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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR MIGRATION & SOCIETY

Sahwira mukuru anokunda weropa: Social Networks and precarity in the narratives of Zimbabwean Undocumented Waitrons

Masters of Arts Thesis (2017)

By

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Supervisor: Prof L.B LANDAU

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, for the Masters of Arts in Migration and Displacement. At no other University or Institution has it been submitted as a requirement for a degree or any other qualification.

15 March 2017

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ABSTRACT

This study speaks to a broader literature on the precarity of service employees and undocumented migrants. Within this literature we see lives characterised by low paying jobs and a lack of social protection. Narratives and in-depth interviews were used in-order to find out how undocumented Zimbabwean waitrons in Johannesburg employ social networks to mitigate economic precarity. In examining Zimbabwean waitrons working the Johannesburg's precarious hospitality sector, I found evidence that demonstrates the importance of social networks but demands we take a more nuanced look at the ways in which they work. More specifically, there are not only straight social connections, but sexual networks and, religious networks, and – perhaps most importantly – overt patterns of disconnections. While social networks can invariably play an important role in migrants' (and others') success, they are not without potential risks. In light of this, this study sought to systematically investigate the role of social networks in mitigating precarity. This study adds to emerging field of social networks of marginalised groups and a growing literature on migrant integration in the social and economic environments of the global south.

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I am grateful to the research participants who made this research a success with their narratives.

Last but not least I thank God for the strength to be able to undertake such a challenging journey.

DEDICATION

To my late father and mother, Hugh Misheck and Sikhangele Matina. To my late siblings Bridget and Ntombizodwa.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Migration is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to understand without a close focus on what migrants actually do and how they comprehend their experiences (Tutt, et al. 2013). This research examines the actions and perceptions of undocumented migrant waitrons as a way of understanding the challenges faced by undocumented migrants in host countries. It builds on a school of research that treats social networks as the primary mechanism that migrant workers adopt to mitigate their challenges in precarious labour markets (see Lin 2005, Comola and Mendola 2015, Yieuh 2011). In examining Zimbabwean waitrons working the Johannesburg's precarious hospitality sector, I found evidence that demonstrates the importance of social networks but demands we take a more nuanced look at the ways in which they work. More specifically, there are not only straight social connections, but sexual networks and, religious networks, and – perhaps most importantly – overt patterns of disconnections. Indeed, migrants' social networks do not only yield positive outcomes at times they yield negative ones. This study adds to emerging field of social networks of marginalised groups and a growing literature on migrant integration in the social and economic environments of the global south.

International migrants are often regardless of their documentation status they are documented or undocumented, international migrants are often susceptible to precarity (Lewis, Hodkinson and Waite 2014). Migrants are often pushed to unskilled jobs in the host countries and at times are forced to work in jobs that are below their skills due to their vulnerability. Migration tends to de-value the qualifications of highly qualified migrants in the receiving countries (Ryan 2011). Migrants in low skilled jobs are a vulnerable group that faces the risk of labour exploitation in their host countries. Literature indicate that migrants can navigate through such systems by the use of social networks (Boyd 1989 and Kathiravelu 2014). Denstedt (2008) indicates that restaurant workers are faced with precarity and resulting in job mobility. In treating migrants as largely unresilient, Denstedt (2008) fails to acknowledge the potential of social networks to mitigate these challenges or to enable such mobility as a strategy. Restaurant workers may use information from their networks to move from one job to another. Faced with precarious situations migrants have agency to act upon the situations that they are exposed to. Social networks are often employed as a tool of mitigating their precarity (Palloni et al. 2001, Lin 2005, McCollum and Apsite 2015, Liu 2013). Scholars like Lin (2005), Fernades and Paul

(2008), Thieme (2008), McCollum and Apsite-Berina (2015), Liu (2013) state that information about new jobs is embedded in these social networks, these social networks act as a recruitment tool. Kathiravelu (2012) highlights that social networks are an integral part of migrant city life in the absence of the legal and moral obligation from the care of the state that are ensured through formal citizenship, which is unavailable to labour migrants. However, due to reciprocity that social networks demand, there are also indications that some migrants disconnect from these networks that are binding (Worby 2010, Landau 2016). In this study I argue that migrants are not a homogenous passive group, they have an agency to act to some situation and navigate through precarious situations. The agency they employ may be used to mitigate precarity they face in their day to day lives. The findings of the research will be divided into themes (religion, social networks and disconection) that were prominent in the narratives of the respondents.

1.1 Background

After receiving news of my uncle's passing at the beginning of May 2016, I travelled to Zimbabwe, my home country for his funeral with my two cousins (Thelma and Helen), both waitrons in Johannesburg. While journeying home, they discussed the nature of their precarious work. As we conversed, they bemoaned the lack of basic salaries, constant insults they received from their bosses, and the unfair distribution of tips. As they continued I remembered a *Checkpoint* documentary I had recently watched featuring Zimbabwean waitrons complaining about working conditions. In the documentary, waitrons ultimately reported their boss to the bargaining council to which he responded by threatening them with retrenchment.

This left me wondering about how waitrons might mitigate their real and perceived challenges. From my cousins I began to understand that social networks might play a key role. For instance, one cousin relied on friendships to ensure someone covered her shift whilst attending her father's funeral. Thelma could not find someone and subsequently lost her job. Without recourse to law, social networks seemed to make or break undocumented waitrons' livelihoods.

Of course I was not the first to note the potential importance of social networks in shaping migrants' lives. It is well documented that migrants use their social networks to advance themselves provide routine job information, at times unsolicited, which may eventually become critical in getting a better job, without actors' actually searching for that or indeed any job (Lin in Lin 2005). Yieuh (2011) states that social networks increase the elasticities of labour supplies for migrant workers. Marques (2011) argues that people and social groups access opportunities, goods, and services including money, tools, information, affection, solidarity, and emotional support through social connections. Social networks therefore play a pivotal role in the lives of migrants faced with precarity.

While social networks can invariably play an important role in migrants' (and others') success, they are not without potential risks. Scholars like Worby (2010) and Liu (2013) point to the potential downside of network – the obligations they bring and what might be described as negative social capital. In light of this, this study sought to systematically investigate the role of social networks in mitigating precarity. It also explored the nature and fluctuations as well as the ebbs and flows that social networks tend to take among undocumented Zimbabwean waitrons.

This study speaks to a broader literature on the precarity of service employees and undocumented migrants (Alberti 2011, 2014, Standing 2014 and Lewis et al 2014). The previously indicated literature show that migrants' lives are characterised by low paying jobs, a lack of social protection. Without legal protection, migrants are presented as disposable and interchangeable. As many in the hospitality industry worldwide, both citizens and foreigners are in precarious work, this is an issue of importance not only to South Africa or Zimbabwe, but to migrants in general across the world.

For my purposes, I separate the hospitality industry into two distinct sectors. On one side you have the accommodation sector (hotels, bed & breakfasts, caravan parks, camping sites, inns, game lodges and time sharing of apartments at resorts). On the other are food and beverage services. These include restaurants, coffee shops, tearooms, fast food outlets as well as other catering services (NALEDI, 2001). This research focuses on the restaurants because precarious employment is particularly evident within the restaurant industry where there are seemingly

low barriers to entry and significant competition among local businesses (Denstedt 2008, Alberti 2011). Most restaurants are not-unionized which can make them an even more precarious place to work (Denstedt 2008, Alberti 2011, Cazarin and Jinnah 2014). Denstedt (2008) postulates that waitrons are second in line when it comes to being vulnerable in restaurants. As a coping mechanism migrants may rely on micro social networks for recruitment, to help cover shifts, or to address a range of disputes or labour concerns (Alberti 2010, Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013 and McKay 2012). Using an exploratory study of Zimbabwean undocumented workers in the Johannesburg food service sector, this project documents this and sought to explain the nature of these networks.

Undocumented workers in Porthe et al.'s (2010) study in four Spanish towns found that undocumented migrants perceived their work as including:

> 'high job instability; disempowerment due to lack of legal protection; high vulnerability exacerbated by their legal and immigrant status; perceived insufficient wages and lower wages than co-workers; limited social benefits and difficulty in exercising their rights; and finally, long hours and fast-paced work' (McKay 2012:15).

Whilst this is the case, my study takes a step further to investigate how they mitigate this vulnerability that they perceive in their work conditions. Scholars like Standing (2014) and Lewis et al. (2014) talk of migrants as being part of a homogenously passive group that cannot negotiate around and navigate through the precarious conditions that they are encounter. I argue that migrants that are not a passive group and have an agency to act upon situations.

This research questions this idea of seeing migrants-waitrons- as a homogenous group and powerless. Viewing migrants as social actors who have agency, this research seeks to understand the mechanisms that undocumented migrant waitrons employ to mitigate precarity. In addition, it is also important to shed light on the reasons why such precarious jobs are often picked in the first place. Available literature indicates that waitrons face precarity because of the nature of their job, their status as aliens in a foreign land and as illegal migrants (Dendstedt

2008, Alberti 2011, 2014 and Baum 2012). For most African migrants, being a foreigner is the first precarious condition that is compounded by where they came from and leads into how they will relate in South Africa (Muanamoha, Maharaj and Preston-Whyte 2010). Unlike domestic workers and agricultural workers, undocumented waitrons are more exposed to precarity for they have to avoid policemen on their way to work. members of the South Africa Police Service often, particularly before the introduction of the Zimbabwe Special Dispensation Programme and after it ended, arrest, detain and deport undocumented migrants. The police officers also have a tendency of asking for bribes from undocumented migrants, an untenable demand as most of them are poor. As a result undocumented migrants live in fear of arrest. However, the situation is a bit better for other migrants like farm workers and domestic workers as some of them are offered accommodation by their employer.

It is noteworthy that a number of scholars' (Denstedt 2008, Loonat 2014, Cazarin and Jinnah 2015) research on the hospitality industry is over a large sample and using structured questions thereby limiting the information they get from the participants. This research is different as it focuses on one type of workers in the hospitality industry (waitrons) and has unstructured questions.

1.2 Research Question

How do undocumented Zimbabwean waitrons in Johannesburg employ social networks to mitigate economic precarity?

1.3 Objectives

1. To investigate how the waitron sector becomes a space in which precarious, undocumented migrants access livelihoods.
2. To find out undocumented Zimbabwean waitrons working in a precarious setting, perceive and view their jobs.
3. To understand how undocumented Zimbabweans employ social networks to mitigate their precarity.

4. To explore how waitrons overcome their challenges independent from their social networks

1.4 Structure of the report

The report is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction and it gave an insight into the study and the rationale. The second chapter reviews literature about the nature of the hospitality industry and the precarious conditions that undocumented migrants are exposed to. It reviews literature to understand what it means to be an undocumented labour migrant. The report provides the details on the methodology, including the research design, analysis and ethical considerations that guided the study in the third chapter. The fourth chapter and the fifth unveil the findings and discussion of the nature of the hospitality industry and waitressing job. The fifth chapter discusses the results and are divided into themes. The study is based on extracts from the undocumented migrant waitrons' narratives. Finally the report concludes with the summary of the key findings.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature. This chapter will be divided into major themes to better relate to other studies done before and to show the gap this study fills. The study firstly gives an overview of migration and the challenges that are faced by migrants in general and then narrows down to look at undocumented migrants that are the research population of this study. The second theme that I focus on is precarity, I feel like in order to focus on the precarious nature of the hospitality industry it is crucial to try to define this term. The third theme is the hospitality industry that is divided into sub themes of employers, employees and the work conditions. This section attempts to bring out the precarious nature of this industry. My last theme which is social networks looks at how other studies show how these networks have been used as tool for survival by migrants. I reviewed literature on social networks, migration, hospitality industry undocumented migrants so as to build on previous blocks of studies. Reviewing literature on the hospitality industry helps identify the work conditions that might lead to job precarity. Literature on social networks helped identify how they are utilised to provide social capital. Through the literature reviewed I then formed a concept termed '*transposition of precarity'*.

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews the literature used in this research in order to identify gaps in the existing scholarship. As such, this chapter reviews studies similar to mine in ways that justify my topic and approach. This study contributes to the literature on the use of social networks by a group of migrants who are the informal (waitrons) in a formal sector (the hospitality industry). This research takes a close focus on undocumented migrant waitrons as a way of understanding the challenges faced by undocumented migrants in host countries. As such, this study is situated within literature on social networks as a tool of mitigating precarious work. There is a plethora of studies (Deindst 2008, Lewis et al. 2014, Comola and Mendola 2015) that focus on the precarity of migrants and how they mitigate those challenges and other studies that focus on waitrons. However, this study differs in looking at an understudied sector of waitrons and how they employ social networks to mitigate their precarity. Ryan (2011) states that migration studies have been criticized for taking networks for granted and paying insufficient attention

to the opportunities and obstacles that migrants encounter in attempting to access new networks post migration.

Alberti (2011) highlights on the fact that migrants are very mobile therefore the concept transnationalism is introduced to labour studies. Cazarin and Jinnah (2014) found out from their research of the hospitality industry that employers hardly promote migrants or make them sign contracts because of their high rate of mobility. This fact then leads migrants to contribute to their own precarity in the work environment. Alberti (2011:20) states that encounter of labour studies with cultural analyses of transnationalism opens up new understandings of labour migration as a social force that cannot be merely read off from migrants' economic drives or the position of the labour market. This research acknowledges the fact that human beings are social beings and need other social beings for their survival. Consequently, this research takes a close focus on undocumented migrant waitrons' social networks as this will shed light on challenges faced by undocumented migrants in the host countries and how to deal with them.

2.2 Migration Overview

2.2.1 Migrant Workers

Migrants are often exposed to many challenges in host countries. Standing (2014) argued that migrants whether documented or undocumented are like denizens who do not have the same rights as the citizens in the host country. Recently, Lewis et al. (2014:583) pointed out that, "there is growing evidence that many migrants in low paid, insecure jobs in particular sectors (such as construction, cleaning, care, agriculture, food, hospitality and sex work) are the most exploited and insecure." He further stated that migrant workers are a key group that faces insecurity and more exposed to vulnerable employment. According to Alberti (2010) migrants constitute a large majority of the workers in the lowest paid sectors of the labour market employed under temporary and precarious conditions in many countries across the world. Alberti (2011) Alberti et al. (2013) and Baum (2012) highlight that the hospitality, domestic and cleaning sectors are flooded by foreign born workers and their work is often characterised by poor working conditions such as long and anti-social working hours, low pay, bullying and

harassment. This segment looked briefly at the challenges that migrants are faced with, however these challenges will be analysed in depth later in this study. This section attempts to show that migrants in general are exposed to difficulties in their host countries.

