Braamfontein. She stated “In the formation of CID in 2004 part of the agreement with the inner city was that Braamfontein will remain a no trading zone” (BID Manager).

Subsequently regarding the system in which the salon workers become salon workers though the ‘counter system’, which basically means that people are hired as they walk in the shop looking for employment. Most of the participants for the study were hired through the counter or through word of mouth and they were not offered any contract for their term of work. Sbusiso* an owner of Macufe Hair Salon when he was asked if he offers any contracts to his employees he stated “*There are no contracts that I give to my workers- when they come through that door and ask for a*

*job I test them first to see if they can do hair and I measured it. If I am happy then they hired no paperwork involved*" (Interview, Sbusiso). Informality manifests through employment relations and contractual terms which means the owner of the salon has a formal relationship with the landlord/property owner, however, the salon workers have informal relations with the salon owner. This is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The environment and the set -up of Braamfontein is restrictive and because of the developments that have taken place meant that the standard of living is a bit costly than it is in the CBD. Furthermore, property rates compared to the CBD in Braamfontein are expensive. Burocco (2013) puts forward that it is impossible to ignore how the increase in the cost of rent in Braamfontein will in the future be the cause of residents leaving Braamfontein to other places. The high rent costs in Braamfontein, which the salon owners are also affected by, affects those who rent chairs/mirrors mostly (see Chapter 5).

Mpye (2013:34) states that street traders in the CBD are expected to pay a levy for the spaces they use for trading. The money they pay goes towards keeping the city clean and secure by paying security guards and cleaners. The levy varies depending on the trading space that one uses, between R40-R100 per month. In Braamfontein, the salon workers rent chairs/mirror and the prices range between R400-500 per week. Sbusiso* the owner of Macufe* hair salon when asked how much he rents, he stated that the rent is high because it does not include water and electricity. He pays R5 500 rent and the money he pays for electricity and water fluctuate between R1 500 and R2 000. From his response, it becomes clear that trading in Braamfontein is more expensive compared to the inner city. This is further elaborated in the following chapter.

## 4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the nuanced meanings of informal economy comparing the CBD and the Braamfontein informal trading. Also unpacked the City of Johannesburg Informal Trading Policy which was a good initiative from the city council to create an inclusive economy for all the city's residents. However, the limitations of the policy are that it is limited to only public spaces demarcated for trading. As much as the policy also caters for Braamfontein, it disadvantages the

informal trading participants because they are not allowed to trade in the pavements which could be beneficial for their businesses, and they are subjected higher rent rates. The next chapter will be a detailed description of the different hair salons that were used for the study.

## CHAPTER 5: Forms of Hair Salon Operations and Experiences in the work Place

This chapter explores the nuanced meanings of the salon workers experiences of precarity. The chapter will also unpack the salon workers' ambivalence about their state of being. On one hand they convince themselves they are doing well here in South Africa because things are worse back home in Zimbabwe, however, on the other hand when they look at their realities they realise that they are actually in a vulnerable situations. Thus, the chapter argues as much as there are a number of features of hairdressing salons that could be described as precarious, the hairdressers within those decent work deficit and precarious conditions construct work for themselves.

To unpack the experiences of the hairdressers in the work place and whether they are precarious or not, and also to hear their subjective articulation of their experiences as precarious or not precarious. The first part of this section will provide the working conditions: the hours, wages, employment relationships, skill, training and how they address conflict in the work places. This serves as the general composition and a brief background of the salon operations of the study. Then the following subsection will focus on the working conditions and the hairdressers' access to work opportunities. Also, focus on the gig economy as part of the informal economy, and also address questions of precariousness: to look at whether there is any link between the "migrant status" of salon workers and experiences of precarity in the work place. Also look at issues emotional labour as an imperative and part of the process of the hairdresser's work.

### 5.1 Description of Hair Salons

<u>Self Employed Mirror Renters (Beauty Hair Salon)</u>

Mirror renting falls into the category of self-employment. Agarwala (2016:106) states that self-employment refers to owners of small businesses that are unregulated that offer services and goods to people and the ILO (2002) puts forward that 'self-employed' people are those who work on their own account, they have no employer.

**Figure 5: Beauty Hair Salon***



Beauty Hair Salon*[3] is a mirror renting salon. The hairdressers that work here are self-employed own account workers. The five "mirror renter" hairdressers that were interviewed three of them previously worked for someone but decided to work for themselves because of various reasons. One of the reasons which stand out across the hair stylist is that the pay was not enough from their previous work hence they opted to work for themselves. Thoko* one of the hairstylists working as a mirror renter at Beauty Hair salon asserts *"I have been working for myself for a year now, I was employed somewhere before- and I need to grow that is why I left and the money was not that good*" (Interview, Thoko). She stated that she used to be paid R500 per week, and she used to work Monday-Saturday 08:00-18:00.

[3] The asterisk is to show that pseudonyms have been used.

Zaho* was also employed in her aunt's salon when she arrived in South Africa in the year 2010. She decided to be a self-employed mirror renter in 2015 because she wanted to start her own business. She puts forward that working for her aunt was good for her to understand business and how things worked in South Africa. She also complained that she was not making good money at the time but her reasoning is different from others. She states "*I did not care how much I was making because I was working for family. I was just glad that I finally came to South Africa. My aunt was just helping me, sometimes she would just give 800 per month when it was a good month for her, and I was staying with her I did not have rent to pay*" (Interview, Zaho).

Debbie* states that she worked for someone when she stayed in Pretoria. When she moved to Braamfontein she started her own businesses by renting a mirror. She puts forward that the rates in Pretoria are different than they are here in Braamfontein, she was getting paid 3800 per month which was not that bad. She puts forward that the rates here in Braamfontein range between 2800 -3500. However, she states that she wanted to start her own business when she moved to Braamfontein and that is how she became a mirror renter.

Debbie* became a mirror renter because of the autonomy working for herself would offer. Furthermore common amongst the self-employed salon workers is the sense of pride they feel for themselves for the fact that they do not have an employer. To them it seems like an achievement; it is as though they own a business and it makes them feel fulfilled in a particular way. It is the case that, these migrant women keep looking back to the experiences they had back home and they use that experiences as a measure of how far off they have grown financially. Also, regarding precarious situations, they think about how things would have been at home and make conclusions based on that kind of thought process.

Working Hours: Most of the things that the self-employed workers enjoy the most is the flexibility of their time to start work and leave work. They have no fixed time to work. Sometimes they start to run their errands in town before going to work and they leave work late in the afternoon.

Earnings: Their earnings range between R4000-5000 on good business months. When business is slow the range is between R1 500-2 500. Their salaries fluctuate in between these ranges.

Training/Skill: Noni* has a Diploma in Business Administration. Debbie* has form 4 which is equivalent to Grade 12 in South Africa, Zaho has grade 11 and Thoko has a training certificate to teach children. She used to teach at crèche. Sne* has a certificate in health care for old age people. None-of them has formal training in hairdressing.

Rent: They all pay a rent of R500 per week for the mirrors. They pay a weekly fee to the salon owner, who is responsible for utilities and maintenance of the building. The salon owner/building owner in exchange for the rent that the hairstylist pay, they receive a mirror, hydraulic salon chair, shampoo bowls and “hood” dryer.

Recruitment Process: Based on the detail that these migrant salon workers are undocumented, social networks serve as a source of information for availability of workspaces in certain salons. Subsequently, there is no formal recruitment process. It is through word of mouth process. Because these salon workers do not have an employer, they do not have to prove themselves to the salon owner/building owner if they can do hair. All it takes is the notion of knowing people who know people who have spaces in their salons to vouch for that particular client. This depends on the connections that one has with the people from their own countries.

When I asked salon workers why they decided to work for themselves, there were mixed responses. For other salon workers, the decision to work on their own stemmed from the fact that they felt they were not making as much money as they would have loved to make as resulted decided to work on their own, Thoko* put forward, “I felt it was best I work for myself because I realise that the heads of people I do per day, I am making that money for someone else. And that money could have been coming straight to me” (Interview, Thoko). Furthermore, for other salon workers, self-employment gave them a sense of achievement and success. They attached working for themselves as a sign that they have “made it “(which means they have reached success). For others it was just a viable idea that was available to make money.

Macufe Hair Salon*(Owner-Zimbabwean)

Macufe* Hair Salon is Zimbabwean owned salon in Braamfontein. The salon has 15 staff members, 12 of them are hair stylists, 1 person is responsible for doing nails, and there are 2 people acting as receptionists and salespersons for the products that are sold in the salon. The salon is made up of two sides, which is the side where people do hair and the other side is where they stock the products they use, like the extensions, relaxer creams and weaves. They make their weaves to sell to customers or sometimes customers come with extensions to have their weaves custom made for them.

Employment Relations:

The hairdressers are employed on a basic salary plus commission basis. They are offered a guaranteed base salary of R2 000 plus 40% commission of what each hair stylist makes during the month. The advantage of this type of arrangement is that the hair stylist can rely on their base salary during low sales time. Also, the basic salary is a profitable deal for the hairstylist because it ensures that they are able to make ends meet during the time when business is not good. This deal is also beneficial for the employer because they set the salary very low given that the employee has the ability to earn more based on their excellent performance. The hair stylist states that at an average the salary ranges between R3000 and 3 500 and this range covers both good and bad months. Furthermore, the hair stylists are employed informally. They do not have a formal employment contract

Working Hours

The standard time that the salon opens is 7 o'clock in the morning. The first person to arrive at work will be the first one to be assigned the first customer who comes to the salon. There is no time set for knocking-off at work; it all depends on the clients and also no official break time, they eat when one doesn't have a client.

Training/ Skill: The hairdressers at this salon who were interviewed for this study have no formal training. They learned the skill through watching others do hair and growing up doing hair from an early age. Sethu* and Rudo* have a National Diploma in Business Administration, Sbusiso* has a Diploma in Banking Financials. Gillian|* and Tanaka* have high school education and Bola* was a hairdresser even back at home.

Recruitment Process: There is no formal recruitment process. People get work by mostly being referred by someone, also just walking in the salon and asking for a job or through word of mouth. These type of hair stylists have an employer, therefore they first have to show the capabilities to the employer before they get hired. They are given a trial period of about a week to prove that they can do hair then they are employed. However, when they have good references or good recommendations they do not have to prove themselves, for example when the person comes through someone they know and that person vouches for them then they are trusted on the spot (they vouch for one another based on the fact that they come from the same country).

Grievances: In terms of conflict management within the store the owner overseas everything. The salon workers put forward that when they have grievances they address them. I then asked them to make an example of an instance when they addressed something at work. Sethu* gave me an example that one time, there was a misunderstanding between two hairstylists where they argued about who came to work first. They are allocated clients based on how early one arrived at work, so what had happened that day was that; one of the hairstylists was the first one to arrive but she went to town only the person who opened the shop had seen her. But that person after opening the shop left. When the hairstylist came back from town she was put last to be allocated a client, as she was seen only arriving at that time. She fought to be placed closer to those who came first so that she could get a client sooner as she claimed to be the first one to arrive. They argued amongst each other about who should get clients first before who without resolving anything until they decided to take it to management for solutions. The manager resolved the issue by phoning the guy who opened the shop and confirmed with him whether the lady was there in the morning. After it was confirmed then the lady was given a customer first.

