

https://dspace.org/

Beneficial friends: a case study of the social networks of undocumented Zimbabwean women working as domestic workers in Johannesburg

Muvenge, Chido Fecility

2017

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/24606

Muvenge, Chido Fecility (2017) Beneficial friends: a case study of the social networks of undocumented Zimbabwean women working as domestic workers in Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/24606>

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

This research report gives an account of the social networks, links, connections and relationships of undocumented Zimbabwean women working as domestic workers in Johannesburg, Gauteng. The primary aim was to understand the role of these ties in providing social, political, emotional and economic support in addressing the challenges that undocumented domestic workers face. The study also explored how social networks enhanced the capabilities and resources of non-national women, particularly focusing on how they defined wellbeing and development.

Based on 12 semi-structured interviews with undocumented women living and working in Johannesburg, the findings that emerged from this study, show that unlike what the majority of literature in South Africa points to, undocumented domestic workers do not live in isolation from others, but rather have a diverse range of social networks that allow them to be active agents and participants in their lives. The results highlight that the majority of social networks that undocumented domestic workers use are in actual fact useful to them and how they navigate their contexts. Migrants in this instance are largely dependent on their families for support both in the originating country and in the host community.

Key words: Capabilities, Domestic work, Social networks, Zimbabweans