2.2.2 Migration of undocumented migrants

This section analyses the reasons for migration, the phases migrants go through from pre-migration to arriving in the host country and dwells more on the destination stage. Before I delve much into the migratory phases of undocumented migrants, it is crucial to acknowledge that migration has always been a way of life since the Stone Age and has taken place throughout history, and current trends indicate that it will continue to increase in the future (Baum:2012, Bolt 2015).

This study focuses on undocumented migrant waitrons from Zimbabwe. It is noteworthy that there is little literature on experiences of undocumented, Zimbabwean waitrons in particular. I first define undocumented migrants as migrants without any legal permission to be in the country of residence (Bloch and McKay 2014). Generally, insecurities and precarity span pre-migration and journeying experiences. It does not only occur in the host country. Thus, it is essential to look at the whole migration trajectory.

Undocumented migrants start to negotiate and navigate through vulnerable spaces prior to looking for jobs in the host country. Having this in mind therefore one cannot only focus on the precarity of undocumented migrants in the host country. It is important to acknowledge that their precarity transposes throughout the migratory phase, hence the need to look at the migratory phase. The precarity faced by migrants in their countries of origin and through the journey plays a pivotal role on the jobs they end up doing as well as how they negotiate with their living conditions in the host country (it plays a part in their decision making). Undocumented migrants are not only susceptible to precarity in the host country but they phase precarity throughout the migratory trajectory. This precarity ranges from poverty and unemployment in the country of origin, to the routes used to come to Johannesburg and to the jobs they settle in. Precarity is not something that just appears in the host country. This is what I term '***transposition of precarity'***. This is a situation in which the conditions that are push

factors in the country of origin ultimately are the major determinants of the kinds of socialities that will be led in the host countries. Insecurities and precarity are present pre-migration and through the journey experiences and does not only occur in the host country therefore it is essential to look at the whole migration trajectory. The following paragraphs focus on the migration decision pre-migration, the routes used by undocumented migrants and finally the destination phase.

Migrants make decisions to migrate based on the push or pull factors they are exposed to in their countries of origin. Muanamoha et al. (2010), Cornelius and Salehyan (2007) postulate that the primary reason for the migration of undocumented migrants is because of economic factors. Cornelius and Salehyan (2007:139) postulate that, "neoclassical economic theory suggests that wage differentials matter most in migration decisions, yet border enforcement and other immigration controls are designed to restrict access to labour markets". Bolt (2015) says that low salaries and unemployment in the countries of origin has resulted in citizens migrating to other nations in order to sustain their livelihoods in market positions. Factors such as poverty, indebtedness, obligations to support family back home, low education/social position contribute to the decision for one to migrate (Lewis et al. 2014). These factors are exacerbated in destination countries by socio-legal status restrictions (that is no right to work), lack of knowledge of rights and access to information resulting from social isolation (Ibid).This highlights that the need to improve one's income often leads to making the decision to move to countries that offer such an opportunity. Undocumented migrants in the host society tend to become an invisible population as they try to avoid deportation back home.

On a slightly different note Taylor 1999, Cornelius and Salehyan 2007 state that inter-family comparisons of wealth and status between those who receive remittances and those who do not contributes to the pressures on working age members of the household to migrate to counter income inequality. They cited argued that at times migration is a family decision. Families as socialising agents transmit norms on who migrates and why depending on their resource levels and stages of the family cycle (Boyd 1989). This then indicate that families play a pivotal role in making decisions to migrate. At time family members facilitate the migration of members left behind.

Liu (2013) gives a different view when she states that kinship networks are not necessarily the most efficient or most salient in shaping migration decisions hence weaker ties or friendship or acquaintance may be equally or more important than kinship ties. Muanamoha et al. (2010) gives instances on individuals who made their migratory decisions to South Africa based on friendship networks. This study differs from the literature mentioned because it attempts to explore how undocumented migrants mitigate these challenges in the absence of or in addition to social networks. Moreover, it attempts to understand the variations that occur among these networks. This section gave a brief discussion of the reasons for migration and showed that strong and weak ties facilitate migration.

On a different note, high restrictions in migration laws have given rise to a huge number of undocumented migrants. The limitation of migration of lower skilled workers to South Africa by the implementation of restrictive laws and deportation practices, shape the way in which labour migration is viewed and managed (Cazarin and Jinnah 2014). The restriction of migration of borders yields to an increased number of undocumented migrants. Undocumented migrants always find ways to enter into their destination countries therefore borders do not entirely restrict the movement of these migrants. Cornelius and Salehyan (2007) in their research found that increased enforcement resources deployed along the border have had little effect on the probability of undocumented migration. Richter, Taylor and Yúnez-Naude (2007) argued that the increased law enforcement at the border does not deter migration of undocumented migrants but results in the increase of the smuggler fees. The tightening of the borders results in undocumented migrants using different routes to reach their destination. Below I look at how undocumented migrants migrate from their host countries to the destination country.

2.3 Concept of Precarity

This study mainly focuses on job precarity of migrant waitrons. Thus, it is important to define and characterise precarity. This section looks into understanding what precarity is and how it relates into working lives, however this section takes a step further into analysing this concept

through the lens of the hospitality sector and more directly to waitrons. The above section helped in paving the direction on where precarity comes from and highlights that it is an element that exist from the country of origin throughout the migration trajectory. Precarity is at the work place as well as precarity outside the work place.

Most of the literature identifies the origins of the term '*precarious*', as embedded in French sociology, which, in the 1970s, began to link '*precarité*' to poverty, only later using the concept to describe work relationships (Barbier et al. 2002:281). Precarity can be used to refer to lack of regulations that support the standard employment relationship, making workers more vulnerable (Ibid). The International Labour Organization (ILO) has four dimensions of precarious jobs which are uncertainty over the continuity of employment; a lack of individual and collective control over wages and conditions; low or no levels of social protection against unemployment, discrimination, etc.; and insufficient income or economic vulnerability (Lewis et al. 2014:585). These dimensions mentioned also tally with the factors that Standing (2011) stated to be reflectors of precarity. Lewis et al. (2014) and Alberti (2011) state that precarity work is at times referred to as vulnerable work and used to describe insecure work. Precarity does not only exist at work but also undocumented migrants lead precarious lives. Three manifestations of hyper-precarity produced by the nexus of employment and immigration precarity can illustrate this: deportability, risk of bodily injury coupled with restricted access to healthcare, and transactional relationships (Lewis et al. 2014). Having explained what precarity means, the next sections are then divided into sub themes of precarity in the workplace and precarity outside the workplace.

2.3.1 Precarity in the workplace

McKay et al. (2012) states that precarious work has been studies in large number of studies over the last decade but it still remains a contested terrain, with differing views as to what it is, what its causes are and what its impact has been on the labour market. Alberti et al. (2013), Lewis et al. (2014) and Standing (2011) postulate that precarity is a product of neo-liberalism. As the world becomes a global village and companies have a large pool of prospective employees to choose from, the competition among prospective employees arise and they tend to settle for the low paying jobs hence resulting in the birth of precarious work. These scholars

further highlight that migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, where their jobs are precarious and do not benefit from the protection of unions. Alberti (2011) postulates that in Britain precarious work is often referred to as vulnerable work. This however brings the notion of spaces of vulnerability where migrants may comply with some work conditions out of desperation rather out of will and can settle in exploitative work knowingly.

Undocumented migrants are always faced with precarity in their work places and this may be due to their documentation status (Muanamoha et al. 2010, Standing 2011, McKay et al. 2012 and Lewis et al. 2014). Standing (2011) Lewis et al. (2014) postulates that in the global north most migrants are at the bottom of the labour markets and are usually faced with highly precarious jobs, they conclude that this may be a result of racism or anti-immigrant feelings. Undocumented workers in Porthe et al.'s (2010) study in four Spanish towns found that undocumented migrants perceived their work as including 'high job instability; disempowerment due to lack of legal protection; high vulnerability exacerbated by their legal and immigrant status; perceived insufficient wages and lower wages than co-workers; limited social benefits and difficulty in exercising their rights; and finally, long hours and fast-paced work' (McKay et al. 2012:15). This highlights a space of vulnerability where they know that the situation is bad but comply in-order to survive.

The absence of contracts in any job may facilitate or cause exploitation of employees. The hospitality sector is characterised by having many cases of workers without labour contracts or payment for over time or holiday work premiums (McKay et al. 2012). Cazarin and Jinnah (2014) reflect on their respondents stating that waitrons do not sign contracts and get paid daily. This shows precarity because a contract does not only include the agreed salaries but the terms and conditions of the job, the hours they are expected to work and also to refer to it when an employer bridges the contract. The contract can also highlight social protection provided to employees and when and how often salaries can be reviewed. Standing (2011) posits that the absence of a contract reflects the existence of a precarious job since there is an uncertainty of whether an employee is permanent or not. The absence of a written contract serves as an indicator of both informality and precariousness (McKay et al. 2012). This section has indicated the importance of contracts in any job so as to help protect employees against exploitation and unfair dismals. What the above mentioned literature fails to appreciate is that migrants are not just a passive homogenous population who cannot act on their situations.

Migrants use various tools and mechanism to mitigate their precarity. This study tries to figure out what other tools they use.

McKay et al. (2012) study explores the existence of precarity in the hospitality sector. McKay et al. (2012) in their study of the twelve EU member states found that eleven countries related to the fact that the hospitality sector was characterised with long term perceptions of high levels of precarious work. They further highlight that the data provided by the national experts indicated that the hospitality industry is most commonly associated with precariousness. In their findings they say waitrons rely on tips more than anything hence leading to precarious lives. They also found out that 83% of migrants interviewed perceived themselves to be in highly precarious work (McKay et al. 2012). The key findings of their study where the high levels of labour turnover, lower social rights than other sectors, low salary that is less that the national one since the minimum guaranteed salary was removed in 2004 and longer working hours than other sectors. This then raises the questions that amid all these challenges why people are still attracted to the hospitality industry. By investigating how waitrons mitigate their challenges, the findings can give an overview of why large sums of migrants prefer this sector.

This section identifies the attributes of precarity in the workplace which are the absence of contracts and social benefits, long work hours, no basic salary and unfair dismissals. The above mentioned literature highlighted the existence of precarity in workplaces (the hospitality sector) and this study goes on to fill the gaps on how employees encounter those challenges. The next section focuses on precarity outside the workplace.

2.3.2 Precarity outside the work place

Undocumented migrants outside the workplace are also faced with uncertainty and vulnerability. The salaries they earn contribute to the lives they live and the areas they stay. In the section I focused on undocumented migrants I highlighted that this group is faced with uncertainty of how long they will stay in the host country since they can be deported anytime. Whilst there is a legal framework for governing undocumented migrants (arrest, deport and repatriate), informal structures overpower the formal ones. “Numerous officials have little

regard for procedure and tend to view corrupt practices as mere facilitation, assisting individuals to negotiate an overly complex bureaucratic structure," (Segatti 2008:38). Undocumented migrants negotiate their way with the police by paying bribes in order not to be arrested. Kihato (2013) gives an example of police roadblocks as breaking boundaries between legality and illegality and that these roadblocks make extra-legal activity possible thus creating an invisible population. These parallel structures help undocumented migrants mitigate their precarity outside the workplace. Much of the literature on the police portrays them as an appendage of the state, Steinburg (2008), reveals their inherent xenophobic stance in relation to undocumented migrants. Another important conundrum that seems to characterise this relationship between undocumented migrants and the police is that despite the xenophobic attitudes they have the police tend to extort money in return for 'looking the other way'. What this reveals is that both parties are suffering from precarity that is unique to them and when their paths collide, that very precarity tends to colour their interaction in ways that seem to be out of character with their status quo.

After defining precarity it then makes sense to look at the hospitality industry and how precarity exists in this industry. I first defined precarity because in this chapter I constantly refer to this term. In this section precarity is divided into two subsections which are namely precarity at the workplace and outside the workplace and have shown the attributes of precarity.

It is important to take a glimpse of employers in the hospitality industry and the role they play to contribute to the precarity of waitrons. Cazarin and Jinnah (2014) assessed the perceptions of employers in the hospitality industry. They argued that sentiments employers have towards their employees will determine the way they treat them. Cazarin and Jinnah (2014) state that employers regard work in the sector as low skilled and the workforce as easily replaceable and given national and regional unemployment rates, employers consider work to be a privilege. This contributes to the precariousness of the hospitality work since some workers remain in their positions for more than a couple of years (especially in the case of waiters) and there is less room for promotion (Ibid). Arguably, knowing that you can be fired anytime prompts a certain level of uncertainty and insecurity. Workers are aware of the way that their employers

perceive them. Taking note of these challenges presented by employers, it becomes very imperative to understand how waitrons respond to them in order to earn a living.

On a slightly different point, Cazarin and Jinnah (2014) found contradicting responses from employers and employees in the hospitality sector. Most employees reported that they had no contracts and some did not understand those contracts. In addition, some workers indicated that when officials representing labour organisations in the protection of workers' rights visited their workplaces, employers would hide undocumented migrants. The respondents mentioned that most employers do not ask about the documentation and it is the norm. Alberti (2011) postulates that migrants without legal status to work are preferred by employers because they are willing to adapt to the demands of an increasingly 'flexible' labour market to an equally 'flexible' demand. Whereas employers insisted that they only employ documented migrants. Cazarin and Jinnah (2014) also found out that employers considered locals to be lazy and too protected by unions. This however reflects that the advantage employers enjoy by employing migrants instead of local people. Migrant workers can be exposed to any form of exploitation as it is difficult for them to claim rights and have them respected. Cazarin and Jinnah (2014:39) postulate that, "migrants urgent need for social and economic stability makes them vulnerable to abuse from employers."

Loonat (2013) argued that negative impacts experienced by migrants have a positive effect on local businesses as they offer cheap labour which employers can exploit. The negative experiences faced by migrant workers make them prioritise their work more and settle for anything even though they perceive precarity in those situations. This is an advantage to employers since they can maximise their profits and they do not spend much in wages and salaries of employees. This subsection has shed light on some of the reasons why employers prefer migrants than employing local people.