Consequently, the issue here is that there is no system in place to record who comes to work at what time, everything is done around the shop as per witness. They use one another as a system to run the shop. There is no book which they sign in for the time they clock in and the time they clock out thus recording the actual hours they work.

Fatou Hair Salon* (Owner- South Africa)

Fatou* hair salon is situated just close to the University. This is one of the busiest hair salons and because there is always a pull of people queuing to do their hair, there is no pressure to go an extra mile keeping clients. This salon is managed by two South African men who alternate their shifts on a daily basis. There are 30 hair stylists made up of different nationalities, Nigerians, Congolese, Zimbabweans, others from Mozambique and few South Africans. There is a general assumption from clients, and this comes out also outside the scope of this study that migrants are way better than South Africans when it comes to doing hair. As long as the hairstylist is not South African, they are trusted, clients gravitate towards them. But because there is an employer who stays in the shops, most time the employer delegates to whom the clients should go.

Getting access to interview the hair stylists was a challenge because they are not allowed to have extended conversations with clients. Also, the owners would not allow for the interview to take place within the salon; they argued that there was no time for them to do the interviews while they were at work. As a result, I could not interview the hairstylist when they were at work I only managed to interview three Zimbabwean hair stylist. The interviews took place outside the workplace. One of the participants stated that the reason they were not allowed to speak or form relations with their customers was that their managers were worried that they would steal their customers. She further stated that at times it happens that clients exchange numbers with them. They get asked by clients sometimes to do them in their homes after hours. To avoid this from happening the owners make sure that on daily basis one of them is in the shop to oversee the running of the day (Interview, Mudiwa).

Employment Relations: They earn a standard basic salary of 3000 every month. There is no structure in place where they address their grievances. What is prevalent among these hairstylists is that they just want to keep quiet and do their work and not complain about anything. And this comes up a lot from the interviews; where there is a case where the hairstylist make comments like “I just want to mind my own business” or “I do not want to stir any trouble” (Interview, Mudiwa and Vimbo). These kinds of comments; even though they are common to experiences of migrants when they are outside of the work place, these salon workers seem to have that mentality even within the work place. Comments like these also show that even if these salon workers are unhappy about something at work chances of bringing it up are very

minimal. This could be tied to the fact that they were migrants in the salon and that renders them voiceless. However, the salon workers were not quick to link these experiences that leave them voiceless at workplace to the fact that they are undocumented, but based on the fact that they are migrants. When I asked Mudiwa who works at Fatou Hair Salon owned by a South African, if she felt some of the experiences they go through (like being asked to do work that South Africans don't want to do) if she thought had anything to do with her migrant status? She stated that it was because they are migrants not necessarily because she is undocumented (Interview, Mudiwa).

Working Hours: They start working at 08:00 in the morning and leave at 18:00 in the evening provided a person is not busy with any client. They do not have break time, they eat as they work.

Training/Skill: There is no formal training that they went through, doing hair was self-taught.

Recruitment Process: The hair stylists are required to hand in CVs. If there is space they are given a week to showcase their skill and if the manager is not happy with the work they are told not to come back. There is no procedure for dealing with conflicts within the workplace, problems are dealt with as they come and issues are settled as they present themselves and the managers oversee the whole process. The hairstylists in this salon do not have any formal employment contract.

### 5.2 Working Conditions: Precarious Work?

Standing (2011) puts forward that the precariat "is a worker who lacks a secure work-based identity" because they lack adequate income, protection against dismissals, upward mobility, protection against accidents, opportunities to gain new skill assurance of stable income and the right to collective representation (Standing 2011:10). The salon workers work under exploitative conditions, long hours with no lunch breaks, no work contracts and low pay, as we have seen across the three different contexts.

#### 5.2.1 Long Hours and Low Wages

When one of the hair stylists was asked how many hours does she work, she stated, “We start working at 7 am. We don’t have a specific time to go home it depends on the clients” then I probed a bit more and asked the participant, what is the latest time that she has ever gone home, and she stated that the latest was 10 pm. I asked her if the company organizes transportation when they have to go home that late, she stated that they have to organize transport themselves (Interview, Sethu).Long hours of work with no lunch breaks seem to be common across all operations. The workers only eat when they are not working on any client. This is a rule at Macufe* and the Fatou Hair Salon* that they are allowed to sit and have lunch only when there is no customer waiting to be served. As for the self-employed mirror renters they control their own time, but also, through observations it seems to be a standard procedure not to allocate time for lunch.

The self-employed mirror renters also stated that, they do not have starting time that is set to start work. The salon workers sometimes come to work very early to have an early start especially when they feel under pressure financially. Thus, financial demands to a certain point controls their works schedule. It controls the time they start work and what time they finish,

> Zaho* stated “My target every month that I try to reach is at least 4500. I need to be able to pay my bills. To be able to do that depends on doing as many clients as I can. Sometimes when I am under pressure I don’t take time off even when I am sick because it will cost you money to stay at home. I cannot just take days off especially now that I work for myself- I have a target-I have to push and come to work- I depend on it” (Interview, Zaho).

The process of self- regulation evident in the above quote is the feature of the gig economy as discussed below.

Subsequently, as for the wages that the hairdressers earn/make, most of the hairdressers have to split the earnings between two families. The salon workers lamented that as much as they are able to support their families the money is way too little. I asked one of the hair stylists, what they thought of their salary, Bola*

> “I think a lot- it is not enough for everything I need to do. I sometimes send like R1000 depending on how much I got paid in that month. I get paid on

> commission but I have a base salary of R2000 so when I did not do many clients then my salary is not a lot. I will get something like R2800, then I cannot send any money home in those months if I get paid less than R1000. I have a lot of expenses, I stay in Hillbrow, my rent is R1100 and I have a child in school. It's tough sometimes when I am running low on money I am forced to ask one of my relatives from home to send me money, but sometimes my boss loans us money when we run out during the month but take from our salaries" (Interview, Bola).

I further asked Bola if the loans they were given by their boss accumulated any interests, she put forward that they are not expected to pay back the money with interests. She further stated "He is helping us, he is doing us a favour-he doesn't charge us extra"

Sethu* stated "What is important is that we survive from it" when she was asked what she thought of her salary. Thoko* responded that "It is so hard to send cash home because of the dollar. The rand to the dollar doesn't make much of a difference. So if I send them cash, they are only able to buy two items from it. So it is better for me to send them food than cash. It is cheaper to buy food here than at home. There is a truck which transports food from here to Zimbabwe. I send them food every month. My wage is too little, it is cheaper to buy food" (Interview, Sethu). When Vimbo* was asked if she earned enough money to take care of herself and her family she stated, "I earn 3000 per month, I have to pay rent 1 100 and look after my two kids pay uniform, transport for them to go to school. It is difficult to send money home, when I can I do send it (Interview, Vimbo).

It is clear from these responses that these salon workers are just surviving. From the money they earn and the extensive hours they put on to work they still struggle to make a good living, they are just surviving. The salon workers do not have any type of jobs that they are doing on the sides to supplement the money they earn. They solely depend on the money they make from doing people's hair.

The mirror-renters state that one of the challenges they have is that; they don't feel secure as "self -employed" workers because there is no guarantee that they will make it financially every month. They argue that they have to work extra hard all the time to be able to meet their monthly expenses and it is a strenuous process. There

is no security in terms of a monthly income. Their wages fluctuate depending on the number of clients they have in a month as shown from the quotes. However, they argue that being self- employed is worth it because the money they make directly comes to them. Also, they are able to look after their families on a daily basis with the cash they get daily from their clients without waiting for the end of the month to get paid. They are able to look after their immediate families on a daily basis and try to send some home (Zimbabwe) on a monthly basis. Furthermore, the fact that they are self-employed gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment as Debbie* stated: “This feels good with all the challenges it comes with, it’s like I am running my own business” (Interview, Debbie).

Consequently, across the different context hairdressers experience similar forms of insecurity despite the difference in their arrangements, which then brings focus to the precarious nature of participating in the informal economy and particularly bringing light to the kinds of issues that hairdressers deal with.

### 5.2.2 Work Opportunities

The mirror renters were asked how difficult it is to get a mirror. Zaho* who is a mirror renter stated that “It is not difficult to get a mirror, but to have clients is the hard part because clients have to trust and know you”. I further asked, how does she then make sure that she gets clients? She added

> “I mostly depend on the word of mouth to get clients. I make sure to tell every client I get to tell their friends and other people to come to me”. Also when you do them nicely they tell their friends to come to you, I exchange numbers with them so they can give to people so that they can reach me. I also make use of WhatsApp to keep in contact with the clients. Sometimes I put a plug card outside to show people the different types of hairstyles I can do” (Interview, Zaho)

However, Sne* who is also a mirror renter stated,

> “For me, it is difficult to get a job because you have to make sure that you can do hair, you let your work speak for you, let your work be the one that draws people to you. There is many of us, the competition is high. You constantly have to prove your capability. Getting a mirror is one thing (which is not hard) getting clients is another thing” (Interview, Sne).

I then asked Sne* what is the average amount of money she makes per hour, and she stated that they do not earn per hour but per head. Sne* stated that the amount ranges between 150- 400 per head.

Debbie* (mirror renter) responded to the question of how difficult it is to get a job and stated that; it all depends on getting clients. Also Thoko* puts forwards that getting a mirror to rent is not difficult but getting clients is hard. She further stated,

> "This is a very competitive business you know. When clients come through the door you pray inside that 'Oh God send her to me'. Send her to my direction. (She laughs) then she says, you know what we do (laughs again) you will be doing someone's hair and busy looking at the door for clients walking in and you jump to go help them. It's tough" (Interview, Thoko).

Then I asked the hairstylist who has an employer, how difficult was it to get a job. Vimbo* who is an employee at Fatou* salon stated it was not hard getting a job. She further stated that she wants to look for another job because she is not satisfied with how much she earns. Tanaka* who is employed at Macufe salon (earning on commission) asserts that it was not difficult to get the job but making sure that she gets many clients is the hard part. She put forward that she gets paid on commission the amount of her wages depends mostly on the number of clients she has. Sethu* who is also employed at Macufe* stated that to get a salon job is not difficult there is a lot of salons around and also getting the jobs was not hard.

Subsequently, looking at the above responses of the hairdressers shedding light to their working conditions and access job opportunities (in a form access to a big client base) particularly self-employed hairdressers and those that work on commission; it is clearly imperative for the hairdressers to find alternative ways to cope within these conditions. Thus, the migrant hairdressers find the gig economy to be an innovative and beneficial in their participation in the informal economy.

### 5.3 The Gig Economy and Social Media

The emergence of gig economy characterised by online platforms and isolated independent workers, pose some fundamental challenges to the traditional models of regulating work and setting standards (Stewart et al 2017). However, these are the features that make gig economy a viable for the informal economy. The salon

operations which were the focus of the study particularly the self-employed workers and the hairdressers employed on commission find the online presence to be a fundamental aspect in ensuring that they keep clients and advertise their expertise online. In the context of Braamfontein and how the informal economy operates as already noted in chapter four, the physical restrictions enforced on the hairdressers by the bylaws the impact of online presence becomes more significant for the hairdressers as part of their processes in participating in the economy. Subsequently, Ueno (2014) states that, the digital media age is useful particularly to migrants because it facilitates processes of recruitment and transnational communication with their home countries.