Analysing the working conditions of waitrons helps identify the attributes of precarity. Wong and Ko (2008), Rose (2009), Alberti (2011) and Zaheera and Cazarin (2014) articulate that the hospitality industry is characterised by long working hours, work shifts and handling difficult customers. Loonat (2013) postulates that one of his respondents, a restaurant owner stated that immigration is high within the hospitality industry hence immigrants have a "desperate

mentality" which enables them to work under any condition irrespective of the level of decency of the work. This then leads to immigrants opting for highly precarious jobs so as to sustain their livelihoods. Loonat (2013) concludes that workers in these restaurants consent to their own exploitation. This raises a question of what kind of consent is this and an interest to find empirical evidence on why waitrons consent to their own exploitation amid the existence of these challenges.

Aside from the above issues, it is important to look at the legislation for wages allocation in the hospitality sector. McKay et al. (2012) mention that in the UK, legislation on the national minimum wage was introduced in 1998 in the hospitality sector, this law however was fully implemented in 2009. In the UK there has been mention of a new legislation that would review the existing provisions, to make it unlawful to use tips to pay the minimum wage and make no deductions from tips or salaries to cover breakages, till shortages or customer walkouts hence making all rules for the distribution of tips and service charges available in writing for staff and customers on request (Ibid). If this new legislation is to be enacted it might help minimise precarity of waitrons. Cazarin and Jinnah (2014) posit that the bargaining council has stipulated a minimum wage for waitrons in South Africa. However, the documentary on *Checkpoint* (15 October 2015- Indian Restaurant under investigation over staff treatment) showed that not all restaurants abide by these regulations and some owners do not give waitrons a basic salary.

On a different but related matter, Loonat (2013) in his research of the hospitality sector in Gauteng province found that one in every eight (14%) employees in the hospitality sector worked without a contract of employment. All the twelve waitrons he interviewed highlighted that they did not have a basic salary but relied on tips for their income. Loonat pointed out that workers in this sector are not paid for working overtime. Furthermore, even if they do not want to work overtime they feel compelled to do so. Then half of his respondents indicated that when they got injured at work but did not receive their salaries for abseentism. The issue of low salaries was also supported by Alberti (2011) who indicated that in the hospitality sector the waiting staff is paid less compared to other workers in the hospitality sector. Then with regards to social benefits, Loonat (2013) found out that in all the hospitality sector workers waitrons

were the least group to have, for example, medical aid, annual bonus, paid annual and sick leave, and transport allowances.

2.4 Social networks

Social networks can be used as a tool for mitigating precarity. Migrants can employ these networks for information about jobs, helping each other in time of need. This subsection reviews literature on social networks and how migrants utilise them for survival. Both the positive and negative outcomes of social networks are examined.

Social networks act as a mechanism that is employed by migrants to mitigate their precarity. Muanamoha et al (2010:1) state that:

> "In South Africa undocumented migrants are subjected to high levels of xenophobia, exploitation and deportation. However, through social networks undocumented Mozambican labour migration to South Africa has become a self-sustained circular process that is difficult to control."

Boyd (1989:641) postulates that, "migration flows often become self-sustaining, reflecting the establishment of networks of information, assistance and obligations which develop between migrants in the host society and friends and relatives in the sending area". McCollum and Apsite-Berina (2015), Liu (2013), Muanamoha et al. (2010) and Tutt et al. (2013) state that these networks are a means through which employers and migrant labour are brought together in the labour market. The social experiences at work become sites for accumulation of 'social capital', which is not necessarily re-invested in the search for new jobs (Alberti 2011:225). This shows how some migrants in South Africa mitigate their precarity through the use of social networks.

Boyd (1989) alludes that the study of social networks is not new and has been done since the 1960s. However, there is not much literature which focus on how migrants mitigate their precarity in the absence of social networks (Kathiravelu 2012 and Muanamoha et al. 2010).

Most scholars, Edralin (2013), Denstedt (2008), Cazarin and Jinnah (2014), do not solely focus on waitrons but on all the hotel, restaurant or hospitality staff. The purpose of this research is to reveal the empirical ways in which waitrons deal with notions of connection and disconnection. This study by interviewing waitrons about their networks can reveal how migrants themselves view their networks and priorities them.

Not all social network ties are equal (Liu 2013). The study acknowledges this, therefore seeks to investigate why there are variations. Fernandes and Paul (2011) in their study of social networks of migrant construction workers in Goa talk about migrants as a homogenous group that employ social networks in a similar way. Comola and Mendola (2015) posit that previous studies assume that migrants interact homogeneously in groups and they argue that within a group, individuals are likely to have different patterns of interactions, which in turn might affect their outcomes. Comola and Mendola (2015), in their study on Sri Lankan immigrants in Milan highlight that migrants are a heterogeneous group that employ social networks in different ways according to the network function. Comola and Mendola (2015) found the above by analysing the formation of migrant networks and how the formation of these links actually shapes interpersonal exchanges. Ryan (2011) in his study of professional polish migrants in London found out that not all networks are equal and migrants prefer to be part of different networks, some networked with their ethnic groups yet some preferred to disconnect from these groups and connect with English speaking people to improve their language proficiency. Ryan (2011)'s study and Comola and Mendola (2015)'s study had similar results in that migrant networks are different and yield different results. This study does not focus on how migrant networks are formed but on how these networks are used as tools of mitigating migrants' precarity in their host countries. Migrants interact heterogeneously hence they employ networks at different degrees and some choose to disconnect. Alberti (2011) states the trajectories of migrants are not formed only on ethnic and family networks but are more temporary, individualised, and yet, at the same time, more embedded in friendships. Based on previous studies, this part has tried to demonstrate that migrants interact within social networks differently and may yield different outcomes.

Networks are dynamic, Ryan (2011) and Worby (2010) highlight migrants' networks change over time, and networks that migrants encounter on arrival are unlikely to remain static.

Migrants may disconnect from their initial networks to create new ones they see appropriate at the time, Ryan (2011) gives an example on how educated Polish migrants in London disconnected from their ethnic groups and formed networks with professionals. Worby's study in 2010 showed how individuals employed networks heterogeneously, some of his respondents did not mind taking care of relatives who came from Zimbabwe, whereas some preferred sending money back home but where not willing to have relatives come to them in South Africa, whereas some preferred neither communicating nor helping out relatives. This gives an insight on how a group of migrants from the same nationality react to the same situations and that they are not just are homogenous group. Worby's study population was low skilled workers from Zimbabwe. The low skilled migrants had different reason for keeping their social networks or disconnecting from them.

The utility of connections through networks cannot be overly romanticised. Worby (2010) reveals that disconnection is used as efficiently as connection when one finds themselves in a situation of exceeding difficulty. Social networks can heighten real or perceived vulnerability or precarity. Worby (2010) does not highlight a lot on how migrants cope in the absence of social networks, or in any event, the way in which connections, or the lack thereof, play out among undocumented waitrons, therefore that is my point of departure. This rides on the realisation that there are variations between connection-disconnection and the absence of a social network. Worby (2010) hones in on how Zimbabweans at times are disappointed by their networks when coming to South Africa, as others are ignored by relatives.

Lewis et al.'s (2014) study focuses on the precarious lives that migrants are exposed to in their host countries. Lewis et al. (2014) argues migrants are faced with highly precarious work experiences at the bottom end of labour markets in Global North countries, including becoming trapped in forced labour. Lewis et al. (2014:2) quotes Waite, 2009 saying precarity refers to those who experience precariousness, and this conjures life worlds that are inflected with uncertainty and instability. He further argues that migrants are exploited in low paying jobs in their host countries. I concur with Lewis et al. (2014) that many exploited migrant's lives are best characterised by a notion of hyper-precarity that emerges from on-going interplay of neoliberal labour markets and highly restrictive immigration regimes. Due to restrictive immigration regimes most migrants find it hard to become legal citizens in their host countries,

therefore are forced to be undocumented which increases their precarity for they can be deported anytime and also reduces their chances to getting formal jobs thereby leading to hyper precarity. Lewis et al. (2014) fails to bring out the fact that migrants in precarious jobs have an agency to navigate through their systems and mitigate their precarity.

Social networks are often utilised by migrants to navigate through the laws set up against them. Failure to appreciate social dimensions of migration process has resulted in the failure of migration laws which in turn bring out opposite desired incomes as migrants employ social networks which generate more legal and illegal migrants (Massey 1990, Muanamoha et al. 2010). Networks are central features of illegal migration (Boyd 1989). However, illegal migrants have fewer family and friendship ties than do legal migrants (Ibid).

2.4 Conclusion

Lewis et al. (2014) observed that most migrants in a state of precariousness are undocumented. Following this observation, this study looks at an under-researched and vulnerable population of Zimbabwean undocumented migrant waitrons. This research seeks to contributes to understanding the lived experiences of undocumented migrants and expression of agency under very difficult conditions.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature. This chapter presents and will reflect on the methodological steps taken in this study. I present the operational concepts used in this research. Data collection was involved separate narratives and in-depth interviews with the waitrons.

The main question this research sought to answer was, how do undocumented Zimbabwean waitrons in Johannesburg employ social networks to mitigate economic precarity? Through the use of narratives and in-depth interviews respondents narrated what they perceived as precarity and how they mitigate it in their daily lives.

As stated before, this research seeks to understand the social aspect of the work and lives of undocumented waitrons in Johannesburg. A qualitative study offers a description of some social phenomena. Qualitative research gives room for discovery and allows for unanticipated events (Yin 2011). This study design allow me to have a detailed perspective of the perceptions, and experiences waitrons have about their job nature and the predicaments they go through, and how they mitigate them through the use of social networks. A qualitative approach also makes it possible to establish if there are any variations in social network reliance and what accounts for the variations among the research sample., this study's initial aims were to find out a detailed perspective of the perceptions, and experiences waitrons have about their job nature and the predicaments they go through, and how they mitigate them through the use of social networks. The study sought to understand their experiences in the hospitality sector and how they sustain themselves therefore the need for a qualitative research. The study tried to establish if there are any variations in social network reliance and what accounts for the variations among the research sample.

3.2 Operational Concepts

3.2.1 Precarity/ precariousness

The working definition for precarious employment in this research refers to the forms of work characterised by limited job security, few employment benefits, lack of control over the labour process and low wages. Drawing from the literature in the previous chapter, the absence of contracts, no basic salary and the absence of social benefits highlights precarity.

3.2.2 Social networks

This research uses the terms migrant networks, social connection and social networks interchangeably. The working definition of migrant networks is that they are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants to one another through relations of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin (Palloni et al. 2001: 1263). This research will use the term social capital referring to the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu and Wacquant in Palloni et al. 2001). Social networks yield social capital but as stated earlier at times the outcome of social networks is not always positive. Social capital is defined as resources embedded in one's social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilised through ties in the networks (Lin in Lin 2005). Respondents were not aware of the term social networks so I asked questions like, who introduced them to their first job, who do their turn to when they have lost jobs and how close are they to their colleagues, and how often do they cover their colleagues'' shifts if they are sick.

3.2.3 Disconnection

In this research 'disconnection' is when people abandon their social networks or where there is absence of social networks. Worby (2010) highlights that social networks at times yield negative results in instances where people become a burden or when people are just ignored upon their arrival. These individuals they then have to find other mechanisms to employ to

cope. These mechanisms might be exercising their own agency by individually mitigating their precarity by utilising parallel structures. Disconnecting from social networks can be seen as a way of survival.

3.2.3 Waitrons

This term in the study will be used to refer to servers in the restaurants and hotels. The servers are usually the ones that attend to clients in a restaurant**.**

3.3 Pilot study

The pilot study helped me to refine most of my questions and know what to focus onduring my field work. After the pilot study I decided not to use terms like precarity and social networks since most of the respondents would ask for the definition of these words. I then resorted to identifying the indicators as they narrated their stories. For instance instead of mentioning the word precarity, I would ask about the work conditions, the challenges they faced most at work or whether they had signed a contract or if they were entitled to social benefits. The pilot study helped me to frame the questions for my in-depth interviews and come up with operational concepts.

3.4 Research Methods

This section looks at the research methods I used. This study used the interpretivist approach because this method allows an in-depth insight into the lives of respondents thereby taking a phenomenological paradigm (Reissman 1993, 2002). The research used narratives to collect data from the participants. Narrative inquirers attend to both personal conditions and, simultaneously, to social conditions and they further address the so what and who cares questions that are necessary in all research undertakings (Clandinin and Huber: n.d). I sought to answer questions like how do Zimbabwean waitrons cope with their economic precarity.

Through the use of narratives I was able to gain in depth insights about their work conditions and tools they employ to mitigate precarity. The interpretivist approach allows the researcher

to use unstructured interviews that gives room to gather thick description about a certain event and find individual motives of each participant (Strauss, 1990). The use of narratives allowed some of the respondents to talk of their precarity outside the workplace and open up about their sexual networks and some about domestic violence they encounter. This research focused only on a small sample of the population so as to understand deeply their perceptions on the job conditions. Narratives allowed the participants to tell their story in their own way without being forced to leave out some information they wanted to include (Reissman).

This interpretivist method argues that individuals understand the same 'objective reality' in different ways and have individual reasons for their actions (Reissman). This was evidenced in this study when some of the respondents showed different views about their work conditions. One respondent highlighted that if he was to have a restaurant he would not pay any waiters since it would be a waste of money yet some highlighted the need for a basic salary. This then makes the approach suitable for this research because the study acknowledges that there are variations on how waitrons mitigate precarity. Narratives given by respondents allowed the researcher to look beyond the story and in the process enable her to deduce meanings from their actions. However, this can mislead the researcher (Strauss and Corbin 1990), hence the implementation of a follow up interview guide, to guide them to answer some areas where I feel they did not fully answer. This approach has a disadvantage that it can lead to bias on behalf of the researcher however it gives room to study topics to a great depth (Reissman 2002).

In qualitative interviewing there are open ended questions. The researcher usually has a mental framework of study questions. The verbalised questions might differ to participants according to the context and setting of the interview (Yin 2011). In-depth interviews were implemented so as to try to address some issues that I felt the respondents did not fully elaborate on. The in depth interview guides were divided into themes emanating from the objectives. The follow up interviews were open ended and filled in the gaps from the narratives.