Furthermore, Lewchuck et al (2017) argue that the gig economy is part of the precarious forms of employment. However the study will not discuss the precariousness of the gig economy, but how the tools used in gig work are actually helpful for migrants running of the salon businesses. Thus the focus is on the media platform specifically the use of WhatsApp centred approach to business, which works best for the hairdressers that were the focus of the study. These undocumented salon workers find ways in the precariousness of doing gig work in their favour in the precarious work conditions they are under.

Subsequently, Stewart and Stanford (2017) argue that the qualitative features of the gig work are not new; but the way in which technology is utilised to coordinate and facilitate the organization of the work is new. Like the gig economy, the many existing types of work are characterised by irregular work schedules, driven by variations of demands for services. Also, the expectation of gig worker to provide their own capital equipment needed to perform their work is not new; it dates back to the earliest days of capitalism (Stanford et al 2017). However, what makes the gig economy different from other types of occupation is the centred use of technology to run the business.

The use of technology is one of the features of running the salon business. The hair stylist makes use of social media apps to advertise their work and keep communication lines with their clients. Based on observations, the use of social network particularly WhatsApp helps the hairdressers to also maintain some sort of control over their clients, and ensures that they don’t lose them to fellow colleagues

and also to ensure that they come back. This type of operation within the gig economy Stewart et al (2017) put forward that it a “Work-on-demand’ systems, which entails a more traditional, physical and ‘real world’ tasks. The jobs unlike the traditional nature of employment are organised through online platforms.

**Figure 3: Client and Hairstylist Check-Up**



[4]

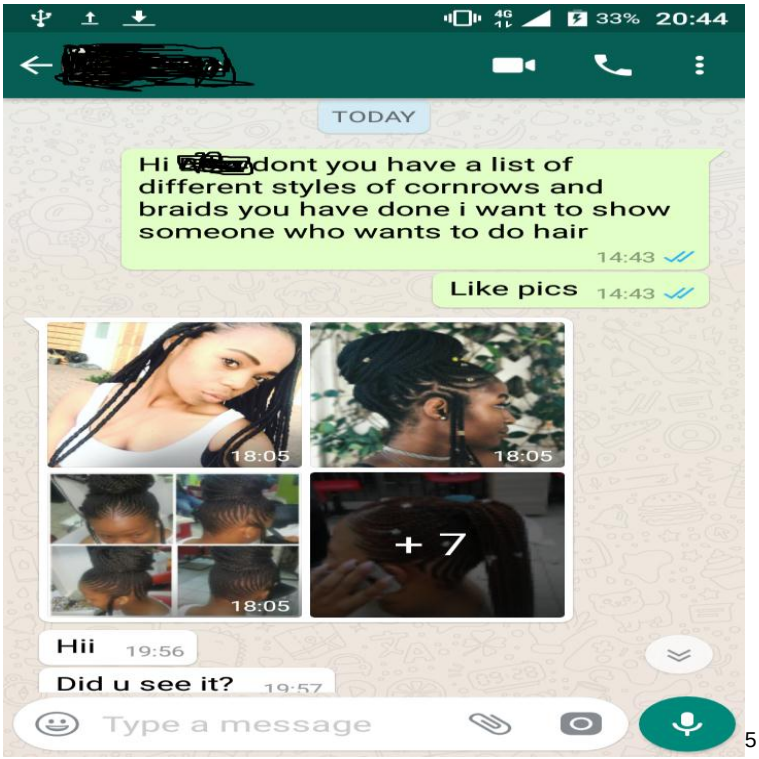
This is a chat that took place between me and one of the hairdressers Zaho*. Though there is not much in the content of the chat related to the study; the chat was just a random check up on me a client. These hairstylists have random conversations like this with most of their clients, and the conversations are not necessarily related to the clients’ hair. For instance asking the clients when they will come for their next appointment etc. The check-up is a way to maintain the client base. The self-employed salon workers make it a point to exchange numbers with their clients when they come to the salon. The self- employed mirror renter

[4] Consent was given for the above WhatsApp conversation, provided I hide the names of the people chatting.

hairstylists put forward that; when clients walk into their salons to do hair, they have no control over them coming in other than the advertisements on the salon walls. However, the hairstylists know they do control whether the clients come back to the salon or not. Hence they are big on maintaining communication with their clients. Chatting with their clients over time also ensures that they do not run the risk of losing their clients to their fellow colleagues provided the client comes back to do hair again. Furthermore, these salon migrants use the WhatsApp as an advertising platform for people who need jobs, also they showcase their skills on social networks.

Furthermore, the use of social media is beneficial also for the clients because they are able to make appointments with the hairstylists before they come to the salons. Usually what happens is that; if the hairstylist has a full day, they would ask that particular client to come the following day or any day the clients feel comfortable with; instead of coming to the salon when it is busy to wait the whole day.

**Figure 3: Hairstylist Advertising her Work**



[5]

The above figure shows a conversation that took place between one of the hairdressers with a client requesting photos of hair styles that the hairdresser is able

[5] Consent to use the photo was given.

to do, which she shared with me. This is how they mostly advertise themselves. Furthermore, these salon workers especially self -employed workers are big on using the social media to secure their jobs (their clients). Based on observations, the salon business is highly competitive and they need these relations with clients to secure themselves. In the context of Braamfontein for example; almost every street and every second building that one passes there is a salon operation. In most cases, a number of salon operations function in the same building offering similar services. The fact that they operate closely with one another offering same services to the same client base; competing for clients becomes inevitable. The issue of clients becomes more of an issue when it comes to self-employed mirror renters because they operate within the same space, offering the same services. The fight for clients becomes more intense.

It is palpable that these migrant hairdresser have to go through lengths to ensure survival. They have to constantly find alternative ways to negotiate their existence and ensure livelihood. Consequently, this raises questions around the pressing issues which subjects these migrant women to precarious conditions. As result, the following section will look at whether the 'undocumented' migrant status has any bearing on the precarious experiences of these hairdressers.

### 5.4 The relationship between migrant status and precarity

Under labour law, illegal immigrants are protected however under the Immigration Law Section 38(1) Act of 2002(amendment 2004) states that no persons shall employ an illegal foreigner. The Human Rights Watch (2006) asserts that there is legislation in the Immigration Act to arrest and deport (illegal) undocumented foreigners. Migrant 'illegality' refers to a state of existence which works as a disciplining mechanism for undocumented immigrants, it is a condition ascribed to the illegal/unlawful entry (into a particular country) and working/staying in that country without any official documentation authorising them to do so (Pinedo, 2009). However, Choudry et al (2016) challenge the categorisation of referring to migrants as illegal because they do not hold any proper document, and they question the ethical basis of calling migrants illegal. Also, social movements and progressive NGOs have further stressed that there is no one who is illegal and also "illegal

migrants" has a normative connotation and conveys the idea of criminality (Hlatshwayo and Choudry 2016, Van Driel 2008, Grant 2005).

Furthermore, there is a number of reasons why migrants cross the borders or enter other countries illegally. Some cannot afford to pay for visas, and also because employers in the informal sector do not provide recommendation letters for them (migrant workers) for 'work permit' (which increases the employers' chances of exploiting the workers, because of their illegal status).

When I asked one of the salon workers how did they come to South Africa she state,

> "I didn't have a passport when I came- I had to pay someone to arrange me crossing over". I then asked her to explain what that process was like, she then explained that; "It's a long process. You have to keep everything undercover, the authorities must not know about it. My uncle knew someone who works on the border who knew someone that transports people through. My uncle is the one who was the mediator, so we paid the driver who then negotiates at the border with the authorities. But you must make sure that even when you reach South Africa you don't attract attention" (Interview, Gillian).

Noni "I only have asylum-but to get a permit now is hard, I heard that it is even that they don't give them out anymore". When I was coming to South Africa though I just applied for a visa for visiting just to pass the borders, it expired then I applied for asylum. I only have asylum now" (Interview, Noni). Vimbo*, Rudo* and Bola put forward that they also came to South Africa for visiting. They had temporary visas which lasted them three months. But they never went back home. They just started working without papers. Zaho* stated that when her mother died she decided to come to South Africa to live with her aunt. She came with the Relative Visa South Africa which allows for foreigners to visit their relatives who hold the South African permanent residence permit. Her stay she argues that it was supposed to be for a short period. Also, she stated that she is not supposed to work under this visa. She further stated that she is not ready to go back home to Zimbabwe because she has better chances of bettering her life when she is here in South Africa than she does in her home country. And she further stated that getting a permit for permanent residence is not an easy process especially if you do not have the money to bribe the authorities.

Sbusiso* the owner of Macufe* hair salon put forward that he got his citizenship status through his wife. He is married to a South African woman. He says he came to South Africa through the system of 'Malaishas[6]'. It is the case that those who with no legal papers and have no money to bribe the police, when they cross over they avoid the legal route and travel through unguarded parts of the border where they pay people who guide irregular crossers. And the people that facilitate this illegal crossing are called Malaishas or those who carry (Crush and Tevera 2010: 275). Furthermore, Sbusiso stated, "I crossed the borders from the help of the "malaishas". You find people at the borders who help others to pass through those people are called the malaishas. It's dangerous, you have to be tough. It is risky, you can be caught by police and go to prison, especially if you cannot bribe them". He further stated that he got married to a South African then he got the Spousal/Life Partner Visa. Tanaka* stated that there were special arrangements done to help people cross which she cannot entirely reveal to me, which are in place for people who do not hold proper documentation. She stated "I came here to work for my family, I just cannot afford to *pay for all the papers to come here*". This seems to be a justification for the way she entered South Africa. Then I asked her how much would it have cost her to pay for a permanent residence permit, she then stated that US $133/ 1580.

Furthermore, Tanaka*, Sethu* and Debbie* argued that the chances of getting a visa when you come to South Africa are very slim because even if you have some qualifications if they are not recognised then you cannot get even the work permit. Also, they stated that one needs to have already applied for a job and get a letter from the company which motivates your application then you can get a permit. But because their qualifications are not recognised in South Africa they are not offered employment by the big companies. Subsequently, Kiwanukwa (2009) asserts that, the majority of migrants from Zimbabwe whether skilled or not skilled are absorbed by the informal economy due to lack of passports and high levels of unemployment in host countries. Thus, Matsipa (2017:33) argues that; the hair care business is becoming the primary source of employment for women especially migrant woman who makes a big part of the informal economy. The tremendous growth in the hair

[6] *Malaishas refers to an illegal system of transportation. Many travelling to South Africa employ the services of Malaishas (smugglers).Others to evade immigration authorities, pay Mgumagumas (thieves) and Malaishas who know the best clandestine crossing points into South Africa(IOM:2009).*

industry reflects the rising demand from African women, and also there is an easy entry to the salon work than it is in other employment avenues for migrants. However, Matsipa (2017) argues, as easy as it is to enter the hairdressing business it takes considerable skill. Based on the participants' responses, they have professional skills or qualifications from other fields of work. However, when it comes to the skill of doing hair the participants from this study did not acquire that skills through formal education, they acquired it from watching others do hair and that is how they learnt how to do hair.

Subsequently, most of the women interviewed for the study put forward that they had been doing hair even when they were in their own countries. Some had been in the hair business from home, for others, it has been a case of doing their friends and siblings. One of the participants commented that "we just grew into it, there is no running away from it, if you don't do your sister or your friend's hair, no one will do you" (Interview, Debbie). That is how they learnt to do hair at an early age. Being able to do hair was some sort of capital that one needed or else no one will style their hair for them. Phido (2008) avows the method of learning through watching she states, the skill of doing hair is learned through the method of watching other people doing the hair especially when it comes to braiding.

Furthermore, when I asked one of the hairdressers if she has ever been deported before, Zaho stated, "I was not deported but I was taken to number 4 police station where I stayed for three days. I got out because I bribed the police. If you are there at the police station and you don't bribe anyone, then you will be deported". I further probed Zaho* to narrate the story of her arrest and how that like for her, she stated; "when you do not have legal papers it is something one knows that it can happen anytime". She put forward that she was in the CBD and the police were just raiding the city. She further stated that she was just stopped as she was walking and she was asked to show her papers and she lied that she left them at home, and in the police van there were already people that had been arrested. When they arrived at the police station that is when they negotiated individually with the police to get out. Zaho stated that, sometimes police just come to town and start doing rounds and that is when they are caught most of the times, when they least expect it (Interview, Zaho).

Bola* stated that she has never been deported but she has met police in town and she was stopped and asked to produce papers which she didn't have. She then gave him drink (bribe) money. Then I asked her how she was spotted that she is a foreigner in the midst of people in town, she then laughed and said "Ahh they do see us, even 'us' we don't know how, but they do. And they stop us every time". From all the participants' none of them has been deported, however, they fear being deported, Machinya (2016 published concept paper) puts forward that undocumented migrants are constantly subjected to oppressive everyday governmentality. He further states that undocumented migrants are rendered precarious economically and politically because of their illegal status and are under constant fear of apprehension and deportation. Furthermore, Debbie* put forward that, when you go to town one needs to at least make sure that they have R200 because anything can happen while they are in town. They have to be prepared all the time.

Furthermore, the migrant salon workers were asked if they thought their migrant status has any bearing on the working conditions. Aneni* put forward that; she works long hours and doesn't have proper lunch breaks and gets paid little wages, and the fact that she cannot do anything about it is partly because of her migrant status. She states" I would love to get a better paying job, but I know I have to look within the salon sector, I can't go to these big companies and look for proper work because I don't want to be caught" (Interview, Aneni). Bola* stated that she knows her status is working against her. She puts forward "The hours we work are too much, we don't have time to spend with our families because we are here all the time and we have nothing to show for it". If I had the papers I would get a better job than this (Interview, Bola).

Vimbo* further stated that her migrant status is not only negatively affecting her in terms of finding better employment but also the fact that they don't have access to housing is a problem. She puts forward that if she had permanent residence permit she would have a better place to stay. I then asked Vimbo to elaborate on her statement, she then stated that she stays in this small flat and there are three of them in the room where she stays. She further stated that it is not easy as a migrant

especially when you are not documented to get access to government subsidies for housing.

Sethu*, Gillian* and Tanaka* that they feel affected by their “illegal statuses” because they cannot get better-paying jobs, but I asked them if they experienced any sort of exploitation in the work that they feel is the result of their migrant status? They stated not necessarily. They argue that the challenges they face in the workplace are normal just like any job. They put forward that in terms of access, the migrant status becomes a problem. They further state that the reason they are not affected by their statuses in the work place might be because they are working for a fellow Zimbabwean. Mudiwa* and Aneni* (who work at Fatou Hair Salon[7]) state that, they felt mistreated in the workplace based on the fact that they were migrants. They assert that they were made to do work that South Africans didn’t want to do. They don’t feel that it was based on the fact that they were undocumented per se, but on the fact that they are migrants.

Subsequently, Kiwanukwa (2009) asserts that, the majority of migrants from Zimbabwe whether skilled or not skilled are absorbed by the informal economy due to lack of passports and high levels of unemployment in host countries. Thus, Matsipa (2017:33) argues that; the hair care business is the primary source of employment for women especially migrant woman who makes a big part of the informal economy. The tremendous growth in the hair industry reflects the rising demand from African women, and also there is an easy entry to the salon work than it is in other employment avenues for migrants. However, Matsipa (2017) argues, as easy as it is to enter the hairdressing business it takes considerable skill. Based on the participants’ responses, they have professional skills or qualifications from other fields of work. However, when it comes to the skill of doing hair the participants from this study did not acquire that skills through formal education, they acquired it from watching others do hair and that is how they learnt how to do hair.

It becomes clear from these responses that, the salon workers do not find any correlation of precarity and the migrant (illegal) status in relation to their experiences in the workplace. However, it appears as though they would love to work in other fields of work other than doing salon work. But because of the illegal migrant status,

[7] Owned by a South African.

they cannot do so. Thus the migrant status hinders the salon workers from accessing employment opportunities than the ones they currently have. Also, the migrant status affects the undocumented salon workers when it comes to accessing housing and social protection. They are unable to apply for housing and social protection because they do not have legal documents.

### 5.4.1Crisis of Representation

The Immigration Law Section 38(1) Act of 2002(amendment 2004) condemns employers from employing illegal migrants, and based on the Human Rights Watch there is a legislation which calls for arrest and deportation of illegal migrants (HRW 2006). The immigration policies are the cause of undocumented migrants' invisibility and exclusion which makes organising for migrants difficult. Even leading big federations like Cosatu refuse to represent undocumented migrant workers "… Cosatu has tended to see immigrants as a problem that must be fixed through tighter border controls (Hlatshwayo and Choudry, 2013). Lehulere (2008:34 see Hlatshwayo 2011) further states that there is no indication of the need to integrate illegal migrants into unions but that employers should not hire them. Subsequently organizing for undocumented migrants becomes impossible. This is more so for the salon workers because salon workers even if they are documented do not organize.

Consequently, this puts the migrant salon workers in precarious situations because they are unable to bargain with the employers about any problems they might be facing in the workplace. This renders the salon workers voiceless. I asked one of the salon workers since they cannot be part of any trade union, do they have an organization or any form of representation in the workplace which addresses their grievances with the management of the salon? Aneni* stated, "You know that is the problem with South Africans, they have too many rights. They are always fighting for something that is why they never get anything done. We as foreigners we mind our own business as long as we can feed our families. You come to work, you work work, and you keep your mouth shut, no problems. My sister, I count my blessings, I have a job I am happy I don't need to fight (Interview, Aneni). These are bold assertion made by Aneni* about themselves as migrants and also about the common assumptions about South Africans. This further speaks to what Dawson (2017) alludes to about the work ethic of migrants. That managers prefer to employ

migrants because they are willing to overlook a lot of things that citizens would not. Furthermore, this also speaks to the way migrants choose to walk with their heads down by not engaging mistreatments in workplaces out of fear of losing the job.

Aneni* works for a South African salon owner as Fatou Hair Salon*, and already as Zimbabweans together with Vimbo and Mudiwa feel mistreated based on the fact that they are migrants. Consequently Aneni* feels silenced by the fact that she is a migrant that she cannot voice out any problems she has in the workplace. She feels all she has to feel is gratitude because she has a job, and therefore the working conditions are not an important detail. What is important is that she has a job and that she is able to look after her family.

Furthermore, most of the salon workers from Beauty hair salon* when they were asked how do they address their grievances they offered a general answer that; they don't have grievances as such. They put forward that they usually have conflicts about the allocation of clients and the manager usually resolves those conflicts when they come up. Other than that they do not have serious issues that require them as salon workers to form organisation that will represent them to management even within the work place.

However, Tanaka provided a more detailed account of why they do not have any representation in the workplace. Tanaka* voiced out of fear of losing their jobs, she lamented

> "For most of us, other people spoke on our behalf to get these jobs, we cannot betray those people who got us the jobs. We don't want to form those things (organisations) that will cause us to fight with the people that have offered us jobs. The people we work for are like family to us, they are our brothers. We are all here in South Africa to find bread. I just want to focus on my work. I am just grateful that I have a job, things could have been worse. Some people from Zimbabwe especially those who do not have papers do not have jobs, they are just all over the place in town. I see how people are struggling. I cannot bite the hand that feeds me. Sometimes you just need to be thankful to God and not cause any trouble" (Interview, Tanaka).

I then asked her if there was any case that someone complained to management about how things are done, or complained about the salary and the working hours. Tanaka* responded and said that, she knows of a lady that quit because the money she was earning was not enough. And after that, there was an informal meeting

where the owner just announced to them that the lady has left and if there is anyone who is not happy about their wages they are welcomed to quit. She further stated that the manager was not happy with the lady leaving (Interview, Tanaka).

Based on the above discussion and response from the migrant workers it is apparent that the migrant workers go through a lot of strain and emotional toil which does not only stem from their work experience, but also from their existence within those working conditions. To some degree, these women deal with work issues which sometimes hit straight to their identities, to the fact that they are migrants and everything that comes with that as discussed above.

### 5.5 Emotional Labour

> When you see them receiving passengers with that big smile, I don't think it means anything. They have to do that. It's part of their job. But now if you have to get into a conversation with a flight attendant ….well…no…I guess they have to do that as well. - Airline passenger (Hochschild 1983:89).

Everything that workers do in the service work has become part of the economic product, as emotional labour has become an imperative part of paid employment. In essence, service workers are not only expected to do their work but they must do their work in a way that shows their clients that they love what they are doing. Everything that workers in the service work do is part of the economic product given that emotional labour is a major element of the job (Hill and Bradley 2010: 42).

On top of the issues that these salon workers are going through, low pay, long hours of work, no time off, they are also expected to be emotionally present for their clients. The nature of salon work on a big scheme of things depends entirely on clients. For the business to be afloat, clients need to come through, and when clients come through, the hairdressers have to ensure that they come back. Also, the hairdressers make a point to ask their clients to spread the word to their friends to come to that particular salon. This entails an intensive level of interpersonal engagement. Interpersonal interaction showed to be a big part for the self-employed mirror renters and the salon workers employed at Macufe hair salon (who work on base salary and commission) because their earnings are determined by the number of clients they serve, and the number of clients they service depends on how nice they are to their customers.

I asked the hair stylist how they keep their relationships with clients and fellow hairdressers, Bola* (employed at Macufe Salon) stated that,

> "I make sure that I maintain a good relationship with my clients, by keeping in touch with them. When clients come I have to be like their friend, listen to their stories you know. Sometimes I exchange numbers with them, after say maybe a few days I will call them and ask how are they, are they happy with the style, just making conversation. Advise them how to maintain the hair things like that". When they are not happy with the outcome of a style or how it sits on them they blame us. Sometimes I have to redo the style and that costs me my time and there is a certain amount taken from my wages for the fibre when I redo the style. You know moss it said, no matter how wrong customers are they are right" (Interview, Bola).