3.5 Data analysis and Translation

The study's findings were analysed thematically. According to Anderson (2007) and Reissman (1993) in order to provide commonality among the participants, the researcher assembles the data into themes. The interviews were recorded using a tape recorder, and later I would listen to the recordings and transcribe them in the form of a dialogue, taking note of the voice tone and where one would pause or sigh. Interviews were conducted in Shona and Ndebele and some respondents would use one vernacular language and English. As I transcribed I had to translate all the ten recorded interviews to English. The major challenges I faced was giving words the exact meaning in English as in the vernacular languages.

3.6 Research population

I chose to focus on Zimbabwean waitrons because the demographic landscape of the hospitality industry in South Africa consists of a large proportion of Zimbabweans. Jinnah and Cazarin (2015) point out that many Zimbabweans are employed in this sector due to their high education and English proficiency.

The researcher chose to focus on waitrons from Zimbabwe because the demographic landscape of the hospitality industry in South Africa consists of a large proportion of Zimbabweans. According to Jinnah and Cazarin (2015) many Zimbabweans are employed in this sector due to their high education and English proficiency. The study focused on both men and women. There were five men and five women so that my study would be an equal representation of both sexes.

Table 1

The table below shows the demographic information of the research participants

Name *(pseudonym)	Age and sex	Marriage status	Academic Education	Years in S.A	Years as a waiter
Nobuhle	Female (35)	Divorced no Children	O'level drop out	8	7
Tanatswa	Female (33)	Single	O'level drop out	5	5
Charmaine	Female (32)	Single one child	O'level drop out	6	6
Cheryl	Female (30)	Single no children	O'level	3	3
Helen	Female (27)	Single no children	O'level	8	8
Themba	Male (31)	Married with one child	O'level	8	8
Ray	Male (37)	Divorced one child	Diploma	8	8
Leroy	Male (35)	Married one child	University drop out	8	8
Xolani	Male (40)	Divorced one child	O'level	20	20
Peter	Male (42)	Single one child	Diploma	15	12

*** Pseudonyms were used to protect respondents' identity**

Their ages ranged from 27 to 42 years. The average number of years they have been living and working in South Africa as waitrons were 8.5 years. At the time of the fieldwork, the children of the waitrons who were single and divorced lived in Zimbabwe. Of note the majority of the waitrons who were interviewed had at least completed the Ordinary Level of education and this is in line with the general view that migrant workers from Zimbabwe are educated. With regards to their ethnic backgrounds, there were four who belonged to the Shona ethnic group, the dominant ethnic group in Zimbabwe, and six who belonged to the Ndebele ethnic group. Anecdotal evidence say people from the Ndebele ethnic group have a longer history of migrating to South Africa, high sense of belonging and stronger social ties in the host country than the Shona people. The Ndebele people speak Ndebele, a Nguni language which is very

close to the Zulu language which is widely spoken in Johannesburg. They used this an advantage to navigate in the areas they stay.

Research participants worked in different restaurants spread across Johannesburg, for example, in Melville, Eastgate and Midrand. I employed the snowballing technique to identify interview waitrons to interview. Snowball sampling is useful when a researcher wishes to study a stigmatized group and behaviour, hence having a previous participant vouch for the trustworthiness of the researcher may help new potential participants feel more comfortable about being included in the study (Yin 2011). Undocumented migrants rarely want to make their status known due to fear of deportation; therefore snowballing can help deal with these challenges associated with research participants not trusting strangers to recruit or encourage them to participate in a study. My networks (cousins and colleagues) introduced me to the first participants they were close to in order to gain their trust.

3.6.1 Undocumented migrants

Undocumented migrants are often restricted to the most precarious jobs within the least regulated parts of the economy, therefore making up a large share of the precariat (Bloch and McKay 2015, Standing 2011). They are a cause of its growth and in danger of becoming its primary victims, demonised and made the scapegoat of problems not of their making (Standing; 2011). Undocumented workers provide cheap labour and can be fired and deported if necessary or if they prove recalcitrant. They do not appear on the payrolls of firms and households, and fade into the nooks and crannies of society when recession hits (Standing 2011:97).

However, according to Standing 2011 undocumented migrants, have civil rights as human beings but lack economic, social or political rights. In the United States and Spain the millions of undocumented migrants account for the huge shadow economy (Ibid). Ironically they have no right to work for pay but are hired thus living with the threat of deportation (Alberti et al. 2013).

Budlender (2013) states that researchers' best estimate undocumented migrants ranging from one to three million in South Africa. Initially I intended to focus on migrants who are currently undocumented despite the fact that they once had some documentation. During the course of the field work I became aware that some of undocumented migrants used fake documents or someone else's documents and they had to be careful not to be caught. These documents were used only in South Africa. They feared that crossing the borders with these documents might get them caught by the immigration officers at the borders.

The documentation status of the participants affected the location where the interviews were conducted. Some were scared to be apprehended by the police so they preferred meeting in their homes or in quiet places. Those I met in public seemed not to be at ease and kept looking round. One of the waitrons vanished whilst we were walking to a restaurant in Hilbrow, Johannesburg. The waitron later called and explained that she disappeared after seeing some police officers at a distance. This reflected the precarity and vulnerability faced by undocumented migrants outside the workplace. Waitrons indicated that I their workplaces they were safe from the police for they never came into the restaurants to ask for documentations like on the streets.

3.7 Accessibility

This section describes how I managed to meet up with the respondents. Most participants preferred to meet in areas where they stay and were not open to meeting up in places I suggested. But I remained vigilant when I met them at their places of choice as Johannesburg is a very dangerous city. Most of the fieldwork was conducted in December and ended up extending to early January due to the busy work schedule of waitrons. Some would cancel meetings at the last minute due to work commitments or would be called to fill in for someone sick. Initially I had planned to conduct the interviews from November to December. However, in November I spent most of the time making appointments. I realised that most of the respondents I had to meet them twice, the first time they would ask me to come near their workplaces where they would sneak outside or ask others to cover for them to meet me briefly. They asked whether they would be exposed to any risks if they participated in the study. Research participants wanted to build trust first, a point I appreciated as they were in a precarious situation.

3.8 Challenges

I conducted fieldwork in the festive season, November and December 2016. One of the challenges I faced during the field work was getting hold of waitrons and it took longer to conduct the interviews. November and December were busy months for them as they wanted to have an opportunity to get more tips by having more shifts. The other challenge that I faced is that some waitrons thought I would be like their 'saviour'. Upon disclosing to them that the research was only for academic purposes others then withdrew from the research. Others expected that this would be like the *documentary on Etv's checkpoint* where the employers were exposed and the bargaining council intervened. Waitrons expected their employers to be exposed and their situation to change. Despite all these challenges, the fact that I was the same nationality with them gave me an advantage as others referred to me as their sister and this made them to open up. Most participants accepted me as one of them (insider) than a student who was conducting research.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Christians (2000) advances that research participants have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of the research in which they are involved and that subjects must agree voluntarily to participate without physical and psychological coercion. The objectives of the research were fully explained to the research participants. They were free to withdraw from the study whenever they wanted to and no form of coercion was used.

Verbal consent was used as a way of securing the anonymity of the research participants. Keeping the identity of research participants and the names of their workplaces anonymous as well as the information they released as confidential was important since they were undocumented. The research also did not want to expose them to the danger of being dismissed from work. If they were to be identified would run the risk of being arrested and deported. The respondents were made anonymous by the use of pseudonyms. Individual interviews were carried out so that the respondents may not be identified by others. In addition, whilst the

practices of the research participants are being revealed in this study, efforts have also been done not to expose hidden or sexual networks they might want to keep hidden.

Before each interview begun, respondents were asked for permission to record their views using an electronic recording device. Audio recordings were kept in a laptop with a password. Field notes were kept in a lock and key drawer. Right from the outset the research participants were told that there are no material benefits for participating in the study. In other words no incentives were offered to the research participants. The point that this research is being undertaken for academic purposes only was emphasised I order to give the research participants some confidence in the purpose of the project and how the study's findings were going to be utilised. Nevertheless, some research participants still hoped to get incentives. Some of these participants ended up withdrawing from the study. However, the response rate in the study remained high.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter was about the methodological steps that I undertook to carry out the research. I defined the precarity, social networks, disconnection and what is meant by the term waitrons. The challenges including ethical ones, faced during my field work were highlighted. The next chapter will analyse the data gathered during the field work.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of this research. The findings discussed thematically. The major themes that came up during data gathering were **social networks**, **sexual networks**, **religion** and **moral economy**. Of note, this research found out that there are sexual networks that are formed as a way of survival, other migrants disconnect from their networks as a survival strategy or because those they helped out never reciprocated, whereas others use religion as a way of facing the challenges they come across and the concept of moral economy (social justice) also come to play. Before concentrating on the major key findings on how undocumented migrants mitigate their precarity it is important to first describe the social context in which they operated in. I present and discuss their work conditions and the exploitation they are exposed to. They highlighted that their work involved emotional labour. During the narratives most participants focused a lot on the challenges of their jobs. During the follow up interviews I then concentrated more on the mechanisms they employed to mitigate the challenges they would have highlighted. It is worth mentioning that the waitrons when communicating amongst themselves often used their own terminology. I list the common terminology, which I will also be constantly using in the chapters on study findings.

- *iowner - the restaurant owner*
- *market - to look for a job with a cv*

4.2 Nature of the hospitality industry

Migrants make up a large number of workers in the hospitality industry (Cazarin and Jinnah 2014, Albert 2011, Baum 2012, Fernandes and Paul 2011). Once migrants are recruited into particular occupations in significant numbers, these jobs become culturally labelled as "migrant" jobs and native workers are reluctant to fill them, reinforcing a structural demand for migrants for these jobs (Fernandes & Paul 2011:15). The hospitality industry is characterised by low pay, high labour turn-over, long working hours and unfair dismissal.

(Alberti 2011, Alberti et al. 2013). Nine out of ten waitrons highlighted that they did not have basic salary and some got paid using commissions of 0.1 percentage of their sales. Some of the respondents highlighted that they only relied on their tips only where also the restaurant owner would take a certain percentage of those tips. A basic salary seemed not to be part of the package. Of note, only one waitron, Peter aged 40 had signed a contract.

> **Interviewer :** What does your contract entail?
> **Peter:** It only talks about my behaviour at work.
> **Interviewer :** Can you give me examples?
> **Peter:** Hmmm. It just states that I should not be late to work, that I should always attend my shifts and that there is a daily breakage fee of R20 per shift.
> **Interviewer :** Do you get refunded back your money if you do not break anything?
> **Peter:** No I do not. That's the norm here. The painful thing is that you cannot start a shift without paying this money. So as a waitron going to work every day you need to carry the breakage money and also the money to bribe police men if you met them.

It is worth noting that the contract did not even stipulate if the waiter was permanent or not and even his salary. All the waitrons that I interviewed expressed discontent over the issue of breakages. They indicated that they pay R20- R30 for breakages every shift, a fee paid before they start their shift. They were almost never refunded even if they did not break anything during their shift. To them, it was a way for the restaurant owner to continuously steal from them. They showed disgruntlement by going to an extent of calculating the amount per month and they would allude that if they would get that it would make a difference.

The majority of the waitrons, 80%, gave instances where they encountered physical violence of the respondents attested that encountered any physical violence with their current or previous employers. Majority of the waitrons attested that they were used to verbal abuse from their employers who would swear at them. Waitrons shared with them insults which were hurled at

them. For example, the insults involved them being reminded of their documentation status, country of origin's economy. They claimed that they had gotten used to the verbal abuse. This indicated that the waitrons were normalising their abuse a situation which results in many of them not bothering to report the abuse to other authorities like the police. Shockingly, one of the waitrons who talked about her experience of physical abuse (beaten up) by the owner had been working at the restaurant for five years. Some respondents indicated that at times it was their fault when they got beaten by the employer. These were moments they were caught stealing for instance. Some indicated that being slow or having a misunderstanding with a client may result in a beating. For example, Ray aged

> **Interviewer :** What had you done when you were beaten by the employer?
> **Ray:** I had been caught in an argument with a client. He had said that I had brought them the wrong order but I was sure that I had the correct order?
> **Interviewer :** Oh
> **Ray:** You see these customers at times they come with no money at all, and after eating they register complaint and iowner will say "it is on the house" The reality is I will be the one paying for it. For instance the Blacks and the Indians they come here and order cheese cakes and yet they tell you 'your cheese cake is sour'. A cheese cake is supposed to be sour.
> **Interviewer :** Oh. So on that day when you were beaten what really happened?
> **Ray:** Oh sorry, iowner came and apologised to the customer and told them to place another order and designated another waitron to their table. He then called me to his office where he beat me and then fired me. I was not given my card tips for that day.

Ray did not bother to report this unlawful incident and others to the police. His reasons was that as an undocumented migrant he was afraid that reporting to the authorities would result in

him being deported. Waitrons believe that the restaurant owners bribed the police not to take action against them.

Significantly, the waitrons' understanding was that such action by employers of taking the law into their own hands and punishing them as normal. The South African clearly does not give employers powers to mete out such form of punishment to their workers.

McKay et al. (2012) alludes that precarious work creates a higher risk of poverty as well as of ill health and this has negative implications. Nobuhle, aged narrated a story about her colleague who had passed on. She attributed the cause of death to hard working conditions.

> **Nobuhle:** Can you see the girl in the middle in this picture?
> **Interviewer :** Yes
> **Nobuhle:** Can you see how young she is?
> **Interviewer :** Yes, what happened to her?
> **Nobuhle:** She died because of the kind of job we do. Many people die here (naming the name the restaurant). We are no allowed to sit down, we are always standing. Here we are not only waitrons, were load stuff, we carry heavy stuff, we clean. At the end of the day you suffer from diseases you never had before. You see this girl I showed you in the picture, she just complained of side pains (isihlabo/mabayo- usually a result of over working) and they got severe and a few weeks later she passed on. You come here without back problems and side pains but now almost everyone here suffers from that. When we see new people coming to look for job we feel sorry for them for we know they have come to be tortured. When you look for a job they never tell you all these things. I was told I would earn on a commission basis but that is not the case.
> **Interviewer :** Oh
> **Nobuhle:** When this girl got really sick the owner did not even think of paying her hospital bills. I organised with other waitrons

> to put some money together so that we can help her pay her hospital bills and go back to Zimbabwe. When we raised our money, someone alerted 'umkhaba' (the owner's nickname. We as waitrons we raised R4 500 and him out of shame he gave us R300, what is R300 from iowner. My sister this is painful.