Sethu said,

> "Yoh you know clients sometimes (shakes head) we try to manage our attitude because we are here for money and they bring it to us. It is our job to make clients happy all the time, it is so hard because sometimes you are going through your own stuff but you must listen to them telling you about their problems while you going through your own problems. And you have to make them happy". They tell you about their families (laughs) and you know we have our own problems that time (Interview, Sethu).
>
> Debbie "I motivate my customers, I become friends with them and advise them how to maintain their hair. I have them on WhatsApp to keep in touch with them". To ask them when they think to change their styles and recommend to them what style they should have next. We have to be friends with them" (Interview, Debbie).

Rudo* (Macufe salon) put forward that being nice to their clients is as important as their skill and ability to do hair. Also, keeping a very close relationship with her colleagues is as important because they help each other get through the long days they work. "Sometime a customer will upset you, you need someone to talk to, this job is very emotionally draining, you get tired, and you get angry sometimes you need your friends around you to support you. We support each other here" (Interview, Rudo). I then asked her to elaborate, how do clients upset them. She then stated that; sometimes clients come with cheap fibre to do cornrows or braids and when they are not happy with the outcomes of how their hair looks, the clients blame the hairstylists. Rudo* further stated that; how the outcomes of the hairstyle to an extent is determined by the quality of the fibre used. She also argued that clients come to them with thin hairlines that affect the way the style will look, which in most

cases means bad outcomes. Clients will leave the hair salon unhappy blaming the incompetence of the hairstylist but their hairline is the reason they do not look nice, Rudo* lamented. When incidences like the above mentioned take place, Rudo* asserts that, when the customer leaves she would find a colleague to speak to, or sometimes as the incidence takes place they offer support to one another with the exchange of looks. “As co-workers, we exchange looks to how our fellow worker that we see how they are treated, and we have unspoken communication that the fellow stylist would understand that; these are just customers they are difficult and she should not take it into the heart” (Interview, Rudo).

Sbusiso plainly stated that his relationship with her employees and his clients is cordial. Zaho* (mirror renter) “It is important for me to put my clients first because without them I do not have a business”. Also stated that she has a good relationship with her co- workers, they have to be professional but friendly at the same time. She states “Our work is competitive; we all need clients so we have boundaries even though we are friends. You have to be on your guard but don’t step on anyone’s toes” (Interview, Sbusiso).

The general feel from the salon workers is that being able to get clients and keep them happy is the most important part of the job. Also ensuring that the clients remain their clients there are personal relationships that need to be formed in that process. Furthermore keeping a healthy relationship with their colleagues also as important; they need one another for moral support. And this speaks to Hochschild’s (1983: 116) idea of the benefits of solidarity in jobs which require workers to be emotionally invested in their work/clients. Hochschild (1983) argues that team solidarity improves morale which then improves service. Also, team solidarity can be the basis for the employees to share their grudges against their clients or their employer.

However, the processes of emotional labour are not all gloom and doom for the hairstylist. Sometimes labouring with their emotions has positive returns for them. At times it genuinely feels good for the hairstylist when a client is happy about their work. When the hairstylists are praised for the work they feel good about themselves. Furthermore, the hairstylists at times are genuinely emotionally invested on their customers, contrary to Hochschild’s (1983 see Cohen 2010) notion of

emotional labour that workers become estranged and alienated from self or the part of the body that is used to do the work. However, for these salon workers it is not the case that they feel estranged or alienated from self and the part of the body which creates the product. The salon workers put forward that it takes creativity for them to be able to come up with hair hairstyles. They argue that sometimes customers come to them and customers do not know what types of hairstyles they want. Consequently, it becomes the hairstylist duty to be creative and at the same create something the client will be happy with.

Furthermore the migrant salon workers do not seem to be alienated from self or estranged from the parts of their bodies which produces the work because they (salon workers) view themselves as talented on top of their skills. It is the case that one requires to a certain extent a skill to style hair, but they also see it as talent from God. Bola put forward that, even clients' attests to the fact that they are not just skilful in their work, but they are talented as well. Bola states that one of her clients said to her "*iwe une tarenda nemako ako*"[8] (which means you are talented with your hands) and this made her day Bola said. Furthermore, the notion of not looking at their work as only a skill but as something that is given to them by God as a talent they feel fulfilled. And also when their clients are happy they too as hairstylists feel good about themselves. It is a reciprocated relationship.

Subsequently, Payne (2009) aids the above argument. He asserts that, there is a shift from Hochschild conception of emotional labour. Payne (2009: 350) argues that, there is now recognition that the use of emotions by workers may sincerely display genuine feelings towards clients, and at the same time get satisfaction from giving good service and also enjoying the social engagement that worker have with their clients (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993, Tolich 1993, Wharton 1993, Wouters 1989 see Payne 2009). When I asked Gillian if there was ever any time where she felt that her client was happy with her work and how did she feel about it, Gillian put forward that it is not every day that they meet difficult customers, sometimes they actually meet good clients. She stated that,

[8] Shona language- *iwe une tarenda nemako ako* – "you are talented with your hands". Bola said this line and quickly translated for me after she had said. It seemed as though if she had put it in English from the beginning it would not have had the effect or would have expressed fully what she wanted me to get from it. There was pride in her eyes as she was narrating this story to me. I told her that I wanted to add the phrase on my work she then helped me to write down and gave me the translation.

> "There was a time I did a client that was getting married on the weekend. She came to do 'twist' on a Friday and she was getting married the following day. She came to the salon with her two sisters that were going to be bride maids and the sisters were doing straight up cornrows. The sisters were done by my co-workers, we really enjoyed doing their hair. When they came to the shop there was a change in the mood-they were so happy and excited even us we just became excited for them and also about the wedding. When we finished doing their hair it felt so good. I felt like I was part of the wedding, they were so happy and they promised to send us pictures after the wedding" (Interview, Gillian*).

What is obvious in the way that migrant salon workers approach life in South Africa is the notion of self-erasure in the sense that; first, their work becomes their identity. Work becomes their identity in the sense that as long as their job pays them; they are good, everything else is outside what they came here for. Secondly, these salon workers adopt this view of romanticizing their position in life, they convince themselves no matter what they going through, life is way better here in South Africa than it would be in Zimbabwe. And this ties in to the following section. The following section serves as the key argument of the study and it offers the perception of the migrant workers from the subjective point of view of their experiences with the informal economy and precarity.

### 5.6 Key arguments: Perceptions of the Informal Economy and Precarity

The purpose of this section is to offer the argument of the study which addresses what the subjective perceptions of the hairdressers; their subjective views of the informal economy and precarity.

The ILO (2002) defines the informal economy as poor employment conditions, lack of protection in the occasion of non-payment of wages, required overtime or extra shifts, lay-offs without notice or compensation, precarious (unsafe) working conditions and the absence of social benefits such as pensions, sick pay and health insurance (ILO 2002).However, Kihato (2007: 16) problematizes this view of informality and argues that it is limited. Based on her own research she has actually found that; the informal economy actually helps migrants, she put forward that; "Rather, the informal and small business sector provides women with a range of

retail options that they can engage in". Kihato (2009) further states that; in fact, the informal economy gives migrants options regarding what they can do for their livelihoods. She states that; migrants have options in the informal economy like selling vegetables, beauty products, they can have hair and beauty salons, restaurants and Internet Café.

Subsequently, counter to the (ILO 2002) definition of the informal economy, the study argues that; migrant salon workers see themselves as only people that are able to contribute financially to their families at home; they want to work the extra hours; they do not view their working conditions as unsafe for work because everything they experience here in South Africa is referenced to the state of affairs back home and that makes the working conditions bearable. However, at the same time when one digs deep they are actually aware that in fact they are working under bad conditions. Most of them as evident from their interviews show unhappiness with their work. That they feel like they would love to undertake other employment opportunities that were "better" than where they currently work. The same long hours they want to work ae the same long hours they complain about that they are quite long. The same people that complain about being made to do work that their fellow South African hairstylist do not want to do are the very people that seek to keep quiet and not raise any injustices in the work place because they are grateful to the owners offering them jobs.

The above assertions to a certain point speak to Kihato's standpoint on theories which do not pay attention the agency of women in the informal economy. Kihato (2007) challenges the binary approach that literature takes in articulating the experiences of migrant women that; sometimes migrant women are victims of the informal economy and sometimes they are victors. Kihato argues that this way of looking at migrant women's experiences is limited and it takes away the agency of the migrant women. Together with Bozzoli (1992), Kihato (2007) argues that the portrayal of migrant women in literature is 'lacking'. Both of these authors' work tries to show migrant women as personifying multiple identities that cannot be boxed in binaries of 'victim' and 'victor'. Sometimes these migrant women use these multiple identities strategically to their own advantage, and other times bear the burden of who they are.

Subsequently, when one of the hair stylists was asked what it meant for her to work in a foreign country, she stated,

> "It is much better than home. In my home country it was even hard to send my kids to schools, sometimes the old ones have to drop out of school to do piece jobs for extra money to help around the house. Now I have built a house for my mother. My kids are here with me they go to the good schools, and I can take care of my mother at home. Everyone from Zimbabwe wishes to come to South Africa, life is better here" (Interview, Gillian).

And when she was asked how she felt about the long hours she works she stated "When you spend years without any job, and you get someone to help you with a job, you are able to look after your family you have to be grateful. I will rather work long hours than not have work at all "(Interview, Gillian). Tanaka* who works next to Gillian* added to the conversation between me and Gillian* she lamented that "You know my sister what it takes for us to come to South Africa? We can't get here and relax. Other people come here through difficult means we cannot complain, we are here to do work so we can look after our families" (Interview, Tanaka).

Looking at the migrant salon worker's experiences against the decent work objectives of South Africa the study argues that the migrants fall short of those objectives. According to Cohen and Moodley (2012) the ideals of decent work are: employment opportunities, adequate earnings and productive work, stability and secure work, social protection, social dialogue and work relations and these are the measures of whether workers are attaining decent work. However, it is clear from the above responses that the migrant hairdressers have a different take on the interpretation of their experiences with precarity an attaining decent work. It might be the case that they have a shortfall in terms of decent work, but it is clear that these workers see their jobs as a way to attain a decent life for themselves and their families. It becomes clear that decent life can be interpreted differently by different people. What is considered decent is subjective depending on what is important to certain individuals. Evidently being able to send money home and be able to take care of their families based in Johannesburg for these salon workers is decent irrespective of the quality of it.

Furthermore the relationship between migrant statuses and precarity is not a clear cut. Based on the fact that undocumented migrants can only be absorbed by the

informal economy which is precarious in nature. As stated by Statistical South Africa (2012), informal employment is a precarious work situation, where employers are given no written contract and have no benefits in the work place. This includes self - employed informal enterprises, unregistered enterprises and wage workers in informal jobs. Many of the people that belong to these categories are on the survivalist category of workers (SSA 2012, Cohen and Moodley 2012). In the above regard, the study argues that the salon workers are precarious. Also, the study found that the “illegal status” limits the salon workers in fulfilling their desires to get employment in the formal employment. The participants argued that, if they were documented, they would look for employment outside of the salon sector. Furthermore, the illegal migrant status hinders migrant salon workers from accessing housing and social protections.