The waitrons also experienced problems like working for long hours and little changes of promotion. These above outstanding findings support the existing literature that work under terrible conditions and are often powerless to change their situation (Standing 2011 and Lewis et al. 2014)

Since I see waitrons as social actors with agency (see Sibeon 199), I explored whether they were expressing some agency to deal with these challenges of abuse and exploitation at the workplace by reporting or seeking the services of trade unions. Below is my exchange with Linda, age 33.

> **Sostina[1]:** Have you ever that thought of joining any trade unions so that they can represent you?
> **Linda:** Aah my sister, you forget that we are undocumented, so we cannot go to the unions, they went proper documentations

Actually this was a common response amongst waitrons. Some seemed not to be aware of the bargaining council and that it can represent them. One male waitron, Peter and has been working as a waiter for … years however, pointed out that he feared to join the trade unions as he feared to be stigmatised, victimised and discriminated by the employers..

> "Once they know that you are part of the union, you become their target and no one wants to employ you. So it better not to be part of any union", said Peter

[1] Interviewer's name

Cazarin and Jinnah (2014) posit that only fourteen percent of the hospitality workers are part of the unions. Waitrons are reluctant to join trade unions because they believe that without proper documentations it is impossible and fear of being discriminated by the employer. Hospitality workers have limited ability to voice their concerns over their conditions of employment and little access to job protection through organized forms of labour (Denstedt 2008).

On a different point but which illustrates the problem of horrible work conditions, all waitrons mentioned that if their employer delayed to give them their tips from clients who pay using their cards they could not ask the employer. Even if the employer deducts some of their tips they would just accept, since confronting the employer might result in dismal.

As argued earlier, waitrons had a tendency of normalising the precarious work conditions. This situation can be illustrated by John aged….when he said,

> "We are not part of their work staff so there is no need for a contract or a basic salary''.

Sally, aged and who has been working as waitron for …years echoed the same point but made a slightly different point:

> "How can you give social benefit to someone you do not see as a human being".

It is worth noting that waitrons felt dehumanised by employers. Dehumanising waitrons worked to justify the abuse and exploitation.

Since waitrons were not covered by unions, it became very important to find out how they were responding to these challenges at their workplaces. The common responses were as follows:

use of social networks, religion was employed as a way of making sense of the world around them, and stealing from the employer. These responses will be discussed in detail later on.

Despite all the challenges waitrons face at work, they were expected to be perfect hosts to the customers. They are supposed to keep smiling and enjoy interacting with them. In addition, the waitrons the have to provide emotional labour to the customers, a point I discuss below.

4.3 Emotional Labour

All the waitrons reported experiencing emotional labour at work. Emotional labour is defined by Pienaar & Willemse (2008) as an instance where specific feelings have to be induced or suppressed in order to display behaviour for the recipient of service to feel safe and cared for, with the implication that this may be at the cost of individual expressing true feelings.

Waitrons reported that customers often shout and complain at them and at the same time have to only smile back. Shouting back at the customer might lead to their dismal. Therefore customers have power of the waitrons and this makes them very vulnerable at their workplaces. In order to get better tips waitrons are vulnerable to doing whatever the clients requires therefore adding to their precarity. Of note the waitrons are not trained to handle all these pressures including dealing with emotional clients. No waitron reported being offered psychosocial services in order to deal with stress generated at work. I will further discuss this point later.

Waitrons reflected on the way they were supposed to contain their feelings, how they should look presentable and always smile at their clients. Leroy, aged ….with …years of experience as waitron referred to his job as an art, "where you have to master the art of walking, talking to clients and also to be able to predict the mood the customer is in". He elaborated his point:

> *"*You see my sister, waitressing is an art, you just do not have to walk like you are tired and you should be fast, you should know how to hold your trays without spilling. Always make sure that you leave your customer smiling and make them feel so special

> that way you are guaranteed of better tips. Always make sure they do not run out of drinks. The trick is to just smile despite the insults from **iowner** or the manager. You can curse and cry all you want in the background but when you go in front you have to look happy. In this industry, my sister, you have to learn to control your emotions. You do not have to be short tempered and you should tolerate anything", said Leroy.

Rose (2009) supports Leroy's views and added the gender dimension. Rose postulates that a waiter has to know how to hold their trays, how to talk and at times plays the role gender scripts: the waitress becomes servant, mother, daughter, friend, or a sexual object. Waitrons have to master these without training as a way of getting more tips from their customers. Rose (2009) explains that these characteristics are acquired over time and at times by watching seasoned waitrons at work. All these examples highlight that the waitrons are exposed and susceptible to emotional labour.

Throughout the narratives the respondents would refer to the notion that the '***customer is always right'***, hence they should not argue with them or be angered by their actions, but always smile at the customer. Rose (2009) postulates that some customers have sort of appropriated the role of employers. She explained that customers tend to play the role of the employer to the waitron by awarding more tips to the waitron that provides the best services. Waitrons tend to make much effort in pleasing the client so as to be able to yield higher profit. Waitrons are motivated by the tips, hence the manager does not need to monitor them consistently for waitrons will offer the best service for more tips. Borrowing from Rose (2015:75) a newspaper writer who became a waiter for a year when his career went down,

> "And smiling. You gotta keep smiling. You tell yourself: It's like hosting a dinner party that someone else is paying for. You tell yourself anything that keeps you going. After a week of training, they sent me out to the floor to do my thing. Wait tables. Take orders. Make recommendations. Put people at ease. Entertain them. Keep believing. And keep smiling."

Rose (2015) puts an emphasis on the fact that the waitron has to always smile. His statement indicates that the job of the waitron is not only of waiting tables but engaging with the clients as well. They have to make sure customers are comfortable and at ease. He further indicates the use of tips as a form of motivation.

> "That is when they love you. Your job is to make them love you. That is when they tip you and that's how you live on a job that pays $2.13 an hour. Yes, $2.13 an hour. The rest is up to you, your performance, your skills, your knowledge and your ability to convince people that they're having a good time. And if you believe and if you hustle and if you keep smiling – nine times out of 10, they will. " Rose 2015:75

Xolani aged 35 with 8 years' experience as a waitron, echoed the point made by Rose (2015). He gave an instance of a well-known South African celebrity. He indicated that this celebrity, who was a regular at the restaurant he worked at, and has a habit of insulting him. Ironically, every time the celebrity would give Xolani a tip ranging from R400-R600, 'a generous tip'. Xolani tolerates the abuse and warded off feelings of anger against this celebrity as his eyes are always on the tip he would get each time. However, it is important to note that many waitrons were not as fortunate as Xolani that at the end of the day they were kind of 'compensated' by abusive customers.

With such exposure to emotional labour and such vulnerability, waitrons lack the training to be able to reduce the stress generated at work. I watched one of my respondents that I had known since as a child transition from being a sober person to be an alcoholic. Helen was one of my respondents, I always asked her why all of a sudden she would drink during her spare time and her response was always that it is because of pressure at work. She explained her situation:

> "Most of us drink because this is the only way we can refresh and forget all the stress. If you do not drink you will go crazy" said Helen

Waitrons need help to deal with emotional labour they are exposed to. Pizam (2004) postulates that there is no training in the emotional labour and this creates emotional dissonance. He postulates that while health workers and actors are properly trained to engage in emotional labour, hospitality employees are simply asked to cope with it "or else" and not given any assistance in managing the emotional dissonance (Pizam 2004: 315). Emotional dissonance is a conflict between felt and expressed emotions (Ibid). Pizam (2007:136) postulates that a recent report summarizing the results of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health in the USA (Office of Applied Studies, 2007) titled "Depression among Adults Employed Fulltime, by Occupational Category" revealed that employees in the food preparation and serving related occupations in the 2004–2006 period had the second highest incidence (10.3 percent) of major depressive episodes (MDEs). Waitrons are more prone to suffer from major depressive episodes because their line of work forces them to supress their feelings. Proper training for emotional labour would help to reduce the incidences of major stress depressive episodes.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented some of the challenges that the waitrons are exposed to. These challenges range from verbal to physical abuse. The perpetrators of abuse against waitrons are both employers and customers. However, waitrons are not just passive and accept their predicament, they have mechanisms that they employ to mitigate the challenges that they face. However, in a bid to cope with these challenges some of them end up engaging in destructive behaviour. The following chapter looks in detail at the mechanisms that were mostly prominent in their narratives. The next chapter is divided into three themes which are Social networks, religion and moral economy.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES AT WORK

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter acted as a foundation for the current chapter. It focused on the challenges that waitrons are exposed to at work. Waitrons in the hospitality industry are exposed to emotional labour, physical and emotional violence, lack of basic salary and social benefits and are subject to unfair dismissal. This chapter goes on further to look at how they mitigate these challenges. The major mechanism that waitrons employ were social networks, these differed from kinship ties and weak ties. Religion is a tool that they also employed which is also embedded in their social networks. This chapter is divided into sub themes which are Social networks, Religion and Moral economy.

5.2 Social networks

> "No car can go ahead without fuel . . . Nearly all people who decide to leave their homes in order to get a job in South Africa may know someone here that can guide them. Those who come here without knowing anybody end up having many problems in the process." Muanamoha et al. (2010:88)

The above statement emphasises the importance of social networks in the migration trajectory. Migrants use their social networks to advance themselves and to obtain new opportunities as well as to come to host countries. Social networks provide routine unsolicited job information, which may eventually become critical in getting a better job, without the actor's actually searching for that or indeed any job (Lin in Lin 2005). Yieuh (2011) and Kathiravelu (2012) observed that social networks increase the elasticity of labour supplies for migrant workers. Contributing to the same topic, Marques (2011) wrote that people and social groups access opportunities, goods, and services including money, tools, information, affection, solidarity, and emotional support through social connections. Social networks therefore play a pivotal role in the lives of migrants faced with precarity.

During my field work, respondents highlighted that their decision to come to South Africa was influenced by people in their networks. They further indicated that most of their networks are the ones who introduced them to their first jobs. This situation is backed up by available literature, for example, Muanamoha et al. (2010) who pointed out that in the destination areas migrants are assisted by family members, friends of the new migrants and the established immigrants are always the first ones who assist the newcomers on their arrival with accommodation and food, as well as in the process of getting jobs and documentation in South Africa. In my study, Ray, a father of one with nearly 10years of working as a waitron in South Africa for example, indicated that the reason why he had become a waiter was because his friend who facilitated his journey to South Africa 'was a waitron and that it was easier to find a person a job in the area you are more knowledgeable in'. Borrowing from McCollum and Apsite-Berina (2015:53) reliance upon social networks contribute to migrants' labour market marginalisation: a new arrival who finds employment through a social network is likely to attain a similar job as the constituents of that network. During my fieldwork I found out that most of the waitrons referred their relatives and friends to their line of work. However, this creates a relative labour market disadvantage of migrants that is effectively reproducing itself and may hinder the likelihood of upward occupational mobility and may result in underemployment amongst migrant workers (Ibid). Fernandes and Paul (2011) posit that networks are a strategy for risky diversification. Palloni et al. (2001), Fernandes and Paul (2011) state that migration costs and risks are reduced because new migrants use kinship and friendship ties to gain access to employment and assistance at the point of destination. Respondents highlighted that their first jobs were influenced by their networks therefore making it easy for them to settle in Johannesburg.

McCollum and Apsite-Berina (2015) in their study found out that migrants play a pivotal role in helping employers recruiting new workers. They pointed out that employers rely on their migrant workers to recruit from their networks hence cutting advertising costs therefore migrants act as a recruitment tool. Migrants perceive social networks as offering quick reliable information about employment opportunities and routes into employment (Boyd, McCollum and Apsite-Berina 2015, Liu 2013).

Respondents highlighted the existence and importance of social networks in their everyday lives. All the ten respondents indicated that family, friends and sexual networks played a role in making a decision to migrate. However, some expressed disappointments upon arrival. I found out that weak social ties played a strong role in the migration decisions of the migrants. 80% of the waitrons highlighted that their decision to move to South Africa were influenced by friends and only one indicated that their partner brought her here and only one mentioned a relative. This contradictory information reveals that weak social ties at times prove to be more influential than the other networks.

Migrants have agency to decide and act upon situations imposed upon them in the host countries and they do so through the use of social networks/ migrant networks. According to Palloni et al. (2001:1280) having a tie to someone who has migrated yields social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to an important kind of financial capital, that is, high foreign wages, which offer the possibility of accumulating savings abroad and sending remittances home. Thieme (2008) articulates that the job market in Delhi is highly organised since jobs are handed over and sold within networks. She further mentions that migrants borrow from one source to repay the other, perpetuating debt and dependency. This statement shows how migrants navigate through a system in which they are disadvantaged to survive.

5.2.2 Strong and weak ties

According to Liu (2013) previous literature completely leaves out friendship ties and focuses less on extended ties. Eight out of ten of my respondents indicated that their decision to migrate was influenced by friends. Liu (2013) went on to analyse the weak and strong ties among migrants and found out that weak ties are also of essence to migrants. Interestingly, Liu (2013) argued that the weaker the tie the more influential the amount of information. According to that research the weak ties are more influential for men than are strong ties while strong and weak ties appear to be of similar importance for women. Contrary to the popular view that 'blood is thicker than water' especially during hard times (Boyd 1989) that relatives are very helpful for migrants in the host country, this study established that with regard to Waitrons tended to rely more on their friends than relatives. Actually, with time they become close to their friends than

relatives. Charmaine, aged 32 and a mother of… who has been living in South Africa for six years explained:

"Sahwira mukuru anokunda weropa"

This is a Shona idiom that means that a friend is much more important than relatives. Most respondents highlighted that their kinship networks had disappointed them and they relied on friends more. Charmaine a divorcee elaborated her point:

> "When my husband left me for another woman I was stressed and had to go back to my mother. He wanted me to leave my children and promised that if I left with them (for South Africa) he won't support them. I couldn't leave my children (in Zimbabwe). I could not take him to court since he came from a politically influential family. I knew I would not win the case. My friend who was visiting (Zimbabwe) offered to take me to Johannesburg so that I could provide for my children and mother. '***Shamwari inokunda weropa,*** when we were on our way she told me that life in South Africa is difficult and we would have to stay in the shelters. We would go there to sleep only, the gates were opened by 6 am, and we would pay R5 per night. For the first two weeks my friend would pay for me as she taught me how to survive here", said Charmaine.