However, as already stated, the link between migrant status and precarity is not clear-cut, the blurry lines on the connection between the migrant statuses of the salon workers and precarity are the fact that the salon workers argue that; their working conditions are vulnerable not because they are illegal but because they are migrants. Thus in terms of the working conditions within the work place the migrant salon workers do not find any correlation between the illegal migrant status and how things are at work. For the most part, these salon workers are employed by their fellow Zimbabweans, and also the one’s employed by South Africans even then their illegal status does not factor within the work place. But, salon workers on one side complain about the working hours that they are long with no distinctive breaks in between. However, on the same breath salon workers actually want to work the long hours in order to earn more money to support the families hence the study argues that the salon migrant workers are in two minds about their subjective experiences in relation to precarity. Also the fact that they view their experiences in comparison to how things are from where they come from, and conclude that their conditions are way much better. Furthermore, sometimes the work of these hairdressers has positive consequences when they are praised by their clients on jobs done well. They feel good about themselves when they are complimented on their skills. To a certain point, the hairdressers enjoy their work even though it frustrates them at other times. This shows further shows the nuances evident with regards to precarity, informality and the subjective experiences of migrant hairdressers.

## 5.7 Concluding Remarks

Based on the above discussions, I conclude this section by stating that, the migrant hairdressers have a strong work ethic which overshadows the fact that their working conditions are exploitative in that they are not given any lunch breaks, they work long hours and they have no contracts, they don't take time off even when they are sick, and they are vulnerable to unfair dismissals. Subsequently, Dawson (2017) asserts, the way in which work ethic is measured is based on absenteeism at work, and migrant workers are often deemed to have a strong work ethic because they are rarely absent from work. And this is evident from the responses of salon workers that; even when they are not feeling well they are reluctant or do not take days off. Also, there is evidence from literature which shows that even managers prefer to employ migrants because of their strong work ethic.

These workers convince themselves that the way things are, they are normal. These are the consequences of the capitalist system, the way it is structured; that it makes people unaware of their bad conditions. Neilson and Rossister (2009) aid this view, by arguing that in order to understand precarity as a political concept, we need to reconsider Fordist occurrence, because a deep political reflection of precarity requires us to see Fordism as exception and precarity as a norm. And this comes from a historical and demographic inquiry of precarity which specified the intersection between centralized union bargaining and Keynesian welfare systems demonstrating the conditions of precarity as the norm of capitalism rather than the exception.

Related to the above arguments, the study argues that; the notion of normalizing precarity undermines the reality of social exclusion and economic struggles of (these) people which in itself is problematic. Also, if the position that precarious workers held in the workplace and also in their general lives in society or their condition in the capitalist system is a norm, then what would explain the protests of workers fighting for job security, against exploitation and for better wages.

It appears as though the capitalist system wants to appease its self from its failures in delivering promises and the inconsistencies of it by making people believe that the precarious state or condition is a concept embedded with the capitalist system and as such should not be perceived as an anomaly. Ettlinger (2017:19) calls this a

reflexive denial, which is a process where people try to disengage with the stress of precarious life by constructing the illusion of certainty. Because their work is instrumental for them to meet these expenses they do not regard the conditions in the working place as anything. However, this is not the whole picture for the salon workers that were interviewed for this study. These salon workers are in two minds about their state in South Africa, because in actual fact they are surviving in precarious conditions but because they compare it to Zimbabwe to an extent it makes them feel they are doing well. But also, looking closely at their working conditions it becomes clear that in actual fact they are not doing well.

Based on the responses of the salon workers as already mentioned, the study argues that the migrant salon workers are in two minds about their existential state in South Africa. The way in which migrants view themselves within the culture and language of work is different from the way they are theorized. Questions of “the informal economy”, “formal economy” and “precarity” are concepts that do not have meaning that migrants can identify with, and how they understand their existence in the workspace. Through my observation in the process of interviews, I noticed that the participants do not express the kind of vulnerability evident in the way precarity and informality are theorized in literature. That is not to say that these salon workers are not victims of the informal economy and precariousness, however, there is something about the way in which they have internalized their conditions, which hides the negative effects of precarity and informality that literature exposes (the effects are covered in literature review). The conditions that push them to migrate to South Africa such as, political turmoil, poverty, economic decline and environmental upheavals create other ways in which these migrants identify themselves other than the standard interpretations of work. The following chapter will examine further other relations which show migrant hairdressers’ experiences are more ambivalent than the literature on precarity offers.

## CHAPTER 6: Precarity as a Political Concept

This chapter seeks to look at the lives of migrants outside the workplace drawing from the concept of precarity as a political concept. Precarity as a political concepts deals with issues of ontological insecurities which are features of human condition found in all spheres of life on a daily basis. However, the focus of the chapter will be on the ontological insecurities of migrant salon workers in Braamfontein and the migrant salon workers responses to experiences of violence (xenophobia) and the role played by the church in the lives of migrants in South Africa.

### 6.1 Normative Violence Experiences of Xenophobia

Precariousness comes from the despotic everyday governmentality, various exposure to violence, vulnerability and suffering which is politically induced (Butler 2004, 2009; Giddens, 1990; Neilson and Rossiter, 2008; Ettlinger 2007). Butler (2009: ii) puts forward that anything living is vulnerable; anyone can be expunged at will or by accident. Subsequently, social and political institutions are designed in part to minimize conditions of precarity, especially within the nation-state; however, norms determine whose' 'fragility' will be minimized.

Moreover, using Butler's notion of precarity as a political concept, the study will unpack the experiences migrants as a marginalised group of people. Thus, looking at 'grievability' and 'livability' to expose how what is considered to be a norm can make physical violence possible and for the physical violence to be normalised. Normative violence according to Boesten (2010: 5) follows from Butler's notion of the power of norms as deciding factor to enable or restrict life. For example, if norms are able to dictate what people can and cannot do at a personal level, Boesten argues that norms can also produce violence to those that break the norms. Normative violence enforces what one can be, excluding those who do not conform and those who do not conform become, in Butler's words, 'unintelligible', non-existent, unless they adapt to the norm (Boesten 2010: 5).

The study has established that the undocumented migrants are marginalised and are not part of the norm because they are not citizens of South Africa. They are excluded from good health care facilities more so the undocumented migrants. They have no social protection; in the workplace, these undocumented migrants are unable to organise themselves because salon workers do not organise, and also because working in the informal economy makes it hard for workers to have representation. Migrants in South Africa are not part of the norm based on the fact that they are not South Africans and this becomes evident in the xenophobic attacks that migrants experienced in South Africa (Hungwe 2010).

Butler (2009) argues that those who are not part of the norm can be exposed to physical violence and that violence can be normalised. Normalised violence was evident in the 2000s; when South African citizens felt justified in attacking migrants. Post -1994, immigrants in South Africa suffered discrimination and hostility from

South African citizens which intensified and escalated by the 2000s (2000-2008) leading to the death of 67 people (Neocosmos 2006). This was called Xenophobia.

Xenophobia is an act of violence towards migrants, and some of the salon workers have been in situations of hate and violence based on the detail that they are not South Africans. When the salon workers were asked if they had experienced Xenophobia or experienced hate in the workplace, in town or their community, Tanaka* responded that she has seen migrants being set- alight, and this took place when she had visited family in Pretoria. She puts forward that the South Africans were screaming at the migrants, and accusing them of taking jobs that are meant for South Africans. Sbusiso* responded that, within the city the experience is different. He put forward that in places like Thembisa and Alex things are different and worse. Sbusiso* asserts that he has not experienced hate so much in the city than he did when he was staying in Thembisa. He lamented; “In those places (Thembisa and Alex), I have been called names by South Africans. I was called “igweje” and “kwerekwere. People in the city mind their own business nobody cares. I then asked Sbusiso* where does he stay now and how the experience living in that community has been like for him. He stated that he stays in Braamfontein. In the building that he stays in is mostly occupied by migrants from other African countries. He states that they are united there, they try to stick together, Sbusiso* states “We stick together and we mind our own business. We come to South Africa our sister country to better our families and our lives we did not come to fight or take anyone’s jobs, we come here with jobs we open businesses for people to work”. Aneni* further stated that she experienced hatred from South Africans; she was in a taxi in Pretoria when a guy threatened her while they were in the taxi and asked her when is she going back home to where she comes from. She states at that moment she has never been so scared in her life. She kept quiet because she did not want to aggravate the men in the taxi. I then asked her if anyone helped her, and she put forward that the lady that was sitting next to her told her not to respond. I further probed and asked Aneni about the lady sitting next to her if she was also a migrant or South African, and she stated that it was a South African lady (Interview, Aneni).

Rudo* puts forward that her experience with Xenophobia was traumatic. She states “They entered our shop and started looting, there was nothing we could do, and they destroyed the shop and stole some of our products. They were screaming you

“makwerekwere” are stealing our jobs”. I then asked Rudo*, was it only men that raided the shop? She stated that the majority of the people that were going around in groups destroying shops and beating people were mostly males, but there were also few females amongst them. (Interview, Rudo).

Zaho* stated that she has never personally experienced it, but she was terrified of the xenophobic outbreak. Mudiwa* puts forward that in her work she experiences tension and mistreatment but she doesn’t know whether to call it xenophobia. She puts forward,

> “We are three ladies from Zimbabwe, most of the other girls that work there are South African. You know South Africans don’t want to do clients that want to do braids because it is a long and painful process to plait. Our boss always makes us do the work that South Africans don’t want to do. We also clean the towels sometimes, it’s not nice, it’s because we are foreigners” (Interview, Zaho).

Mudiwa further stated she is not sure whether her experience in the salon could be interpreted as xenophobia in the broader definition of it which depicts physical violence. She put forward that, “Sometimes people are not going to be physically violent towards you, but the way they treat you shows differences and hate and maybe that could be part of Xenophobia as well” (Interview, Mudiwa). Thoko* stated that it was in 2014 when South Africans burnt tires in their street in Hillbrow. She puts forward that, they closed their street and screamed that those who had shops their shops will be closed. She further states that she did not go anywhere for three days she was locked up in her room afraid to even go outside. She laments “I felt like a prisoner”. Debbie* states that she never at first hand experienced it, but she used to watch the attacks on the news. However, she also states that “We know that South Africans do not want us here”. Debbie* puts forward that, whether you experience hostility or not, it is known to them as migrants that they are not welcomed here in South Africa.

Subsequently in Butlerian philosophical terms as Boesten (2010) asserts, those who cannot conform to the norms are excluded by the recognised society, and their bodies are violated on a daily basis which is clear from the above discussion. Also, it brings forth Butler’s question of a “livability of life”. In practical and political applications of the theory, she uses the post 9/11 to outline the political applications

of her work and also uses normative violence, rebellion, livable life to analyse grief. Her analysis of a grievability of life scrutinizes what she calls ceremonies of public grief. Who is grieved for and who is not, those who are included and those who are not included are identified by being grieved for by the public. And what becomes apparent is that those who are grieved are those that are deserving of a “lived life” and those who are not grieved have not lived a life that fits the normative life. Subsequently, the life of migrants has shown to be an “unintelligible life”. The fact that they are not South Africans rules out the fact that they are deserving human beings, with valuable lives (Butler, 2009, 2004, 2004a, 2004 b, 2004c, Boesten, 2010).