In a separate interview, Cheryl, aged …and has been living in South Africa for …years also supported the point that friends are very important for migrants. This is what she had to say about her experience with friends:

> "A friend that sticks by you becomes your relative. Carol is more than a friend to me, she is like a sister. When you call relatives they only sympathise with you but never come to your rescue. Two years ago I was raped in the park and I called my cousin to tell

> her and she never showed any compassion or visit me. Carol was the only person who stood by me. I could not tell my boyfriend because he would have known that I am the one who infected him with HIV. I needed someone to confide to and Carol proved to be more than a friend. I no longer call my relatives because they have proved not to care about me. I once stayed with my uncle and aunt (in South Africa). I had no peace as insulted me and deny me food. I find it better to live with a boyfriend, even if he beats me he won't deny me food", said Cheryl.

Migrants' close relationship with friends was also illustrated by Ray when he said:

> "During the festive season I would see my former school mates or colleagues spending a lot of money and buying people beers. They would encourage us to come to South Africa because of the better opportunities there".

These responses reflected that migrants rely more on the so called weak ties than the traditional family ties. This maybe so because weaker ties lead to more innovative and useful information, friends have a greater influence on one's likelihood to migrate than close family (Liu 2013). Weak ties usually facilitate crucial information. Amongst the Shona and Ndebele people uncles are often considered father figures and with cousins often considered as brothers. Liu echoes this and further states that these sort of networks are likely to share more redundant information and network connection than friends do. Arguably these relations which are hierarchical often constrain some migrants from opening up fear of being infantilised by senior members of the family and being chided for making poor decisions with reports ending up being filed to other relatives. This makes sharing information with relatives less appealing.

> "The fact that I always have a different boyfriend to stay with without being married has led to my family thinking I have loose morals. But my friends understand that it is how we survive."
> Charmaine

This may be the reason why migrants prefer to keep friends in their networks at the expense of relatives and family.

On a different but related point, Muanamoha et al. (2010) alludes that labour migration is mostly influenced by weak ties yet movement is influenced by strong ties. Strong ties encourage social closure and slower assimilation, leading to the development of ethnic communities in the host society (Liu. Muanamoha et al. 2010). Social networks act as a path into employment for those lacking other routes of entry into the labour market (McCollum and Apsite-Berina 2015). Ray's statement below illustrates on how weak ties at times become an advantage in finding information about new vacancies and which restaurants are the best to look for job. When migrants are socialising in bars they share their work experiences opportunities at other restaurants. Ray emphasised that to get information of what is happening and who is hiring or offers better working conditions a waitron has to go out for drinks with other waitrons. Ray explained

> "We find information about job vacancies sharing beers, when someone states that they have quit or have been fired that is how you know you can go look for a job at that restaurant". Ray

Thus, the so called weak ties facilitate the spread of useful information about prospective jobs. They are essential for labour migrants whose their main mission in South Africa is to find jobs. Respondents highlighted that it was essential to keep these networks and well positioned within these networks.

5.2.3 Sexual Networks

Contrary to popular images of migrant workers as passive victims in the host country, waitrons especially female waitrons use sexual networks as a coping mechanism. Gender is a salient dimension of transactional sex, as men are much more likely to purchase sex and women are more likely to sell it (Cornwell and Behler 2015). Sexual networks can be referred to as a type of social structure with their own characteristic form and dynamics (Thornton 2008). Thornton (2009) articulates that sexual networks aid in increasing social capital of individuals. Having a

relationship with a chief waiter helps one get busy tables for more tips, living with a boyfriend reduces rental costs and dating a client is a good channel for leaving the industry. This then indicates that waitrons engage in survival sex. Cornwell and Behler (2015) state survival sex involves transactional sex as a means acquiring money, food, or even shelter. The case of Cheryl aged 30 with 3years of living in South Africa fully brings out the form of survival sex some waitrons are involved in:

"Ever since I started staying with my boyfriend life has become much better. He pay the rent, buys food and it becomes easy for me to save. Most of us tend to move from boyfriend to boyfriend because if you try living alone you will use most of your money in paying rentals. Rentals here are high".

This sexual behaviour by some women waitrons can be explained by Pinho et al (2016) who argued that financial difficulties result in woman engaging in transactional sex in order to stabilise their income.

According to Cornwell and Behler (2015) a social network member can serve as a source of information about specific sexual behaviours, as well as about potential sex partners, and they often introduce individuals to their future sex partners. In the narratives waitrons highlighted that their sexual networks were formed through their networks and through their jobs. For instance, dating fellow waitrons, customers, owners, managers and chefs. These practices are in line with the argument that sexual behaviour is learned and diffused through close relationships (Cornwell and Behler 2015). This can be so because close networks can influence some relationships or discourage some sexual behaviour. Some waitrons emphasised that when they are in South Africa it was acceptable to have sexual relations in order to cover their expenses but back in Zimbabwe they would not condone such behaviour. These acts and changes in perception about different types of sexual relations support Cornwell and Behler (2015)'s point that social network members are responsive and react to each other's behaviours, hence this result in social networks having an impact on sexual behaviours.

Another point was made by Laumann et al., 2004 cited in Cornwell and Behler (2015) who stated that social networks can exert pressure to date certain types of people or to pursue certain

types of relationships. Female waitrons highlighted that the ideal relationships to pursue were those with customers. They highlighted that most of the customers were rich, dating and getting married to one was a way of leaving the hospitality industry. Some waitrons envied those who had dated customers and got married to them. For example, Linda aged 33 explained this situation:

"I have a friend who dated a customer and she was lucky and the customer married her. Here we get rich customers, the guy then asked him to quit and now she living a better life. I always pray that I also find one of the rich customers to marry me so I can quit my job. Lucky waitrons always get married to the waitrons."

In a way dismissing the notion that women waitrons are passive and weak, Helen, a single woman aged 27 with nearly a decade of working as waitron, revealed that

"If you are clever the best thing is to get pregnant for a rich customer, they always take care of their children. This can guarantee you a monthly allowance".

Waitrons highlighted that they choose sexual partners who had a better economic status than them. Most female respondents mentioned the use of sexual networks as a way of mitigating their precarity and as an alternative way to have income. Thornton (2016) points out that sexual networks give access to goods, services and many other kinds of values that other networks may not produce. Some mentioned that having a relationship with the manager or the restaurant owner is an advantage and aids financially. The restaurant owner can help one with accommodation and transport to work. When asked the about other methods of receiving income a number of female waitrons mentioned having a boyfriend or dating customers as was one of them. These findings support Pinho et al (2016)'s argument that women perceive having transactional sex as a means of managing structural inequalities such as poverty, un- or underemployment and gender inequality, especially with regards to differential access to goods/resources, school and affective-economic support networks. For example, Cheryl, a single woman aged 30, revealed that:

"When you do not have a boyfriend it is a bit difficult, you need someone to help you with your rentals or money to send home. Staying with a boyfriend is an added advantage because it

means you can split rentals or he pays the whole amount and he would be responsible for the groceries as well".

In a related matter, Pinho et al (2015) observed that women use their agency in selecting relationships to engage in. In this study female respondents considered having a sexual network an advantage since they would get material things from the relationships. Some highlighted that dating the head waiter was an added advantage since he can allocate his girlfriend to the busiest section to get better tips.

Sexual links permit access across otherwise unbridged social categories and statuses (Thornton 2009). By developing sexual networks waitrons are able to form networks with managers and owners and are able to negotiate for privileges any normal worker would not get. During my fieldwork one respondent highlighted that when you date the manager or the owner you get transport privileges and they can provide lunch and you get the best tables. Borrowing from Thornton (2009) sexual networks link people across class, linguistic, ethnic and other social distinctions and so form links that transcend these differences. This brought about the relationships waitrons have their owners of different class and ethnic classes. Female respondents highlighted that prospective partners they targeted from the customers are not blacks but they preferred other races, particularly Whites, with the belief that they were richer than their black counterparts.

Despite the women waitrons' machinations, Thornton (2009), Pinho et al (2016), Cornwell and Behler (2016) posit that sexual networks at times increase the vulnerability of women. Sexual networks may increase the risk to HIV and Aids and at times women may be exposed to abusive relationships. Thornton (2009) states social capital does not always yield positive incomes and promotes the well-being of an individual. Individuals may engage in risky sex as long as they are opportunities that it may result in social capital (Ibid). Ponhi et al (2016) highlights that women at times may engage in unprotected sex because of fear to lose the social capital from their sexual networks. These networks may promote the transmission of sexual transmitted diseases.

5.2.4 Disconnection

The above sections concentrated more on the positive side of social networks, however the utility of connections through networks cannot be overly romanticised, and migrants highlight disappointments in some of their networks. Resources in social networks are not always readily available and not everyone has access to the same resources (Palloni et al. 2001, Ryan 2011, McCollum and Apsite-Berina 2015). Ryan (2011), Liu (2013) and Comola and Mendola (2015) highlight that due to the heterogeneity of the migrants, they employ social networks differently influenced by their expectations from their social networks. Migrants may disconnect from these networks because they have faced disappointment, fear and expense of reciprocity or they no longer find their social networks relevant to them.

Disconnection is when members of a certain social network detach themselves from their networks (Worby: 2010, Comola and Mendola:2015 and Mcollum and Apsite-Berina:2015). Worby (2010) reveals that disconnection can very well be used as efficiently as connection when one finds themselves in a situation of exceeding difficulty. Just because resources exist does not mean that they are readily accesible to everyone within that network (Ryan 2011). Networks can heighten real or perceived vulnerability and produce new risks (Worby 2010, Kathiravelu 2012). The cost of travel and of hosting friends and family are some migrants reasons do not to engage in social activities (Kathiravelu 2012). Being part of a network at times can be perceived as costly. Worby (2010) and Kathiravelu (2012) postulates that loss in social status also act as a reason why migrants are reluctant to allow others to see the reduced circumstances in which they were living and hence they disconnect from their networks. During fieldwork I had a certain respondent who did not want to meet at certain places because he did not want people who knew him from Zimbabwe to meet him. His reason was because in Zimbabwe he had a good office job and most of his relatives and friends did not know that he was now a waiter.

> "If you help a friend to come here and you find them a job they owe you hence they have to be loyal to you. They do whatever you ask them because you have helped them."Peter

The above statement illustrate that one can be tied to a social network because they believe they owe someone who helped them. Some migrants then try to detach themselves from such networks. Kathiravelu (2012) posits that social solidarity is a double-edged sword, while networks can function as productive ways to achieve social mobility through migration, they may involve becoming implicated in exploitative relations. Many low-wage migrants are aware of this risk, and yet agree to such arrangements, making ambivalent the position of exploiter (Ibid).

Peter (respondent) in his above statement reflects that helping someone gives you power over them and can demand things from the person who 'owes' you. Borrowing from Landau (2016) such relationships introduce material obligations and inconvenience and an additional source of uncertainty. Migrants then tend to disconnect from such demanding networks to others that demand less.

Concerns about the reciprocity and generosity required in hosting at times lead to migrants disconnecting from their networks. Landau (2016) posits that reciprocal obligations and economic precarity may result in migrants disconnecting from their networks. Kathiravelu (2012) points out that hosting relatives and friends prove to be costly. Undocumented migrants lead precarious lives hence reciprocating and hosting other migrants can be a burden to them. In order to maintain the social networks, migrants have to reciprocate and to help each other. Resources in the networks are not readily available and migrants have to invest in them. The cost of investing in these networks may prove to be too demand and some prefer to detach from these networks. Migrants might disconnect from their networks as a way of survival because networks requires one to reciprocate. Migrants may disconnect from their initial networks to create new ones they see appropriate at the time, Ryan (2011) gives an example on how educated Polish migrants in London disconnected from their ethnic groups and formed networks with professionals. Some waitrons highlighted that they have now strong ties to co-waitrons than to their relatives who brought them to South Africa.

Mbembe and Nuttall (2004) highlight that migrants' lives are tied to multiple elsewhere. This may refer to their home countries where they need to send remittances, and where they currently stay. Hence maintaining all these multiple elsewheres may prove to be costly. During my field works, respondents highlighted the need to provide to those left in Zimbabwe and some believed that their families did not understand that life in Johannesburg was not all rosy and they kept on demanding a lot from them. To the waitrons these demands seemed to be frustrating. Due to the pressures of sending remittances others highlighted that they could not afford to host relatives and only their immediate family had their phone numbers in order to avoid other relatives seeking their help.

Landau (2016) and Worby (2010) posit that the downgrading of skills may lead to one disconnecting from their social networks. Ray (respondent) during field work highlighted that the reasons he did not go to certain places and preferred working in expensive restaurants was that he would reduce chances of people who knew him from Zimbabwe. To him, it was embarrassing that a university drop out from one of the esteemed university to be seen as waiting tables.

Religion can act as a contributing factor to disconnection. Migrants who belong to a same church may build relations with their church communities where they feel they belong. They disconnect from their relatives who are non-believers (Landau 2016).

Worby (2010) states that some migrants who come to Johannesburg and their networks are not reachable. One responded stated that he had a good job in Zimbabwe but was promised a better job by his father's friend. He left his job upon reaching Johannesburg he could not get hold of his father's friend, he ended up looking for friends who accommodated him and introduced him to the hospitality industry since they were waitrons. During interviews one respondent reflected on the disappointment from his networks, he had helped friends but none of them reciprocated.

> "I will never help any Zimbawean again, I hosted many of them but when I got fired no one could reciprocate. It is better I keep my money and use it when I am in trouble. Zimbabweans are not grateful people. You help a person and tomorrow they forget you. Some once you take them in and they steal from you" Xolani

After saying this he 'kissed his teeth' (a mark of annoyance), this action however shows the extent to which he was disappointed by his friends and made a decision not to help any of them. Networks are largely informal, they lack means of ensuring accountability to members hence help and assistance, then, is given with a vague expectation, but no guarantee, of return (Kathiravelu 2012). Xolani is not the only respondent that revealed such disappointment from their networks and making a decision to detach themselves from these networks. McCollum and Apsite-Berina (2015) articulate that some migrants disconnect from their networks because the people they helped out never reciprocated and they felt let down.

5.3 Religion

Katsaura (2015) gives on overview of enchanted suburbanism where people use rituals, religion as a coping mechanism. Waitrons highlighted that they use religion as a copying mechanism. It is logical for some, if not many, for people to retreat into the world of religion, ritual and of the routine as a coping mechanism, if not a symptom of defeatism (Ibid). During my field work I found out that some of the waitrons used religion to make sense of the world around them and accept their fate in many instances. Their beliefs differed from pentecostalisation to witchcraft. Religion sort of gives a meaning to what people experience in their everyday life. Katsaura (2015) explains extensively this by borrowing Weber's words stating about the notions of dualism, predestination and karma as a way individuals justifying circumstances surrounding them.

> "Dualism explains human existence in terms of coexistence of good and evil-of good fortune and misfortune but gives assurance that the good will always triumph over the evil. The notion of predestination which is associated with Calvinism posits that the destiny of each individual-

> the damned and the chosen is predetermined by the omnipotent God and is within the power of humans. Karma is mostly associated with Hindu and Buddhist religions interprets the conditions of human existence through the notion of rebirth in which previous sins determine the present and the future incarnations," (Katsaura 2015:3)

Religion is perceived as a source of 'transterritorial rhetorics' through which 'migrants can generate a subjectivity that allows them to be in but not of the city' (Landau 2009: 198). Religion acts as a coping mechanism and at the same time people make sense of the world around them through it. Landau (2009) and Katsaura (2015) allude that religion forms societies of believers and can create a network of believers. Individuals from the same church solicit jobs for one another and help one another. Landau (2009) however states that by creating such a society they exclude the non-believers from their society. One respondent highlighted that his church pastors and church mates were his closest family and in times of trouble he would rely on them.

However, this above explanation does not give an insight on witchcraft, where humans believe they can possess powers to change their destiny and other people's. At first I dismissed the beliefs on respondents on witchcraft and healers as shaping their lives at work. However this concept kept coming up, I then reflected on the issue of Zimbabwe in 2007, the government ministers and the president were made to believe that there was oil oozing from a rock by a traditional healer (Rotina Mavhunga). The news skyrocketed on tv, newspaper and the traditional healer demanded for a ritual that the president dances bare footed at chinhoyi and she was given a farm, Z$5 billion, cattle and 3 buffaloes and a car. (Africa review 2010, The standard 2010, New Zimbabwe 2010, Zim eye 2014). Unfortunately, the traditional healer's '*prophesy*' did not come to pass. However this signifies how Zimbabwe as a country lays their belief on extra ordinary forces. Even the educated and the elite during the time did not question the credibility of this information. This then made me realise if the country could lay their trust on any random traditional healer, then the waitrons as Zimbabwean citizens would not be exempted from this notion. Geischere (1997) alludes that African politics is framed on beliefs of witchcraft and that the people believe that the leader has a superficial force that keeps him in power.

This prompted some memories as a child growing up and up to now, that elders always make allusion that the president's witchdoctor is powerful and no one can remove him from power till the witchdoctor dies. The statement they often use is "***Inyanga yakhe inkulu***" in Ndebele, "***Nyanga yake ihombe***" in Shona, these terms mean that his witchdoctor is powerful. However, this highlights that human as beings at times make sense of their surroundings by believing in a super power. Mugabe himself has accused his former Vice president for consulting witch doctors to overpower him and he was criticised by Rugare Gumbo (a war veteran and former Zanu (PF) information secretary) for consulting witch doctors himself (iHarare 2015). Growing up I would hear elders narrating war stories in relation to super powers and how they asked the ancestors for direction (Shona spirit mediums Kaguvi and Nehanda). The Ndebele often make reference to late Joshua Nkomo as a leader who protected them during the war time because of his super powers, it was believed that power and security are in his magic walking stick and he possessed supernatural powers that other ordinary beings did not possess. (Bulawayonews24:2015, B-metro 2014).

> Dr Sikhanyiso Ndlovu, Nkomo was to be assassinated by a special Rhodesian death squad but things did not go as planned as he had switched bases right before they could carry out their task. International reporters were dumbfounded how he had come out unscathed from the attack which had seen his home razed. "I turned into a cat and jumped out of a small ground little window at the back of the house," he recounts jokingly telling journalists in his book, The Story of My Life. Magic and supernatural forces are indeed a recurrent theme when one is looking at Mqabuko's history in the struggle. One of the reasons for this was his supposed affinity and relationships with the sacred shrines of Njelele. For many the shrines are particularly revered because of his relationship with them, as he regularly pilgrimaged there to seek strength and spiritual guidance. Bmetro 2014

Having instances where Zimbabweans as a nation seem to acknowledge the power of supernatural forces, the respondents as Zimbabwe shared beliefs of the existence of super powers in their lives. However, this differed as some respondents believed in pentecostalisation, others believed in witchcraft and prophets. Xolani (respondent) believed that the reason why he why sick was because a jealousy colleague had bewitched him and this information was revealed to him by a well-known prophet in his area. His trust in this prophet made him ignore his medical reports, he believed it was the reason he was recovering.

> I was so sick that I could not walk, at the hospital they said it was TB but I do not smoke so it did not make sense. My cousin took me to this young man who is a prophet. I told me that a woman at work envied my luck with better tipping clients and was trying to kill me. The prophet told me of an incident that had occurred to me a few weeks before I got sick and that made me believe him. He told me that this woman had given me a drink that tasted funny and she had put **umuthi**. Such an incident had occurred but I did not know she had **umuthi**. She is an old lady and customers prefer young people. We come here as foreigners making more money than people who are old enough to be our parents who failed to change careers. So they use **umuthi** to eliminate you. The prophet performed a cleansing ceremony and I threw up black things that were the **umuthi** the lady had put in my drink" Themba

Some waitrons believed that in order to survive in the industry there is need for some sort of super power protection. Some believed that in order to have more clients there is need to use some u*muthi*, or prayers.

> This is a tough world, you need to be protected in order to get customers who tip and to make the managers love you. Some use portions to attract customers and make them like you more. If you do not do so people will steal clients from you using **umuthi** and they might take your luck away."Peter

Networks were sort of built based on the religions and beliefs of the waitrons. Katsaura (2015) postulates that Zimbabwean migrants frequently sought prophetic help patronising some African Independent Churches (AICs) whose shrines were dotted on vacant spaces close to the park. Going to prophets and traditional healers help migrants make the sense of the world around them and accept their misfortunes. One respondent disclosed that the reason why he did not get a lot of tips was because his pastor had prophesied that he had to be part of the church ministry and as long as he was a waiter he will suffer and he was considering leaving his job. Geschiere (1997) articulates that witchcraft is the dark side of kinship, it is the frightening realisation that there is jealousy and aggression. People tend to associate the riches with occult forces whilst the rich may encourage such association in order to protect themselves against the jealousy and hidden aggression. Themba believed the reason he was sick was because of jealousy from and elderly co-worker. Respondents tended to believe that those who get a lot of tips had a stronger power than everyone around. Traditional gods, local gods and ancestral spirits are seen as the 'embodiments of Satan himself' and are associated with obsolescent kinship networks which escalate the scare of jealousy, witchcraft and evil. (Katsaura 2015:2)

5.4 Moral economy

Previous studies have used the individual rationality and community values theory to understand their behaviour of peasants (Little n.d). This theory stresses shared moral values, conceptions of justice, and conceptions of obligations held by all members of local society (Little n.d). I have borrowed this theory from previous scholars to better understand the behaviour of waitrons. The concept of moral economy was extensively developed by E. P. Thompson in The Making of the English Working Class (1961) (Little n.d). Thompson's ideas states that there were instances of public disorder ("riots") surrounding the availability and price of food, and there was a hypothesized "notion of right" or justice that influenced and motivated participants. Scott (1985) posits that moral economy can be defined as the notion of economic justice and the working definition of exploitation of the exploited group.

The researcher used the lens of the peasants as vulnerable workers in order to understand the characteristics that waitron displayed. Waitrons like the peasant farmers are exploited by their employers and they have a certain way of reacting to this predicament. At a distance it may be

perceived like the exploited is not conscious of the exploitation around them and they are passive. Focusing on such a group, brings to light ways they adopt to mitigate their challenges and why they withstand the exploitation around them. Deindst (2008), Alberti (2011, 2014), Loonat (2013) and Joppe (2011) posit the challenges that exist in the hospitality sector and paint the workers in the sector as a group that cannot make decisions because of their situations and have no options but to remain part of the hospitality sector. One of the questions I would ask was that 'amid these challenges you have mentioned what makes you decide to stay in your job.' Respondents highlighted that they would steal from their employers at times with the help of the managers and other helped in card cloning. These may seem as far pitched ways of mitigating their challenges.

Thompson argues that these actions were not simple undirected and undisciplined forms of social violence; but rather scripted and morally regulated activities expressing popular values about prices and subsistence (Little n.d). Little (n.d) states that it is possible that it is possible to reconstruct the details of that ethic (moral economy). For instance, in the case of the waitrons among them it is morally acceptable to steal from the owner or client but stealing among each other was not acceptable. This also brings in the notion of 'othering' (exclusion) which I will not dwell on much. The workers are a society of their own, the employer then becomes the 'other'. According to the workers it is acceptable to steal from the other (the employer) since he is an outsider and not part of their society. The workers as a society their loyalty lies among each other and not to the employer.

Scott in his three books (The moral economy of the peasants 1976, Weapons of the weak 1985, Domination and the art of resistance 1990) highlights the fact that the exploited groups most of the times resort to subtle of ways of mitigating their ways. The practices that they are employ are only knowledgeable to the exploited group and they avoid direct conflict and confrontation with the exploiter. He alludes that the exploited group are not passive and do not just accept their predicament. His books mainly focus on peasants who used character assassination, shunning, gossiping, anonymous attacks on property as a weapon of resisting and mitigating their precarity. The narratives of the waitrons and how they mitigate their precarity is similar to that of the peasants. Waitrons are the exploited group in the hospitality industry and their exploiter is the employer. Narratives of the waitrons brought out how they respected their

employers and would do whatever they are asked for. Behind their employers' back they would employ their tools of resistance. In the case of waitrons their tools of resistance consisted of stealing, giving their employers nicknames, retaliating to the employer's insult behind their back. To the employer they never fight back and they take all the insults and they have learnt to smile when the employer is around and to swear behind their back. Scott (1990:18) posits,

> "Slaves in the safety of their quarters can speak the anger, revenge, self-assertion that they must normally choke back when in the presence of their masters or mistresses."

This statement made me reflect during my fieldwork when some respondents in Hilbrow invited me to spend time with them on a Sunday during their off day. One of the respondents had suggested that it would be the best way to gather information of their work conditions and how they mitigated their precarity. They conversed about the challenges they faced at work and they expressed anger towards their employers. Even though this group worked in different restaurants they seemed to be cognisant of the nicknames of their friends' employers and reflected on the insults of those employers. They would make fun of their bosses and shared information on which restaurant had more opportunities to steal. To them the abusive characters of the employers seemed not to be their major concern but the absence of stealing opportunities. This was the major attraction to the waitrons to wake at any restaurants. However there are instances where the exploited express their discontent to the exploiter. In the cases of the peasants they were public protest and rebellion or when the peasants would talk back to the exploiter. In the case of waitrons, in their narratives they highlighted that when the employers beats them at male waitrons at times would fight back but this was not a constant tool they employed.

Ray highlighted that;

> Ray: "To get someone who will not be **impimpi** it is easy to teach a fellow Zimbabwean whom you will have brought from Zimbabwe, you will own him because you are the only one he knows and trust. It is difficult to join those who will be stealing even if you have just joined the restaurant. They will be afraid

that you might be **impimpi** and you report to the employer. To earn their trust do you know what you have to do sister?

Q: No, what do I have to do?

Ray: It is simple, you just have to go out with them to drink every time you are off. If any of them likes your sister or a girl from your home area you convince the girl to date the guy.

Q: Hmmm

Ray: That way you become like a brother in law because you have allowed one of them to date your sister. They begin teaching you how they steal. For instance a bottle of Jameson in our restaurant is R1200 and it is the same Jameson bottle you find in the restaurants for R300

Q: Yes

Ray: You give the clients the bottle and charge it on a different slip that the rest of the order. Then one of us goes to buy a bottle for R300 and replace the one that was bought by the customer, that way the owner will never know that there was a Jameson bottle sold. At the end of the day you have to share the money with the bartender for helping you out. We can also do that with the cooks as well, we do not enter the order into the machine and at the end of the day you collect the money. If the client pays using the card we then talk to the manager who is part of the team.

N.B Impimpi is a word used to mean a snitch. The waitrons kept referring to this word through the study. This word emanated during the colonial era in African countries especially Zimbabwe and South Africa to refer to sell outs who were often punished by death.

Literature that focuses on peasants points out to the fact that (Scott 1979, Scott 1985, 1990) peasants are rational agents, making calculating decisions about their interests and choices. This also implies to the waitrons. Some had managed to buy cars to transport other waitrons who would pay them for that. Stealing from the owner is a calculated to move and everyone knows which role to play, from the manager who turns a blind eye to what is happening, to the bartender who gives the waitron beer without entering the transaction and finally to the waitron.

Unlike the peasant workers studied by Scott and the Bedouin women studied by Abu-Lughod (1988), waitrons do not protest but they rebellion is fought of underground. It is noteworthy that the thievery they engage in is done by people in a circle (network). Respondents highlighted that to be part of the thievery circle the other members had to trust you. Most of them are aware of the consequences if they get caught.

> Q: Are you not afraid if you get caught?
>
> Leroy: If you get the owner fires you and you have to look for a job somewhere. The advantage that we have in our jobs is we are not black listed so it is easy to move from one restaurant to the other. The owner only knows my name and phone number and can hardly track me down and the prospective employer would never know about my history in the previous company.
>
> Q: Have you ever been caught before?
>
> Leroy: Yes I have
>
> Q: Can you tell me about it if you are comfortable?
>
> Leroy: Ok my sister. I would convince customers to order the same thing on the menu or when we have buffets. I would use the same slip on different clients and take the money. I do know how he found (the employer) out. He punched me and asked me to give him back all the money I had taken that day. I just walked out of the restaurant. You never stop stealing from the employers because it is hard to survive on tips alone.
>
> Q: Oh
>
> Leroy: My sister, I never work in a restaurant where there are no opportunities to steal. I first find out from my friends if they are such opportunities. This is how we survive and able to send money home. You see these people (owners) they make a lot of money out of us. They do not give us a basic salary, they do not provide for our transport. After paying the compulsory breakages fee daily you are left with nothing. So if you do not steal it is hard to pay rent.