“We stick together and we mind our own business. We come to South Africa our sister country to better our families and our lives we did not come to fight or take anyone’s jobs, we come here with jobs we open businesses for people to work “(Interview, Sbusiso). This quote was said by one of the migrants in response to questions of normalised violence inflicted on them as migrants. In the midst of existential precariousness, these migrant workers respond with positivity to the violence they experience. In the bigger scheme of things, this section finds context in the following section, which gives account of the responses of these migrant workers to experiences of violence and social exclusion.

### 6.2. The Role of Church: Social Exclusion, Practises of Helping and Seeking and Forming Bonds

Hungwe (2013) puts forward that social exclusion is about disadvantaged participation of migrants, or inclusion on unfavourable terms of members belonging to the devalued groups, also it is about inequality and having devalued identity. Mudiwa’s* response puts a light on the notion of devalued identity. She stated that at her workplace they are treated unequally in that they are made to do the trivial jobs that their co-workers who are South Africans are excused from performing (Interview, Mudiwa). Also, Sbusiso* and Rudo* alluded to the fact that Zimbabweans are devalued in that they are given names such “Amagweje”, “Amakwerekwere” by South Africans. And he argues that, these are derogatory terms that have come to be part of South African’s vocabulary in reference to them as migrants. I then asked Sbusiso* where are they called by these names? Are they called these names in the

work place or when they are in their places of residence (community)? Sbusiso* put forward that in his work place nobody calls him those names and nobody calls his employees or anyone in his shop those names (seemed a bit tense). He further states that,

> "Like I said, these are the general known names that we know that we are called by as migrants. Sometimes it does not even take for us to be in a fight or anything with someone (South African) like maybe you can understand when you are fighting with someone that they call you names. But no! South Africans would be having just a general conversation and they just call us those names. And this happens when you walk on the streets even in our residential areas. You could be walking in town in the CBD or walking here in Braamfontein, Hillbrow or anywhere as long as you are within South Africa at least one time in your life you will hear someone saying "amagweje" as reference to you as foreigners" (Interview, Sbusiso).

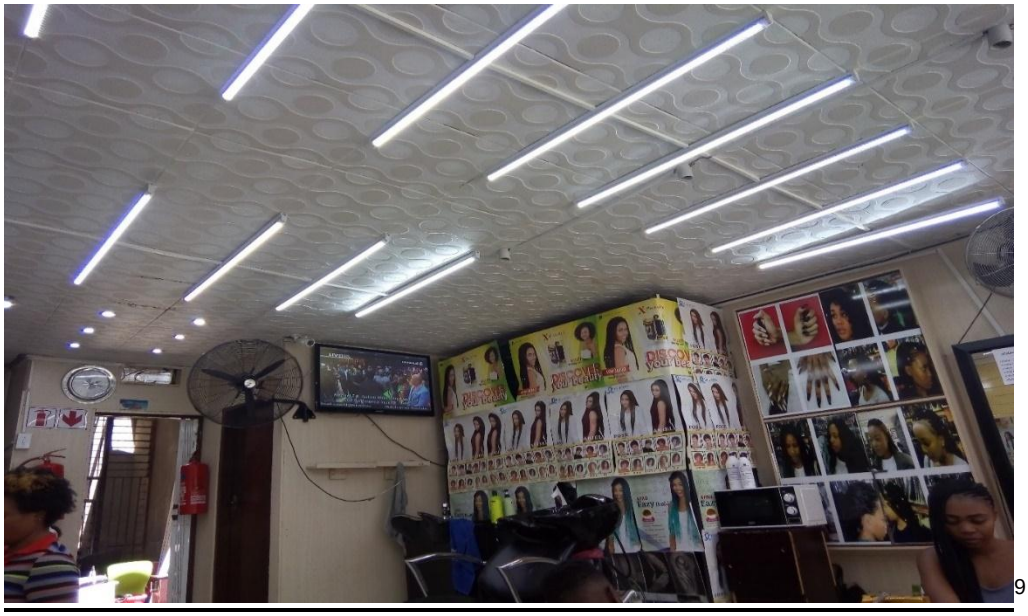
Hungwe (2013:174) argues that derogatory terms are used towards Zimbabweans because their identities are devalued.

Moreover, Hungwe(2013) further states that social exclusion is about lack of social cohesion and bonds; and religious networks within or between communities can serve as lessening social exclusions by creating alternative ways and forms to belong to a group other than ethnic or kin of group (Levitt 2003; Glick Schiller, Calgar & Goldbrandsen 2006). Furthermore, Aydin et al (2010 see Hungwe 2013: 69) argue that people that feel socially excluded tend to have higher levels of religious beliefs than those who are not excluded. The heightened focus on religion is said to be a result of the desire of all humans (particularly migrants in foreign countries) to feel accepted and create lasting connections with other people (Hungwe 2013).

Moreover, Palmary, Hamber and Nunez (2014) put forward that migrants have also used religion as part of their healing process on the hardships that they went through in their countries and also in South Africa. Though the study did not specifically look at the role of religion for migrants as a healing [space] process, it cannot be taken for granted that the migrant salon workers that were the focus of the study had their own share of experiences of violence. This could be referring to the xenophobic attack stories that the salon workers narrated. The discriminations that they endure in the work place serves as part of the pain and violence that they went through.

Furthermore, Palmary et al (2014) further state that even without the notion pain, violence and trauma that migrants go through, they use religion as a coping mechanism dealing with everyday living conditions.

**Figure 6 Macufe Hair Salon**

[9]

> "I want you to record me when you interview me, take your phone and record me. Maybe the person you are writing for will hear my voice and think eh I want to help this girl. Maybe they will like my voice, and give me a nice job, you don't know how God works (laughs) come record me record me" (Interview Rudo).

This is what Rudo* said to me when I went to interview her, and she carried on and stated how God can send help in any kind of way. She stated that she hopes to get a better job one day and God will see to it that it takes place. And what I have observed is that every day when I visit all the hair salon, gospel music is always playing or they watching DSTV sermons. Church or gospel grounds these migrant workers and brings them hope, it offers them ways to endure their circumstances. The kind of message they listen to is that of "miracles", that anytime their situation can change even if they do not practically do anything about it and that God sees their struggle. Most of them before they come to work on Sundays they go to church. As stated by Vhumani (2017) churches play an important role for migrants in host countries. They serve as an escape and a place to recuperate from the challenges they face, in the workplace and also outside the workplace. They build their own

[9] I was given permission to take this picture.

churches where they use their own languages in the services. Vhumani argues that “These churches provide spaces where migrants can feel that they are at 'home while away from home', and provide opportunities where migrants can support one another in issues that they may encounter” (Vhumani 2017:229).

When I asked Bola if she belonged to any religious group, she stated that she does; at Mountain of Fire Ministries which is located in the CBD. I probed and asked her how did she found out about the church and how has it helped her settle in South Africa since her move from home. Bola stated, “I found out about the church when I was here in South Africa. The brethren’s had a fellowship around here in Braamfontein-I was invited by a friend of mine to visit the fellowship because it was held at my friend's place. I then started attending church with them in town in the CBD” (Interview, Bola)

Before she could explain how the church has helped her in her stay in South Africa, I asked for how long had she been in South Africa when she attended the church. She stated that it was after a year. She had been going to just random churches around Braamfontein, but she committed to this one in the CBD after a year. She had been attending to different ministries before that, she stated: “I could never go without God for a long period especially when you are in a foreign country”. She further stated that church has helped her a lot, “If you do anything in your life without God it will be in vain. We have to consult God all the time. The pastor’s wife is a South African. She helps us, she organises jobs for people. The pastor’s wife provides them with information; like people who are looking for people to work for them” Bola*. I then asked Bola, what kinds of jobs that are usually announced? She stated that any type of job is advertised. There are also South Africans that are looking for jobs, some of the migrants in the church actually have papers, and they can apply for jobs in the formal economy. I asked Bola, how does it make her feel that they have this kind of information is at their disposal as migrants in church? She stated that, she finds the information very helpful and that she is not the only person who feels like that. She puts forward that, a lot of migrants especially undocumented migrants found jobs through those announcements done by the pastor’s wife. Furthermore, Bola stated that, some of her friends are working as domestic workers for South Africans and her friends were recommended to the South African employers by the pastor’s wife (Interview, Bola).

This speaks to Durkheim's (1982, 1995) notion that religion is not there for spirituality only, it is also a social product. Durkheim argued that religion acted as a source of solidarity and a way that individuals identify themselves. Furthermore, he saw religion as a pertinent part of the social system; that it (religion) provides social control, gives people purpose and it is another means of gathering people together for individuals to interact and reaffirm social norms. Furthermore, Landau (2009:197 see Nunez et al 2016:7) states that religion is one of the many spaces that create strategies for negotiating inclusion and belonging while transcending ethnic and national boundaries.

Moreover, I observed that at Beauty Hair Salon, the salon workers are always playing gospel music or watching live screening services which play at Emmanuel Television a Christian Channel. I then asked one of the salon workers if they all were Christians and what it meant for them to listen to the services on TV while they work. Gillian stated that "I don't believe in this men that preach in these television services. I believe in God Himself, I believe in prayer and fasting, not in some prophet. But it's our boss that plays it. He is the one who believes in the prophets". There are mixed responses regarding the televangelism. Some of the salon workers actually watch and when there are prayer points as led by the pastor running the service on TV others will participate in prayer. However, this is not done in any way that it affects their clients (Observations).

Moreover, Sbusiso the owner of Beauty Hair Salon stated that it is through God that he was able to come to South Africa and start his own business. I then asked him what it means for him to listen to the sermons on the DSTV in his salon. Sbusiso stated that he used to watch the Emmanuel channel even when he was at home. He puts forward "I believe in the prophets and I believe that they are sent by God to redeem us. I started pledging to the channel when I was still in my country I still do, I have seen what God does through the channel using the prophets". Sbusiso argues that he is where he is in his life because he has done everything that the prophet has told them to do. He states that now he pledges R5000 every month to the channel.

Tanaka responded that she is also a Christian and coming to work to listen to the gospel music or watch the televangelism uplifts her spirit. She puts forward that to watch God performing miracles in other people's lives raises her faith that God is

more than able and her miracle will come one day. I then probed, does she have one specific prayer or a miracle that she wants God to perform for her, and she stated that she would love to get a better job as she wishes to stay with her family here in South Africa. And she recognises that, if she can work in a better paying job she would be able to stay with her family here. I then asked her, why she would want her family to move to South Africa, she then stated that “life is much better in South Africa. “My mother is old, I need to take care of her and I need her to be here in South Africa in order for me to do that. Just to go to a clinic in Zim is a mission. Clinics are far from the rural areas in Zimbabwe” (Interview, Tanaka).

Evidently, based on salon workers responses; their belief in God or their participation in their religion they view it for the most part as helping not only spiritually but also with finding sustenance for their livelihoods. Regarding Tanaka’s response that if she can get a good job she can have her family with her and that is her cry and would be her miracle if it were to take place. Subsequently, Clarkson (1973:6) puts forward that religion is an active moral agency of those who are disadvantaged, also religion is at the hands and the voices of the poor and exploited people as a form of resistance (Clarkson 1973:6).

Furthermore, religion creates a space where migrants feel included, where they feel like they belong, a space of inclusion. Vhumani put forward that church creates a “home away from home” and it also provides opportunities for migrants to support one another regarding issues that they encounter in their host countries (Vhumani 2017: 229). Vhumani also states that church is not meant to only serve the spirit but it is a space to form networks as it has been evident even from the responses of the salon workers. Church motivates togetherness, when I asked another salon worker if she belonged to any religious group and how has that helped to settle in South Africa, Noni stated I attend at God First Braamfontein. I don’t go every Sunday, but whenever I feel down I go, I try to go as many times as I can. The time I arrived here in Johannesburg I was housed by a family friend, she was the only person I knew at the time. I started attending the church with her, it is a mixed church. Everybody attends the church even South Africans, it is not only for Zimbabweans.

I then asked Noni how has church helped her settle in South Africa, and she then stated that church made her feel welcomed and at home. She put forward that back

in Zimbabwe, the church is quite a big part of every-body's life (she made the generalisation). As result going to that church lessened the chances for her of experiencing culture shock. She found familiarity in church. I further asked her if she attended the same church in Zimbabwe, and she stated that she attended a different church at home and she continued "A place of worship is the same no matter where it is in the world".

Subsequently, Vhumani (2017) asserts that the practice of religion serves as a balance for migrants as they struggle to adapt to the new life in the host country, hence he argues, that religion and its participation should not solely be considered a spiritual dimension. The church allows migrants not only to connect spiritually but also connect to one another as people, create a world where everyone feels part of something. Also, church creates a space where help is accessible to everyone regardless of where they come from or whether they are South Africans or not.

Church plays a significant part in the lives of migrants. Based on my observations from Macufe Hair Salon I noticed that there is a man that comes every Monday to share the word with the hair stylist while they are busy with clients. I then asked the owner whether there was an agreement with the preacher to come and preach. The owner stated that there was no formal communication with the preacher; he just comes on his own accord. The owner further stated that "The bible says when a man of God comes to share the word you do not chase him away. I am always open to the word of God, I understand this is business but as long as it's not affecting the workers then there's no problem" (Interview, Sbusiso). Even though religion serves to be a space of inclusion, a place to belong and network for migrants it is also just a place of pure worship. Their participation in church/religion cannot be tied only to the material and social benefits they get from it.

## 6.3 Conclusion

What this chapter has shed light into: are the experiences of the migrant hairdressers with violence in a form of xenophobia and existential precariousness via exclusion from what is considered to be the norm. The study has used violence and social exclusion conceptually to show how precarity as a political concept has been

demonstrated in the hairdresser's experiences as discussed above. As a response to existential precariousness, the hairdressers managed to find 'coping' mechanism by creating new networks of kindness and support in religious spaces. The migrants solace found in religious spaces and also drawn from the faith further diminishes the subjective views to their lives as precarious, which further shows the nuances in the meanings of these concepts (precarity, informal economy and precarity as a political concept).

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This report responded to the question: What is the relationship between migrant status and precarity. The research question was informed by literature which argued that, migrants who lack legal documents are prohibited from accessing employment from the formal economy. They are only absorbed by the informal economy. Subsequently, literature reviewed in this study further shows that, migrants that are

undocumented turn to live vulnerable lives as the result of their migrant status. (Bosh and Farre 2013, Hungwe 2013 and Comacho, Mariani and Pensieroso 2015)

The findings of the study were derived from reviewed literature, in-depth interviews and participant observations. Subsequently, based on the findings the study first unpacked in chapter four the Informal Trading Policy of Johannesburg seemed to be a progressive initiative by the city management to the informal economy. However, the study argued against the “progressiveness” of the policy because the policy is only applicable to certain parts of the city. The study found that the policy is not inclusive in nature, because it was not applicable in Braamfontein, which was the focus of the study. As a result, the exclusiveness of the policy uncovered the difference in the way which the informal economy operates in the CBD and Braamfontein. This difference to an extent created nuanced meanings of precarity and the informal economy.

Chapter five of the study looked at the working conditions of the salon workers and their experiences outside of the work to see whether the salon workers were leading precarious lives. The study concludes based on in-depth interviews and participant observations that migrant salon workers are in a precarious conditions in the work place based on the fact that the informal economy is characterised by insecure labour relation: the hairdressers are not offered any contracts in the commencement of their work, they have no standard break times and starting hours in the work place. Furthermore, the study argues that, based on the fact that, migrants do not have legal documents to be in South Africa and can only find work in the informal economy disadvantages the migrant workers. However, from the interviews, the salon workers have shown to be in two minds about whether they are leading precarious lives or not. The ambiguity stems from the fact that they compare their experiences in South Africa to the experiences they had when they were still in Zimbabwe. This comparison makes the salon workers see themselves as doing well and not precarious. However, the salon workers on the other side recognise that their conditions are precarious in that they do not have voices to voice out injustices in the workplace for example; Vimbai*, Aneni* and Mudiwa* complained that they are made to do jobs that the fellow South African colleagues are excused from doing and they feel that there is nothing that they can do about it. There is lack of representation in salon operation, long working hours, no standard lunchtime set and

no signed contracts. The study further argues that there is no necessary link between the migrants status and precarity of migrants in the work place because they are mostly employed by fellow Zimbabwean even those who are not their legal status has no bearing in the working condition. However, it controls the type of economy that the migrants will be absorbed by which in this case is the informal economy.

Chapter six of the study gives an account of migrants' experiences with existential precariousness. This section also provide ways in which the hairdressers deal with the experiences of violence and exclusion. The study has found that these migrant salon workers find solace in church spaces. As a result the study discussed in detailed how the church serves as "coping" mechanism for the hairdressers.

Lastly, the study has found that migrant salon workers are in two minds about their existential state in South Africa. The way in which they (migrants) perceive themselves with in the informal economy and precarious conditions is to some extent different than the way their experiences are theorised. Notions of "the informal economy", "formal economy" and "precarity" are concepts which migrants have different and subjective meanings to than the way theory addresses them. Subsequently, through observation I noticed that the participants do not express the kind of vulnerability evident in the way precarity and informality are theorized in literature. That is not to say that these salon workers are not victims of the informal economy and precariousness, however, there is something about the way in which they have internalized their conditions, which hides the negative effects of precarity and informality that literature exposes (the effects are covered in literature review). The conditions that push them to migrate to South Africa such as, political turmoil, poverty, economic decline and environmental upheavals create other ways in which these migrants identify themselves other than the standard interpretations of work. Also, the nuance operation of the informal economy in Braamfontein shelters the despotic aspect of the informal economy, because: the informal economy in Braamfontein operates within the formal economy.

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## APPENDIX A- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Appendix: Guide for In-depth Interview with participants

**Biographical Information**

1. Which country are you from?
2. When did you come to South Africa?
3. Why did you choose to migrate to South Africa?
4. Did you know someone in South Africa before you came here?
5. Tell me how you came about being a hairdresser.
6. Tell me what has been your experience working as a hairdresser?
7. How do you keep your relationship with your clients and fellow hairdresser?
8. Is this your only work?
9. When you are tired or sick what happens?
10. Is the money you make enough for you to live and send back home?
11. What are your future goals and dreams?
12. Have you ever been deported? If yes-what happened? If No- do you have fear being deported?
13. What is your education level?

**Work Experience**

1. For how long have you been working for this company/or for yourself?
2. Is this your first job here in South Africa? If not would you tell me about your experiences on your previous workplace(s)? Why did you leave?
3. Are you affiliated to any trade union? Please give details.
4. Can we talk about health and safety issues in your work?
5. How much do you earn per month?
6. Do you earn the same amount every month?
7. What do you think about your salary?
8. Are there any other benefits you get from your work?

9. How do you supplement your salary?
10. Are there any promotions in this line of work? If yes-have you ever been promoted?
11. How do you express your grievances with your employers?
12. Do you think that wage employment is important? If yes, why, if no why?
13. How difficult is it to get a hair salon job?
14. How difficult is it for someone to take over your job?
15. Are you afraid of losing your job?
16. Do you have a contract of employment? If so what does it say?

**Experiences outside the work space**

1. Do you feel integrated in the community?
2. Have you ever had any misunderstanding with the police? If so, how was it solved?
3. Do you participate in any community activities?
4. How best can you describe your relationship with other societal members?
5. Do you feel safe in your community?
6. Have you ever experience xenophobia in your community? Explain.

**Braamfontein Improvement District**

**Interview Guide**

1. What is your position?
2. Please describe briefly what job entails
3. Do you have any by laws in terms of The Informal Economy? If yes... (4)
4. Do people know about those laws?
5. How do you make sure that people adhere to the bylaws?
6. Is there any particular reason there are no street traders in Braamfontein?
7. Is there anything written down which states that street trading is not allowed in Braamfontein?
8. How do you manage the Braamfontein?
9. Are there Hair Salon operation operating informally?

**APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**




Bukiwe Tambulu

Private Bag X

WITS, 2050

Email:1534156@students.wits.ac.za
Phone number: 078 304 8350

Dear Participant,

I am a student at Wits University and for my Masters research I am conducting a study on what is the relationship between undocumented migrant status and precarity. Precarity means a subjective condition of experiencing insecure work. It is a condition of having a temporary or a casual job that has no security and does not pay well. It also means a state of existing where a person is not safe and secure even outside the work place, where one would find that they are in a defenceless state of living. I am interested in understanding your experiences in South Africa in relation to your work conditions as well as your experiences outside of the work place using precarity as the lenses to understand those experiences.

Participation involves making yourself available at a time and place of your preference for an in-depth face to face interview that I expect will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour. If you are interested and available, a further one to two interviews of similar duration would be helpful to me, but only if you are available and would like to.

To make it more private, the only requirement would be that the interviews be conducted only with you wherever you are comfortable (that is, if you prefer for the interview to be conducted in your home, outside the work place that will be catered

for). As the interview takes place I will be taking notes this is for no other purpose but ensuring that I would be able to have your responses more accurately.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in the study without any consequences. Participation will not be beneficial to you in any way. There will be no compensation. In the event that you feel in any way traumatised because of the interview, I will be able to refer you to a psychologist / therapist and Consortium for Refugees and Migrants South Africa and Human Right Lawyers for any moment during my research you feel you need these facilities. You can therefore refuse to answer any questions, and to end the interview and your participation at any time, without any consequences. If you choose to participate, you will be assisting me, and I really appreciate it.

I will ensure that no one will know that you participated in this research, and I will not use your real name when reporting the results of my research. You will therefore not be identifiable in any way. I will ensure that I send you an electronic link to my research report once it is deposited in the Wits university library and made public. I cannot guarantee that you will agree with my representation of you.

If you are willing to participate, I will be most grateful. You are welcome to contact me at the number listed above, and/or to contact my academic supervisor at the university at any time about this research: Bridget.Kenny@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Bukiwe Tambulu

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM INTERVIEW

I, _____ am willing to participate in Bukiwe Tambulu research study. I understand that there will be no direct benefit for me in participating in this study and that, there are not likely to be any risks involved. I understand that participation is voluntary, there will be no benefits for participation, and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I have been given sufficient information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project has been explained to me and is clear.

I have been guaranteed that the researcher will not identify me by name.

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, my questions about participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, and I am aware of the risks and benefits of participating in the study.

Signed: _____ Date: _____