In understanding how a certain group reacts it is essential to essential to understand the problems they are faced with. In the first part of the findings I discussed the problems that waitrons are exposed to in the hospitality sector. A certain group of people may resort to some actions only justifiable by them so as to gain social justice this is then termed the moral 'economy' (Scott 1976). In this research I discovered that waitrons resort to stealing, card cloning as a way of fighting their injustice. They believe that by gaining materially they can withstand all the exploitation.

> "By getting a lot of money we can then drown our sorrows in drinking during our off days. Money makes us to be able to resist what we go through''Nobuhle

Scott (1985) alludes that the weapons of the powerless groups are formed in informal networks and often a form of individual self-help and avoid direct confrontation with authority. Scott (1990) in his book Domination and the art of resistance alludes that this act can also be termed 'hidden transcripts'. Hidden transcripts refer to the acts that the oppressed group behind the back of the dominant. Stealing and covering their tracks is more like a silent way of rebelling to the exploitation brought to them by their employer and they do not directly confront their employers. Scott (1990) alludes that the hidden transcripts do not only contain speeches but also practices. The hidden transcript is often elaborated among a restricted public that excludes the specified others (the employers) (Scott 1990:14). This brings into light the notion that I raised previously that the employers are considered as the other, a different society from the workers. Scott (1990) posits that the hidden transcripts are rarely exposed to the dominant part but are done behind their back. Respondents always reflected the fear to question their employers if they took part of their tips, the only way was to steal from the employer to recover their loss.

Stealing and covering their tracks is more like a silent way of rebelling to the exploitation brought to them by their employer and they do not directly confront their employers. Respondents always reflected the fear to question their employers if they took part of their tips, the only way was to steal from the employer to recover their loss.

In his book titled *Weapons of the Poor*, Scott (1985) hones in on how the low class peasants react to exploitation. The elements he brings out in his book I found them similar to the ones reflected by the respondents. Scott argues that some of the weapons utilised by the peasants were subtle but had results. For waitrons, stealing from employers can be viewed as a tool of resistance, stealing may not be directly confrontational to the owner but they manage to get the money they believe they should be getting as part of their salaries. Scott (1985:31) alludes that,

> "More often however it takes the form of passive noncompliance,
> subtle sabotage, evasion and deception"

Reflecting on my fieldwork, the population of waitrons I interviewed used these techniques to mitigate their precarity. Borrowing from Scott (1985) I would also name stealing by waitrons as their '*everyday forms of resistance*'. Scott posits that the '*everyday forms of resistance*' are subtle and make no headlines unlike protests that can lead to dismal, their safety lies in their anonymity. It is difficult for the employer to identify the waitron who is stealing from them unless caught red handed. The respondents mentioned that they respected their employers and even though they received great insults and swearing from them, they never had the courage to answer back. Their only way of rebellion was to steal from the employer. Scott (1990) states that there is no system of domination that does not produce a routine of insults and injury to human dignity however the dominated have to master a way to control what can be a natural impulse to rage, anger and the violence that such feelings prompt. They highlighted that their code of conduct was that if you are caught you do not snitch on others. Most respondents indicated that when they are in cahoots with chefs, it is only the waitron that gets fired. This was so, because most of the chefs are trained and waitrons felt that chefs were a priced possession to the owner than they were. This however, made the waitrons to be the one who gets a larger share of the stolen money for they believed they were at the larger risk of getting caught.

They highlighted that their code of conduct was that if you are caught you do not snitch on others. Respondents indicated that as waitrons they had to cover for each other and if one spots a customer from a colleagues' table pouring drink for themselves they would rush before the

manager intervenes. Abu-Lughod (1989) states that covering for each other can be perceived as a form of resistance among silences and hiding knowledge from the exploiter.

Most respondents indicated that when they are even if they are in cahoots with chefs, it is only the waitron that gets fired. This was so, because most of the chefs are trained and the waitrons felt that chefs were a more prized possession to the owner than the waitrons were. This however, made the waitrons to be the one who gets a larger share of the stolen money for they believed they were at the larger risk of getting caught. Scott (1985) states that these 'weapons of the weak' should not be overly romanticised for they only marginally affect the various forms of exploitation and does not change the entire situation. The stealing of the waitrons has not prompted the employers to review the salaries and improve the working conditions, waitrons only benefit from an individual level from this act. Scott (1985) posits that the details of the struggle of the peasants entails of back biting, gossip, rude nick names. From the conversations I had with waitrons, I found out that they gossip about their employers and managers and the owners are given rude names. For instance, one waitron constantly referred to restaurant owner as '*umkhaba'* (bot belly), every time she mentioned his name, I would sense a bit of hatred towards the owner. I then asked the waitron why they called him that and besides her who else calls him that, her response was that all waitrons but only the restaurant owner was not aware of that. This name he was given because he was short and had a pot belly, to Linda it seemed to give her some comfort to call him using that name. Borrowing from Scott, gossip and character assassination does not make much sense unless the standards of what is deviant, unworthy and impolite. In this scenario, none of the waitrons would appreciate being given a nickname in the work place and some revealed that they were disgruntled by the fact that the restaurant owner called them by their nationality or by how they looked (tall girl, short girl). However, calling the restaurant owner with such a name seemed to give them some comfort.

5.6 Conclusion

Kathiravelu (2012) highlights that social networks are an integral part of migrant city life in the absence of the legal and moral obligation from the care of the state that are ensured through formal citizenship, which is unavailable to labour migrants . However, there are some mechanisms that are embedded within the migrants' social networks and these can be religion

or moral economy as well. Migrants make sense of the world around them by using religion as a coping mechanism. The next chapter is a conclusion of the whole research.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the conclusion of the research and recommendations for further inquiry. This study focused on a vulnerable group of undocumented labour migrants in order to understand how they mitigate their job precarity. When studying migration it is essential to acknowledge the migration phases. Respondents highlighted that most of the decisions they made in the host country were informed by the conditions they were exposed to in the host countries. Some settle in any job that is accessible to them because they need to pay back the smugglers. This research focused on precarity in the destination phase of the migratory trajectory.

In the second chapter I looked at the migratory phase and argued that precarity is present through the migratory trajectory. The conditions of precarity may differ in each phase but may contribute to the decisions migrants make in the host country. Therefore precarity is transposed in each migratory phase. During my fieldwork, respondents highlighted that the reason they settled in the hospitality industry was that they could be able to support their siblings, parents back home. The hospitality industry offers jobs to them even though it does not alleviate their precarity. Some respondents would compare their current situation to their experience in Zimbabwe and the routes they used and perceived that the current situation was much better. However, chapter four and five I did not mention thus concept because they focused more on how migrants mitigate their precarity in the host country.

The findings of the study confirmed with previous literature (Alberti 2011, 2013, Denstedt 2008, Joppe 2014) that the hospitality sector is characterised by precarity. There is high turnover, unfair dismal, long work hours and no basic salaries. Waitrons are exposed to emotional labour that they are not even trained to cope with. Waitrons are required to play the host and to make customers comfortable, they are the face of the hospitality industry yet they

do not get much training to cope with all this pressure. Respondents highlighted that they experienced verbal abuse from the employers who swear at them at any time and they had to get used to this. Most of the respondents reported to have faced physical abuse, instances where the employer would beat them up. Male respondents indicated that at times they would fight back the employer. They only fight back when they have made their mind that they want to quit the job. It is noteworthy that despite what happens in the background of the restaurant, whether it is physical abuse or verbal abuse, the waitron has to smile to the customer and make them feel welcome. Respondents highlighted that with experience in the industry they had learnt to shelve their feelings and to be able to transition from being sad to smiling. This however highlights that the waitrons work can be labelled as emotional labour.

Respondents highlighted that they employ their social networks as a tool to mitigate precarity. Due to the high turnover in the industry, waitrons are able to find new jobs each time because of their social networks. Information of prospective jobs and better restaurants are always embedded in these social networks. Female waitrons, tend to also rely on their sexual networks as another method of generating income. Some disconnect from these networks because at time they become demanding. However, social networks are not the only tools they use to mitigate their challenges. Migrants use religion as a coping mechanism. Some believe that through ritual cleansing, prayers they can be able to mitigate the challenges they face in the work place. However, stealing from the employer proved to be a norm among the waitrons. Most respondents highlighted that the reason why they are still in this industry is that they make more money from stealing than what they get from the tips that they make.

This research brought out the fact that waitrons are exposed to precarity in the hospitality industry. However, they have put in place informal structures to mitigate their precarity.

6.2 Structure and Agency

This research is more based on the agency of undocumented migrants as it tries to answer the question that how migrants employ social networks to mitigate economic precarity. Agency is defined as as capacity to act upon

situations is an attribute of actor (Sibeon 1990:140). Throughout the research I have argued that migrants use their agency to act upon situations.

Precarity can be perceived as a structure in which migrants use their agency to react on. Points out that structure can be referred to as a social condition. Precarity is a social condition that undocumented migrants are subjected to. Migrants use their agency and form social networks, sexual networks, use religion and the moral economy to challenge this structure (precarity). Their actions are not salient to change the structure that they are confined to but acts as a survival strategy.

The research findings highlighted that migrants at times normalise their situations that are perceived inhumane. This action is also a coping mechanism that they employ.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the experiences during field work future researchers can:

- employ quantitative and qualitative methods in order to cover a huge sample of the population so as to get better understanding of the hospitality industry and the conditions waitrons are exposed to.
- There is need for further research into drug/alcohol coping mechanisms for waitrons
- further investigation into the sexual networks used to deal with precarity, and gender dynamics of these sexual networks.
- Further studies can be done to focus on transposition of precarity in the social aspect of the migrants since the study mainly focused on work precarity

Policy recommendations:

- The bargaining council should ensure that employers should ensure that policy makers in this sector follow the regulations they stipulate for instance, the basic salary is said to be a minimum of R2 500 and waitrons tips should not be deducted. However, waitrons highlighted the absence of a basic salary and deduction of tips.

- The Occupational Health and Safety Act should look into ensuring that waitrons are trained in emotional labour so that they can be able to deal with work related stress.

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INTERVIEW DATES

Nobuhle- 06 Dec 2017

Linda- 07 Dec 2017

Charmaine-12 Jan 2017

Cheryl- 24 Nov 2017

Helen- 22Nov 2016

Themba-14Jan 2017

Ray-14 Jan 2017

Xolani- 15Jan 2017

Peter-15Jan 2017

Leroy-16 Jan 2017

APPENDIX I: NARRATIVE

My name is Sostina Matina, I am doing a research on how waitrons mitigate their precarity in their work places through the use of social networks. From previous researches done I have gathered that some use social networks which are either positive or negative and some do not use them, and employ other mechanisms. I would like you to give me a narrative of your work conditions and the challenges you face at work. I would also like to know how you mitigate those challenges.

N.B Probing method will be implemented

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Follow up Interview

SECTION A: Basic Information

1. Age
2. Sex
3. When did you come to South Africa?
4. How long have you been in South Africa?
5. How long have you been a waitron?
6. What is your highest level of education?
7. Did you work in Zimbabwe?
8. What was your job title in Zimbabwe?

Section B: To investigate other tools and mechanisms waitrons use mitigate their precarity in the absence of social networks and in situation of disconnection.

1. Apart from social networks what else do you do to sustain yourself?
2. How did you come to South Africa?
3. Who connected you to your first job?
4. Do you have other methods of income apart from waitressing?
5. If you lose your job who do you ask to help you?

SECTION C: To investigate the perception of the waitrons, whether they view their jobs as precarious or not and their expectations, and the truths about the job.

1. How best can you describe your work conditions?
2. How did you get the job?
3. Did you sign a contract? If yes can you tell me the details?
4. Do you have a basic salary?
5. How much does your monthly salary amount to?
6. Do you have any social benefits?
7. How long have you been working for your company?

8. What challenges do you face at work?
9. What lead you to the hospitality sector?
10. Did you know the conditions of your job before starting?
11. Do you intend to remain a waitron and why?
12. How many hours do you work per week?
13. Do you have any sick leaves?

SECTION D: To understand why the degrees of social networks tend to vary among the undocumented Zimbabwean waitrons.

1. How did you leave Zimbabwe?
2. Tell me about your journey here?
3. Did you have documents coming here, and if yes what has led you to not using them now?
4. Do you have any close relations with any fellow waitrons?
5. When caught by police officers who do you call and what is their relation to you?
6. When sick who do you call and why?
7. Have you ever helped any relatives or friends to come here? If not then why?
8. Are you still attached to your friends here in Johannesburg, if not then what do u do if you are in trouble or have lost a job.
9. How often do you contact you friends and family?
10. Do you have any dependents?
11. Do you send any of you money back home and if yes to whom?
12. Who do you live with?

APPENDIX III: INFORMATION SHEET

APPENDIX IV: TAPE-RECORDING CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS MITIGATING PRECARITY: A CASE STUDY OF UNDOCUMENTED ZIMBABWEANS WAITRONS

.

Introduction: Hello! My name is Sostina Matina and I am a Masters student at wits University conducting a research study that seeks to understand how undocumented Zimbabwean waitrons mitigate precarity in their work places in the absence of or in addition of social networks.

I would like to invite you to take part in this study as it will help us to understand the challenges waitrons face in their work place and how they mitigate these challenges using different mechanisms and the research seeks to understand why there are variations in the degree of social networks among waitrons.

Can the researcher tape this interview?

 I understand that tape-recording is voluntary

 I understand that if at any point I feel uncomfortable tape-recording will be stopped.

 I understand that recorded information will be confidential and will only be accessible to the researcher.

 I understand that if at any point I want to withdraw from this study, recordings will be destroyed

 I understand that transcripts of the interviews will be made available upon request

 I agree/do not agree that my interview be tape-recorded

 I agree/ do not agree that my verbal consent be tape recorded as well.

Print Name (in full) _____

Signature_____ Date

APPENDIX V: ETHICS CLEARANCE

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Matina

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H16/08/18**
PROJECT TITLE	The role of social networks in mitigating precarity: A case study of Zimbabwean undocumented waitrons in Johannesburg
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Miss S Matina
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Social Science/
DATE CONSIDERED	19 August 2016
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved
EXPIRY DATE	02 November 2019

DATE 03 November 2016 **CHAIRPERSON** _____ (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Professor L Landau

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES