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Title:

An investigation of the vulnerabilities of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town during the COVID-19 pandemic

A mini thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Development Studies

By

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Abstract

The COVID-19 epidemic has been a devastating global health catastrophe, and the ensuing lockdowns and limitations have exacerbated numerous inequities along racial, ethnic, class, and gender lines. Recent studies have shown that undocumented migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers have been further affected, due to policy responses that mostly exclude them from targeted COVID-19 mitigation efforts aimed toward citizen support. As the South African government has provided some measures to ameliorate the negative economic and social impacts of the pandemic and lockdown on its population, undocumented Zimbabwean migrants on temporary contracts in sectors such as construction, tourism and hospitality have been continuously placed on leave, have reduced hours or have altogether lost their jobs. However, most have not been eligible for government social benefits that have been put in place to mitigate against the negative economic impacts of the pandemic.

This study aimed to examine the vulnerabilities and responding social resilience of a sample of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town, South Africa during COVID-19. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews to establish the experiences, challenges and coping capacities of undocumented migrants. The study established that the very factors that are key to the success of social resilience for migrants were the most affected by COVID-19, particularly the closure of places of work. In this case, social resilience has been highly compromised such that the translocal family network is unable to sustain their resilience. Transformative and adaptive capacities have been observed to remain elusive, and most of the migrants included in the study indicated the desire to go back home. The study recommends that the South African government needs to ensure that humanitarian assistance is accessible to all human beings who are in need despite their legal status in the country. This will help ensure that more organisations come out to assist undocumented migrants in times of crises.

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Words cannot express my gratitude to Dr Leah Koskimaki for her invaluable feedback and patience. Additionally, this endeavour would have not have been possible without the generous support of the Bacher family, who financed my studies.

Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning my mother and my nieces Tiana and Kiana. Their belief in me has kept my spirits and motivation high during this process.

Declaration

I declare that *An investigation of the vulnerabilities of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town during the COVID-19 pandemic* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before any degree or examination in any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete reference.

Name: Ngonidzashe Frackson Thom

Signed: ……Thom……

Date: 22 February 2023

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

COVID-19 is perhaps the most overwhelming health catastrophe in the 21st century. It was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the 11th of March 2020 and affected populations and disrupted the flow of the global economy. In South Africa, the first positive case of COVID-19 was confirmed on 5th March 2020. As a direct response, the South African government enacted a five-week state-wide lockdown from the 26th of March 2020 as the first measure to contain the outbreak (Arndt et al., 2020). Under restrictive measures, human movement was severely restricted, and only activities classified as "essential services" were allowed to fully operate, impacting the economy (Bhorat et al., 2020). According to Nwosu and Oyenubi (2020), lockdown measures exacerbated existing income gaps among people of different social classes. Stiegler and Bouchard (2020) posit that low-income households were the most adversely affected by the restrictive lockdown measures, which significantly curtailed their ability to have an income, because the majority worked in the informal economy. Furthermore, food insecurity has become a growing and significant problem in addition to other social ills that include domestic violence, crime and substance abuse (Van der Berg et al., 2020).

As a way of cushioning families from the brunt of the COVID-19 restrictive measures, the South African government put in place social protection and business relief measures for local enterprises (Mukumbang et al., 2020). Firstly, the government announced the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant available for South Africans who were either not employed or had lost their job (van der Merwe, 2020). More so, the value of the child and social support grants was adjusted upwards to assist beneficiaries until October 2020 (Bhorat and Kohler, 2020). In addition, a business relief fund of R500 billion was pledged for distressed businesses that had their operations affected. Lastly, more measures to protect small business were introduced, including tax deferments and reduced contributions to the Unemployment Insurance (Anakpo and Mishi, 2021) .

Migrants who were not documented faced challenges and restrictions in accessing the funds and social protection measures availed by the government to ease the burden on affected families. Nyakabawu (2021) highlights that undocumented migrants in South Africa lack legal recognition as they are considered "illegal" immigrants as per the provisions of the

Immigration Act of 2002. The link between legal status and migrant rights in South Africa make undocumented migrants vulnerable to exploitation. This space of legal nonexistence restricts services and limits the rights of undocumented people (Nyakabawu, 2021). In this study, undocumented Zimbabwean migrants were not eligible for any government benefits availed to cushion the vulnerable population from the effects of mandatory lockdown measures. This is because as they do not match the qualification criteria, which dictates that businesses have to be 100% South African, and that a South African national ID or any other form of special authorisation was required in order to be a beneficiary (Odunitan-Wayas et al., 2021). Mukumbang et al .,(2020) argues that the exclusion of migrants has repercussions on the wider society as they might resort to adopting negative survival strategies.

Zimbabweans arguably compose the largest group of foreigners living in South Africa (Tarisayi, 2009). Proximity and its reasonably well-performing economy has made South Africa a destination of choice for a large number of Zimbabweans (Machinya, 2019). The successive years of economic meltdown in Zimbabwe has seen its citizens migrate into South Africa in search of improved livelihoods (Bimha, 2017).

In Zimbabwe, a crisis period of economic meltdown and political unrest led to record inflation, erosion of the value of wages, record unemployment levels as well as increasing hunger and starvation (Raftopoulos and Mlambo 2008, Tarisayi, 2009). On the political front, the rise of an opposition party, the Movement of Democratic Change in 2000 and its attempt to wrestle power from the ruling party ZANU PF resulted in violence as the ruling party attempted to keep power at costs. Opposition supporters were subjected to beatings and sometimes death, arbitrary arrests, displacement and general repression of the electorate by the ruling party militia, security services and pliable judiciary (Bratton, 2011).

Many Zimbabweans were forced to seek to seek the proverbial 'greener pastures' in neighbouring South Africa and other countries (Sachikonye, 2012). Furthermore Crush and Tevera (2010) describe Zimbabwe's situation as crisis driven migration where people are forced by circumstances to migrate with the intent of supporting those back home. In this case, migrants tend to have challenges with settlement in the destination countries and finding opportunities that would place them in a good position to remit (Dzingirai et al., 2015).

The selective and skills-based focus of South Africa's immigration policy limits the opportunity for less skilled migrants to live and work lawfully in the country, leading a considerable percentage of them to do so "illegally" (Machinya, 2019). More so, some of the migrants do not even have a passport to enter legally into South Africa and used informal border crossings. Zimbabwe migrants in South Africa are unable to work in the formal sector due to a lack of legitimate permits. Given that most of my participants came between 2010 and 2017, there was simply no visa they were eligible for. Nyakabawu (2021) shows how in 2010 South Africa regularised 250 000 Zimbabweans who were living in South Africa through the Dispensation Zimbabwe Process. Even those with asylum and refugee status were encouraged to change their status to Dispensation Zimbabwe Permit. After that procedure, the only permits for which migrants would become eligible were critical skills visa and study visa, only applied from the country of origin. The asylum route has always been a challenge since South Africa considers all Zimbabwean migrants as economic refugees.

Mukumbang et al., (2020) argue that documented and undocumented migrants and refugees living in South Africa already had fairly weak social support systems, less socio-economic opportunities, and poor to social services. This was in addition to other challenges that include poor housing conditions, precarious conditions of work, as well as greater risks of abuse and exploitation. These circumstances meant immigrants in urban South Africa were much more prone to the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Undocumented migrants of Zimbabwean origin have been disproportionately affected due to policy responses that mostly exclude them from benefiting from measures introduced to deal with the pandemic. This research focuses on the strategies which undocumented migrants from Zimbabwe staying in Cape Town adopted to cope with the vulnerabilities exacerbated by lockdown restrictions in circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 Understanding migrant coping capacities through the social resilience theory lens

This research is analysed through recent elaborations of the concept of social resilience. Individuals, organisations, and communities are all examples of social entities with the ability to endure, and cope with, socio-economic, environmental and other hazards. As the theoretical framework in this thesis will detail, Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013) have built on the literature on social resilience to summarise three categories of capacities, which they refer to as coping

capacities, adaptive capacities, and transformative capacities. To summarise their approach, they describe capacities as "adaptive and transformative" ways that communities and people deal with threats using resources that are immediately available. Vulnerable groups may use what Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013:11) describe as "pro-active" or "preventive" techniques to use experiences from past encounters to foresee possible risks in the future, and "adjust their lifestyles accordingly." Transformative capacities refer to the "ability to access assets and assistance from the wider socio-political arena," and "to participate in decision-making processes," as well as the ability to " craft institutions that both improve their individual welfare and foster societal robustness in the face of future crises" (Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013:11).

Due to a lack of data, uncertainty, and the fast-fluctuating nature of the pandemic, measuring the true impact is challenging. Given this context, the goal of this study has been to better understand the pandemic's socioeconomic effects upon, and responding capacities and resilience of, a sample of undocumented Zimbabwean migrant workers in Cape Town. In addition, the study contributes to the literature on lived experiences of migrants in South Africa while providing a context to migrant vulnerability. This research analyses the extent to which a group of Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town have been able to exhibit social resilience in this context and continue contributing to their communities and making connections locally and translocally.

1.3 Rationale and significance of the study

This section builds on the background and context for understanding the situation of migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic given in the previous section. It will provide the justification and significance of the study. The study contributions are divided into three: a) contribution to knowledge b) contribution to policy, and c) contribution to practice and society. These will be discussed separately below.

This research is significant in terms of knowledge generation and this stems from several issues. Firstly, while many recent studies have been done on the COVID-19 pandemic, at the time of proposing this research, there were a few studies focusing on perception from migrants regarding their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. While migrants usually face similar vulnerabilities in different contexts, migrants are not a homogenous group (WHO, 2018). As such, this justifies the need for a study that involves undocumented migrants

narrating what have been their experiences in Cape Town. In this regard, this study is relevant and timely as it provides a different context of the experiences of migrants in sub-Saharan Africa. This topic also intersects with issues of xenophobia and the general treatment of migrants and foreign nationals in the country, which remains topical and highly publicised in South Africa (Out, 2017).

This research confirms previous studies concerning the challenges of migrants in South Africa, which are needed to continue to inform the development of policy recommendations as it uncovers the lived experiences of undocumented migrants. For instance, this study examined the nuanced ways in which migrants may develop social resilience during the pandemic. Continued research such as this helps to inform the need for provision of migrant services.

Undocumented migrants became more vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns as many could not find work. More so, undocumented migrants were not eligible to benefit from government social protection programs due to challenges related to their legal status. It is against this background that the study explored migrant coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4 Problem statement

The global COVID-19 epidemic, as well as the ensuing lockdowns and limitations, have had varying effects on people, in other circumstances exacerbating numerous inequities along racial, ethnic, class, gender and 'citizenship' lines. As the South African government announced some measures to ameliorate the socio-economic effects of the pandemic on its population, thousands of Zimbabwean migrants who are undocumented, on temporary contracts, in sectors such as construction, tourism and hospitality lost their jobs and livelihoods. They were also ineligible to benefit from social safety nets introduced by the government to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. This has multiplied their vulnerability and that of their communities of origin. Some of the vulnerabilities to which they are exposed relate to prohibition of paid work, unfair labour practices and the increasing xenophobic attacks, which leads them to rely on community networks for protection (Macheka, 2018). However, there are a few studies that have specifically focused on the coping strategies which undocumented migrant Zimbabweans in Cape Town have been adopting in circumstances of difficulties that were made worse by lockdown restrictions brought by the outbreak of the COVID-19. This

study aimed to cover that gap by qualitatively documenting migrant narratives of challenges and resilience.

1.5 Delineation of the case study area

The research was carried out in Masiphumelele, a township in Cape Town, situated between Kommetjie, Capri Village and Noordhoek in the Southern Peninsula of the Western Cape. Masiphumelele shares boundaries with the opulent Noordhoek and other primarily "white" Southern Peninsula suburbs. Masiphumelele grew out of an overflow of people from the Khayelitsha Township and an adjacent squatter settlement in the early 1990s (Living Hope 2022). The community was started by a group of people from Khayelitsha and were also joined by their fellow compatriots from the Eastern Cape Province who were looking for work in the Western Cape in 1991/92 just after Apartheid had ended. The people built their shacks and simple homes, and a community was set up at the area which was then known as "Site 5", later renamed by inhabitants to Masiphumelele which means "We will succeed".

Source: Johnny Miller, 2016 . *Unequal Scenes* series, http://www.unequalscenes.com /

The above figure shows the overcrowded and dusty black suburb of Masiphumelele surrounded by affluence suburbs such as Noordhoek and other mainly white southern peninsula suburbs.

Masiphumelele status has changed from being an "informal township" to delimitation as Ward 69 of Cape Town. The settlement now has a large population and represents a diverse group of individuals from all over South Africa. Inhabitants that have joined the original Xhosa include other ethnic groups from South Africa and foreign nationals from other parts of Africa, such as Zimbabweans ,Ethiopians, Congolese, Ghanaians, Mozambicans, Somalis, Nigerians, and Malawians (Freedom House, 2017).

According to a Masiphumelele case study, foreign nationals account for roughly 30% of the population, with another 10% claiming languages spoken mostly in provinces other than the Western and Eastern Capes (Freedom House, 2017). Likewise, only 22.4% of residents identified in the 2017 study were from the Western Cape, showing that Masiphumelele sees a lot of in-migration from other provinces in South Africa.

1.6 Aim of the Study

This study examined how undocumented Zimbabwean migrants are coping with the increased socio-economic vulnerability posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the relative absence of government support, the study aimed to assess the ways they build social resilience: the kind of strategies or "capacities" they have in place, and what kind of strategies they might better develop to sustain their livelihoods.

1.7 Research Questions

1. What were the experiences of Zimbabwean undocumented migrants in Cape Town during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are the effectiveness of various strategies undocumented Zimbabwean migrants have adopted to cope with the effect of COVID-19?
3. What role was played by local institutions in building social resilience and transformative capacity amongst undocumented Zimbabwean migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.8 Objectives of the research

The study's objectives were to:

a) Understand the effects of COVID-19 on a group of undocumented migrants from Zimbabwe in Cape Town.

b) Explore the various capacities adopted by undocumented Zimbabwean migrants to build social resilience in the context of COVID-19.
c) Examine the impact of translocal connections on the resilience of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The previous chapter provided an introduction and background context to the study, including the research questions and objectives, and study contribution. This chapter will review the literature on migration, including literature on the challenges faced by undocumented migrants in general and during the COVID-19. This chapter not only provides information on the challenges that affect the wellbeing of undocumented migrants but also examines their strategies to achieve increased wellbeing. The chapter also details the theoretical framework to explain migrant lives in different contexts. In this case, there will be an analysis of the undocumented migrants' capacities to not only cope and adapt to the current challenges but whether they can build resilience for future crises.

2.1 Historical background on migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa

Migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa has been happening over many years (Mlambo, 2010). However, compared to other countries in Southern Africa, Zimbabwean migrants who moved temporarily to South Africa were somewhat limited for much of the twentieth century (Crush et al., 1992). Most migrants from the neighbouring region worked on a contract basis in South African mines and commercial farms. Zimbabwe resisted South African attempts to recruit workers for the fear of loss of their own labour supply (Jeeves, 1986). In fact, Zimbabwe recruited migrant workers from Malawi and Mozambique. In the 1970s, this ban was temporarily relaxed, and South Africans attempted, but failed, to attract Zimbabweans to work in the country's gold mines (Crush et al., 1992). Many whites departed the country following independence in the 1980s and were greeted by the apartheid government of the time.

Zimbabwe's political and economic crises began at the turn of the century, resulting in huge outflows of Zimbabweans into the neighbouring South Africa (Bimha, 2017). Political unrest and economic deterioration led to massive de-industrialisation causing company closures, unemployment, poverty, and shortages of fuel, power, and basic food necessities (Raftopoulos, 2009). The economic downturn has resulted in several challenges including poor industrial performance and shutdown of industries leading to unemployment (Macheka, 2018). By 2008, Zimbabwe's gross domestic product had dropped to an estimated US$ 4 billion, from an estimated US$ 9 billion in 1997, owing to a massive debt burden that accounted for a shocking

122 percent of the country's GDP (Sachikonye, 2011). By September 2008, inflation had reached a high of almost 200 million percent (Mawowa and Matongo, 2010). According to Mawowa and Matongo (2010), by 2009, the country had deindustrialised at a spectacular rate, with only 10 percent of its industrial capacity being utilised.

Due to stability of its political and economic environment, South Africa has been an attractive destination of choice for the huge majority of crisis-driven migrants. The surge of migration in quest of economic stability and a new life during the crisis period was diverse in terms of education and background (Mupakati, 2012). Describing the range of demographic characteristics of Zimbabweans in South Africa during that period, Crush and Tevera (2010:9) describe:

> "*There are as many women as men; there are migrant of all ages, from young children to the old and infirm; those fleeing poverty and hunger join those fleeing persecution and harassment; they are from all rungs of the occupational and socio-economic ladder; the highly read and illiterate, professionals and paupers, doctors and ditch diggers.*"

The number of South Africans reacting unfavourably to the presence of Zimbabwean migrants has been growing, a scenario which has largely compromised their security (Maphosa 2021). Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa faced a daunting task of finding work and rebuilding their lives in South Africa, all while dealing with discrimination, social exclusion, xenophobic harassment, and violence on a daily basis (Moyo, 2019).

2.2 Being undocumented

Undocumented or irregular migrants have faced challenges globally. Jacobsen and Karlsen (2021:3) describe the impact of irregularity on migrants, exposing them to long "temporal" periods of waiting; migrants are limited by "legal regimes, cultural norms and power relationships" and at the same time show that these are diversely "encountered, incorporated and resisted." Undocumented immigrants are sometimes known as "illegal immigrants" (Khosravi, 2010). However, several scholars have critiqued this term as defining people as "illegal" denies them humanity: a human being cannot be illegal. Migrants are people and they have rights whatever their legal status (De Genova, 2014). Another criticism is the connotation of the term "illegal" with criminality (De Genova, 2015).

2.3 Vulnerability and undocumented migrants

Before delving into the details of vulnerability and undocumented migration, it is important to briefly map out the concept of vulnerability.

2.3.1 Diverse meanings of "vulnerability"

The USAID (2012) conceptualises vulnerability as "a set of conditions resulting from physical, social, economic, and environmental factors, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards." As cited in Keller and Adger (2000), the Collins English Dictionary defined vulnerability as the "capacity to be physically or emotionally wounded or hurt." According to Nguyen et al., (2016), early use of the term 'vulnerability' can be traced to natural hazards and geography research. However the term has now carved out a space such that it has also become useful to social research.

The term precarity is often used to explain vulnerability and exploitation (Waite et al., 2015). Butler (2016:201) demonstrates that link in arguing that they inhabit conditions of vulnerability as those who are:

> "exposed to violence and destruction without recourse to safety or exit; those who undergo forced emigration and live in liminal zones, waiting for borders to open, food to arrive, and the prospect of living with documentation; those who mark the condition of being part of a dispensable or expendable workforce for whom the prospect of a stable livelihood seems increasingly remote, and who live in a daily way within a collapsed temporal horizon, suffering a sense of a damaged future in the stomach and in the bones, trying to feel but fearing more what might be felt."

In agreement with Butler, Ferrarese (2016) argues that vulnerability evokes lives that are dispensable and deportable, and the exposure to the forces of the market. The lives of undocumented migrants are often characterised by precarity and vulnerability. Porte et al., (2010) argues that migrant lives are often characterised by precarious employment with six dimensions namely: instability (temporary contracts), empowerment (reduced bargaining power), vulnerability (defencelessness), wage level (low or insufficient incomes), social benefits (reduced rights and benefits), and capacity to exercise rights (powerlessness to exercise rights. In relation to undocumented migrants, this study is mainly interested in five of these dimensions; temporary contracts, defencelessness, wage level, social benefits and

capacity to exercise rights. This is because undocumented migrants had a disadvantage in terms of power relations and fewer opportunities to get social support and exercise rights typically resulting from a lack of legal status. More so, stay at home orders and lockdown effectively restricted their capacity to earn a livelihood.

In anthropology, some scholars have critiqued the concept of vulnerability for its focus on victimisation; Marino and Faas (2020:34) question whether vulnerability is an "outdated" concept- arguing that the term can at times "mistakenly focus attention on the experiences and 'cultures' of the communities exposed to risk, rather than on … actors and institutions engaged in the (re)production, distribution, and contestation of risk, resources, and possible futures."

Obrist et al (2010: 284) describes vulnerability as "people's capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard." Obrist (2010) reviews that seeing vulnerability as an "alternative concept to poverty" fails to convey the realities of living in poorly resourced countries on a daily basis (Chambers, 1989 as cited in Obrist et al, 2010:284). Additional dimensions, such as vulnerability and livelihood, must be examined taking into account the lived experience of the people involved. In this case, there has been a shift from viewing vulnerability as a single layered concept to viewing it as intricately linked to resilience. As Chambers (1989:4) as cited in Obrist et al ., (2010:284) details, vulnerability "means not just a lack or want, but also defencelessness, insecurity, and exposure to risks, shock and stress …" Obrist et al., (2010:285) argue that "combining of vulnerability and resilience as equivalent concepts, leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying social phenomena."

For this study, vulnerability is conceptualised to describe a situation where a family or an individual are exposed to circumstances to which the lack of assets or capacities to effectively cope with the shocks and stress. It might be claimed that resilience is increasingly understood to include the human capacity to cope and or recover from the effects of a disaster. In this regard, it follows therefore that human capacity is placed at the centre of conceptualising resilience. By way of placing the concept of vulnerability at the core, this study seeks to analyse the circumstances of migrants who had to navigate and survive in difficult circumstances brought about by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.5 Vulnerability of undocumented migrants in South Africa

Undocumented migrants face challenges from the time they embark on the journey to travel up until they are at their destination. A majority of undocumented migrants face many challenges that range from sexual abuse, assault, rape and extortion at the general from the South African public, army officials and the police (Idemudia et al., 2013), a failure to access formal health institutions (Crush and Tawodzera, 2011), failure to secure decent accommodation (Landau and Duponchel, 2011, Dumba and Chirisa, 2010), inability to access quality education for their children (Crush and Tawodzera, 2012), failure to access formal employment opportunities as well as low salaries from exploitative employers (Bloch 2008; Crush, 2012), exposure to violence in their communities (Duponchel, 2013) as well as domestic violence to those who are in formal and casual relationships. It has also been established that undocumented Zimbabwean migrants staying in informal statements as well as local townships have to put up with xenophobia from native South African citizens (CoRMSA, 2009; Matsinhe, 2011). Some of these violent attacks on foreign nationals and their businesses have in the past resulted in displacement, injury and death of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants (McConnell, 2009). This has meant that undocumented Zimbabwean migrants have to stay in perpetual fear as they do not know when else they will be under attack.

Machinya (2020) notes that undocumented Zimbabweans migrants in South Africa can be arrested and deported at any time. South Africa's government policy response to undocumented migration has been to arrest, detain and deport undocumented migrants (Crush, 2011). The arrest and deportations of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants creates a more perceptible sense of vulnerability among those still living within the country without documentation. Many undocumented Zimbabwean migrants are afraid of the police, even if they have never met them, because they are aware that deportation is a genuine possibility. This also leads them to be less selective about whatever occupations they take on, regardless of the circumstances (Bloch, 2010). Fear of deportation combined with a desire to work and make the most of their time in South Africa has had a significant disciplinary effect, causing undocumented Zimbabwean migrant workers to become politically passive and wary of participating in labour movements such as joining trade unions.

As a result, they are also vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by their employers (Machinya, 2020). Due to their immigration status, undocumented Zimbabwe migrants are reduced to

underclass as they accept any form of employment despite the working conditions in a desperate fight for survival in South Africa (Moyo, 2020, Kupakuwana, 2017). Undocumented migrants in South Africa operate in segments of the labour market where work is insecure and frequently seasonal (Bloch, 2010). More so Macheka, (2018) adds that they also have little or no influence over working conditions in addition to salaries under the stipulated minimum wage as well as working without compensation for hour overtime. They are paid far less than other migrants, and this is largely attributed to their status (Bloch, 2010). The low pay compared to others among the undocumented migrants affect their transnational capabilities (Bloch, 2010). In addition, research by Rutherford and Adisson (2007) shows how employers take advantage of the desperation of Zimbabwean immigrants by exploiting them, as their legality in South Africa was unclear. Immigrants from Zimbabwe are paid low salaries in very difficult working conditions in return for a place to stay, work and being kept away from authorities who might deport them back to their country (Bloch, 2010). Those who employ undocumented migrant workers in South Africa manipulate their fear of police arrest and deportation and exploit them (Machinya, 2020). Machinya (2020: 108) further argued that whenever undocumented Zimbabwean migrant workers challenge the power dynamics in the employment relationship some employers quickly raise the "but you are illegal can be deported anytime banner". As result, employers exploit these migrants because they are well aware of the desperation to earn money to send home (Bloch, 2010).

Zimbabwean migrants who do not have the required legal documents also have challenges with accessing health and other social services (Mutambara and Naidu, 2021). Cases have been documented where Zimbabwean migrants without valid legal permits have been turned away from local clinics and hospitals due to failure to produce documents which validates their stay in the country (Crush and Tawodzera, 2014). As a result, the huge majority of undocumented migrants end up seeking medical help from unlicensed medical practitioners. Officials at public hospitals turn away illegal migrants seeking medical help as they will be complying with section 44 of the Immigration Act of 2002 which requires public entities like hospitals and clinics to "ascertain the status or citizenship of the persons receiving their services and... report to the Department any person whose status or citizenship could not be established, given that such requirement shall not stop the rendering of services to which (they) are entitled under the Constitution or any law" (The Immigration Act 13 of 2002).

Undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa particularly those residing in informal settlements and townships are exposed to xenophobic violence (Macheka, 2018). In the 2008 xenophobic attacks 62 foreign nationals lost their lives and around 150,000 were displaced during the ensuing violence (McConnell, 2009; Dodson, 2010). There are various accounts of what really transpired in the xenophobic attacks but there is an agreement that all migrants especially Zimbabweans in townships were at risk despite their legal status or livelihood activity (Bekker, 2015; Crush et al, 2017). This is mainly because Zimbabwean migrants both documented and undocumented, are amongst the most disliked by South African citizens (Crush et al., 2013).

In conclusion, there has been a rich literature on the challenges of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. This research builds on this by updating the data in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has worsened the existing vulnerabilities of undocumented migrants, in South Africa (Mukumbang et al., 2020). This already marginalised population is being excluded from economic, poverty, and hunger schemes introduced by the government to cushion ordinary people from the socio-economic hardships under the situation of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (MiCoSA, 2020). Ways (2020) noted that in cases where African migrants received food parcels, it was insufficient to meet their day-to-day food requirements. The undocumented migrants mainly received the relief aid from local churches and non-government organisations. Leaving this marginalised population out of social relief programs has left the undocumented migrants with no other option but engage in negative coping strategies (Mukumbang et al., 2020). In the absence of studies that speak on these impacts of the pandemic, and the capacity of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants to build social resilience in this context, this study therefore seeks to fill that gap and inform policies and approaches to assist vulnerable migrants.

2.6. Transnationalism

Transnationalism is perhaps one of the main catchwords developed by researchers on migration (Pasura, 2012). Dahiden (2017) argues that scholars still contest theoretical framework underpinning transnational migration studies despite the concept being existent for over two decades. However, Portes et al (2017) argue that transnationalism is not a theoretical perspective, but a mid-range concept designed to highlight a previously neglected patch of reality and to guide and encourage investigations.

Glick Schiller et al (1992:9) define transnationalism as "a social process in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographical, cultural, and political fields." Transnationalism involves sustained relations both in the countries where migrants are coming from and where they settle. Studying the concept of migration using a transnational lens is mainly concerned with how migrants "construct and reconstitute simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society" (Glick Schiller et al., 1995: 48). Studies on the subject of transnationalism demonstrated that migrants maintain connections with their country of origin through different exchanges, activities, remittances, building homes, and transnational entrepreneurship (Pasura, 2008; Bracking and Sachikonye, 2010; Crush and Tevera, 2010; Nyakabawu, 2020).

The concept of transnationalism helps to explain the nature of Zimbabwe-South Africa migration. The proximity of Zimbabwe to South Africa also makes it possible for transnational engagements. Thus most Zimbabwean migrants maintain ties to home, through remittances and transnational parenting for migrants who left their children in the care of relatives in Zimbabwe (Crush and Tevera, 2010). While in South Africa, undocumented Zimbabwean migrants seek ways to earn a living so as to maintain their families back in their home country, including in informal trading, domestic work, and restaurant work, just to name a few. Some are even opening small businesses.

Most Zimbabwean migrants maintain transnational relations by sending remittances to Zimbabwe either on a monthly or weekly basis. Bracking and Sachikonye (2010) argue that from 2007 to 2009, almost 70% of households in Zimbabwe received some form of remittances. Remittances include cash for household expenses, medical expenses, groceries and school fees. In Cape Town, undocumented Zimbabwean migrants prefer sending money using money sending agencies such as MPesa, Mama Money, Mukuru.com, Malaicha.com amongst others. Migrants also send money with their colleagues should they be visiting Zimbabwe.

2.7 Translocality and social resilience

Translocality has been defined as identifying with more than one location (Oakes and Schein, 2006). The notion of translocality is used in reference to locales as well as mobilities at the same time. Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013) describe translocality as the formation of complex

networks promoting the circulation of people, activities, resources, as well as ideas in general. Brickell and Datta (2011) use Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and social fields to characterise simultaneous situatedness across different localities more so drawing attention to the immobile sectors of the populations, as they constitute an important factor of connection. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:83) define habitus as a "system of lasting transposable dispositions which integrating past experiences that function at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and makes it possible the achievements of infinitely diversified tasks." In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu defines field as (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 97):

> "... a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations, they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.)"

Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004: 1010) note that the field in a transnational setting means that people activities were regulated by the laws and institution more than one state. On a similar note, Ong (1999: 5) emphasized the need to identify cultural institutions, laws and regimes that shape people's motivations and struggles. Chen and Tan (2009) argue that the institutional context in the host and home country affect immigrant transnational practices and transnationalism literature is criticised for going short on the significant impact of state policies in shaping the institutional infrastructure of social field. Ong (1999:15) also calls for an analysis of the link between institutions of state power and transnational networks to such forms of cultural reproduction, inventiveness, and possibilities.

In this regard, the field for migrants was shaped by laws issued to limit the spread of COVID-19, which included stay at home orders, preventing people to work, suspension of international travel, and the non-availability of social support for undocumented migrants. More so, only people with essential services workers letters were the only ones allowed to travel. These undocumented migrants were not permanent employees and did not have any institution to grant them essential services workers letters and neither was their work classified as essential. Undocumented Zimbabwean migrants lacked legal recognition because of the social condition

of being an undocumented immigrant, which is considered an illegal status as per provisions of the Immigration Act.

At the same time, the migrants needed to eat and survive, take care of their families, had commitments to send remittances. In 2020, remittances were the biggest form of foreign direct investment in Zimbabwe, which was more than 25% of the national budget (Mbiba and Mupfumira, 2022). This showed that despite significant challenges brought by the pandemic on Zimbabwean migrants living abroad, they still needed to support their families. More so, while there were a number of bus operators that run directly from Cape Town to various cities in Zimbabwe, they were not moving during the hard lockdown and people could only send cash remittances. Malayitshas were not available; Malayitsa is a Ndebele word that refers to pick up courier trucks that ferry groceries and other goods to deliver to various addresses in Zimbabwe (Nyamunda, 2014).

This means that even undocumented migrants had no choice but to adapt in the midst of laws that restricted their trade, movement, and sending of groceries with Malayitshas so that they can feed themselves and those left behind back home where the crisis was more severe. Recalling the concept of habitus defined above, this study also sought to understand how undocumented Zimbabwean migrants draw on their knowledge corridors to adapt to the challenges provided by the COVID-19 pandemic. This was because when faced with a crisis, people often drew upon strategies compatible with their previous conditioning. As Bourdieu (1977: 78-79) argues, the habitus tends to "reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle while adjusting to the demands inscribed by objective potentialities in the situation defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus."

In this regard, migrants drew upon their experience from their home country, work experience, education, or other means to adopt strategies to survive in the translocal setting. Thus it can be argued that undocumented migrants drew upon a series of dispositions that were generated from certain cultural schemas. This is because habitus describes the cultural logics that make certain actions thinkable, practicable and desirable, which are embedded in the process of capital accumulation (Ong, 1999:2). Dahiden (2017: 1476) argues that using a "Bourdesian approach in a translocal setting shows how migrants navigate in transnational social fields that are embedded in multiple societies characterised by status inconsistencies."

In line with the above argument, it can be argued that translocality is closely related to social resilience, and this relationship is referred to by Peth and Sakdapolrak (2020) as translocal social resilience. Peth and Sakdapolrak (2020) studied transnational or translocal networks, and in this case, translocal social resilience can help analyse how undocumented Zimbabweans migrants enacted dispositions from the habitus to cope with stresses, pressures and disturbances to their way of living induced by the COVID- 19 pandemic. Vigh (2009: 419) uses the concept of "social navigation" to show people manage insecurity and "escape confining structures." Social navigation is more than just movement, but how people move in relation to "social goals and socially imagined positions" (Vigh, 2009:425). Taking care of one's family amongst Zimbabweans makes one a proper person as part of their personhood. Personhood can be defined as they way in which social persons are created in different societal contexts (Morreira, 2013). Given that remittances and taking care of families is about personhood, this study seeks to understand how their habitus helped navigate the confining structures of the pandemic.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This section details the theoretical framework appropriate for this study by stating the study's problem and explaining the proposed framework. In this case the problem is about how Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa who are undocumented are responding to the challenges brought by the measures to deal with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Social resilience theory is a helpful framework to understand and generate answers to this question. Whilst there are many definitions of resilience for this study the following definition from USAID (2012): "the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems (social, economic, ecological) to mitigate, adapt to, recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth." A migrant community can be an example of a social entity with the ability to absorb as well as cope with a variety of disasters. Social resilience has a reactive as well as a proactive aspect (Wilson, 2012).

This thesis draws from social resilience theory, which describes three types of capacities namely coping, adaptive, and transformative capacities (Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013). Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013) describe the main dimensions of social resilience to include the ability of identified social actors to deal with immediate challenges (coping capacities), the ability to use experience from the past to deal with anticipated future challenges, as well as the ability to

design a set of institutions which help to nurture individual robustness against crises in the future (transformative capacities). The social resilience theoretical framework helps to interrogate factors that are constraining livelihoods, which then enables contextual analysis of vulnerabilities, resilience capacities as well as the governance framework that has a bearing on livelihood outcomes (Lane et al., 2014, Scoones, 2009, Dzingirai, 2013, DFID, 2000). The study focused on how the undocumented migrants are responding (coping and recovering) to the shocks and stressors that they are facing under the conditions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. These strategies will include adoptive, adaptive, local resources, social capital and stakeholder networks and transformational capacities.

Coping capacities relate to how people react to disasters (Obrist, 2010a: 289) while adaptive capacities refers to the ability to anticipate future hazards, and adjust one's lifestyles accordingly. Adaptation entails strategic agency whereas coping focuses on tactical agency and short-term logic (Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013). All communities respond to a disaster in a different manner because of their unique set of capacities (Sherrieb et al., 2010). Social resilience is contingent on social experience and our interaction with political, economic, cultural and social environment. In that regard how members of a community react to a disaster is different at any point in time because of past experiences and he obtaining socio-economic conditions (Maguire and Hagan 2007). Finally, transformative capacities involve people's capacity to "access assistance" from both government and non-governmental organisations so that they are able to contribute to processes that inform decision making as well as contribute to establishment of institutions that improve their individual welfare and "foster societal robustness toward future crises" (Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013: 11).

Quite a number of scholars have linked the concept of social resilience to endowment with various types of assets (Cannon, 2008; Mayunga, 2007). These perspectives are mainly from insights of the social vulnerability and livelihoods approach (Obrist et al., 2010). The importance of social, economic, human and natural capital as well as other assets are discussed in these studies. Social capital is mentioned as playing a vital part in developing and maintaining social resilience, despite the fact that "assets are commonly understood to be products of social relations" (Sakdapolrak, 2010: 57). The framework of this theory as explained above will assist to analyse how undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa are coping under the conditions brought about by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.9 Application of theoretical framework to the study

The study examined the vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town during the COVID-19 pandemic. The identification of stressors in the environment and how individuals cope with them is the main premise of social resilience theory. The COVID-19 pandemic came as an external shock for which the world was little prepared. Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013) state that shocks may increase the vulnerability of individuals and households, and this has been seen to be the case of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Masimuphelele during the pandemic. Guided by the framework and definition of capacities as given in the social resilience theory, attention has been given to how undocumented migrants from Zimbabwean residing in South Africa were responding (coping as well as recovering) to the socio-economic shocks and stressors that they are facing under the restrictions that have been instituted to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study examined how the COVID-19 disaster impacted on undocumented Zimbabwean migrants as adaptation was understood through the lens of the translocal resilience perspective. Thus the social resilience perspective is used to explain how mitigation measure put in place to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic affected translocal livelihood systems supporting undocumented Zimbabwean migrants. A social resilience approach is key for this study as it facilitates the understanding of migrants and migrant sending households as a functional social unit (Stange et al., 2020).

Given that migration is a key livelihood strategy of households and individuals that this study focuses on, it is imperative to investigate how the COVID-19 crises, as an international crisis, affects translocal resilience. In other words, the perspective will be used to shape the analysis of how COVID-19 undermined the ability of undocumented migrants to diversifying risks through translocal embeddedness.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the literature review for the study, including the theoretical framework. This chapter presents the methodology that was used in the study. Research methodology choices were guided by the research aims and objectives.

3.1 Research paradigm

This study used a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research makes use of inductive reasoning, and was chosen for its aptness in dealing with *what, how and why* questions (Bryman, 2012). Meriam (2002) describes qualitative research as where the main interest is understanding a phenomenon, and this understanding becomes an end in itself. This study arose from the growing emphasis in literature that undocumented migrants in South Africa are being affected by a myriad of challenges which calls for the need to adapt more to the challenges affecting them. Qualitative research is thus appropriate as its method is suitable for understanding the experiences of undocumented migrants (Merriam, 2002). The research questions for this study were thus designed to be exploratory and unravel respondents' perspective and experiences of the COVID-19 induced challenges and how they are coping. In this case, this enables the researcher to view the participants' world through their eyes while unpacking their worldviews and perceptions (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative methods for this study included semi-structured interviews and observation methods.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This qualitative research enables the exploration of perceptions and worldviews of the participants (Merriam, 2002). This study used an interpretivist approach in the endeavour to understand the reality of undocumented migrants in the contexts of COVID-19 as it allows for the grounding in the experiences of that reality (Tesch, 1994). This approach allowed the researcher to comprehend the subjective reality of participants as reflected in the meaning that they attach to the phenomenon under study and how they make sense of their world. This, in a significant way, allows meanings to emerge based on reality and not the researcher's prevailing understanding of phenomena. In other words, this approach is key as it allows phenomena to speak for itself, unadulterated by the presumptions of researcher.

3.3 Research design

Research design is here understood to be the strategy used to build the research study (Wagner et al., 2012). This research design was used by the researcher to understand how undocumented migrants in the study area perceive and make sense of their experiences relative to the effects of the COVID-19 (Hartley, 2004). For this reason the thesis employed a "case study" research design. Case study research is described by Creswell (2013: 97) as a qualitative approach in which the researcher "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews)."

3.4 Sampling

This study made use of purposive and snowball sampling (also called referral method) in as far as the target population and respondents are concerned. Following Gaus (2017), the researcher selected Masiphumelele Township in Cape Town on the judgement that it possesses typical issues that this research seeks to understand. Given that the study can be characterised as research in an area that the researcher knows, it was selected on the knowledge that most individuals in the area are undocumented Zimbabwean migrants. This study took off on the assumption that a sample of 10 respondents is satisfactory in addressing the needs of the study. The respondents were purposively sampled on the basis of the possession of characteristics that inform the purpose of the study, chiefly being an undocumented Zimbabwean migrant. The researcher intended to have a level of heterogeneity among the respondents in terms of age, socioeconomic status, marital status and possession and access to productive resources. Respondent self-selection criteria was used as respondents who considered themselves to have the desired member characteristics were interviewed.

Snowball sampling was utilised to identify prospective respondents. According to De Vos et al., (2005), when the researcher is unfamiliar with the exact locations of possible research participants, particularly undocumented migrants, snowball sampling is used. In this research the engaged participant referred the researcher to the next participant who met the criteria for inclusion in the study, and so on (De Vos et al., 2005). Some undocumented migrants were hesitant to refer the researcher to other undocumented immigrants fearing to be captured by authorities. However, they were given assurances that data collected was strictly for academic purposes only.

3.5 Data collection procedures

3.5.1 Interviews

As stated earlier, interviews were utilised for this study. Semi-structured interview guides with open-ended questions were used for data collection. 10 undocumented Zimbabweans aged between 20 and 50 and employed as domestic workers, waiters, and waitresses and others in the informal sector were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in Shona in homesteads and popular leisure spots such as shebeens and braai places (Sixsmith et al., 2003), lasting up to 45 minutes. Audio recorders were also used to record interviews with the permission of the respondents.

However, in some cases interview appointments were cancelled as the research participants cited high stress levels as the reason for the cancellation. Many of the cancellations were done by respondents who were working in restaurants as waiters and waitresses. Their cancellation was understandable as the field work was undertaken during the first phase of the adjusted level 4 of the lockdown when sit in restaurants were prohibited, which means they were out of work and without an income during that phase.

3.5.2 Direct Observation

The study also used direct observation in data collection . Direct observation is "when observer is looking at the events happening in front of his/her eyes in the moment of them occurring"(Ciesielska et al., 2018:41). Direct observation gives the researcher the opportunity to get closer to the field of researcher while retaining the position of a guest or an outsider. During this study the researcher observed how undocumented migrants were dealing with challenges that had been ushered in by COVID-19 without trying to become immersed in the entire context .

3.5.3 Participant information

For ease of reference, a table containing an outline of the participants in the interviews is included below.

Code Name	Sex	Age	Year of Migration	Education level
R1	Female	27	2016	Honors Degree in Human Resources Management
R2	Male	35	2014	A level
R3	Male	41	2005	O Level
R4	Female	32	2017	A level
R5	Male	35	2009	O level
R6	Female	29	2017	O level
R7	Female	47	2009	Certificate in Boiler making
R8	Female	25	2010	O level
R9	Female	27	2015	Hair dressing
R10	Male	36	2011	O level

3.6 Ethical considerations

With regards to ethical considerations all participants signed consent forms stipulating their voluntary participation in the study. Prior to each interview, participants were informed that they reserve the right to withdraw from the interview process at any stage and they would not be forced to say anything they did not agree to say. No real names were used for purposes of anonymity. It was stated that the study's findings would only be used for academic purposes. The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape granted permission to undertake the study. The study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic period so data collection observed the COVID-19 protocols to guarantee the safety of those involved. The research observed social distancing and strict wearing of masks as required by government legislation. To ensure anonymity respondents were mutually prohibited from revealing their names and the researcher did not take down any names such

that no response can be traced back to any of the respondents. Further to this, no photos were taken to further protect the identities and the dignity of the respondents.

3.7 Processing and analysis of data

Given the qualitative nature of the data, the researcher made use of thematic analysis to analyse the data gathered from interviews. Thematic analysis refers to a qualitative methodology to identify, scrutinise, and report emerging patterns within a data collection. The goal of thematic analysis is to find and describe implicit and explicit ideas (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Anderson (2007) espoused that thematic analysis requires widespread interpretation of data by the researcher. In this case, data was read and re-read to scrutinise trends, keywords, ideas and themes, and this was done throughout the data collection process. The following diagram shows the steps taken in thematic analysis.

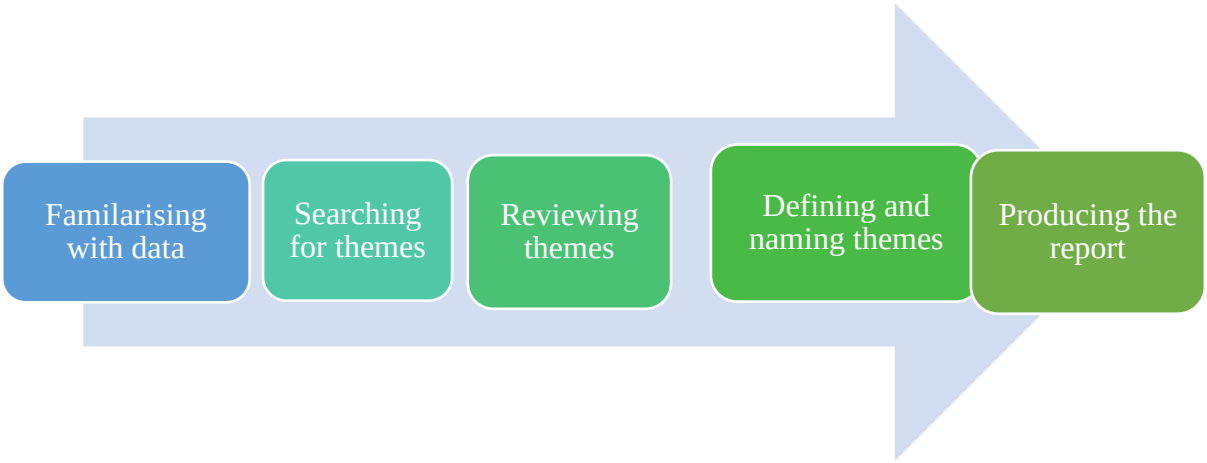

Figure 2: Phases of thematic analysis

Reproduced and adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

Fig 2 above shows the stages of analysis that occurred in this study. First, the researcher reviewed interview transcripts several times in the search for recurring regularities (Merriam, 1998). The researcher took note of the quotations coming from the interviewed respondents. These were analysed to see emerging categories (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). These categories were named, and the transcripts coded with each representing specific categories (Bogdan and Biklin, 1982; Merriam, 1998). Next, the researcher looked for relationships in

and across all the data sources after bringing together the coded interviews. The categories were then combined and refined to the point where themes solidified (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). While some of the themes were derived from literature and adopted for this study as they matched with those in the data, the study also allowed some themes to emerge from the data as influenced by the codes created.

3.8 Researcher positionality and reflexivity

Reflexivity is described as how researchers "position themselves" (Creswell 2013:47). Creswell (2013:47) explains this further as the way a research acknowledges "their background (e.g., work experiences, cultural experiences, history), how it informs their interpretation of the information in a study, and what they have to gain from the study." This study was conducted by a young male migrant from Zimbabwe in search of better opportunities. This position gave the researcher an insider-outsider status which, in a significant way, made community entry and gaining the trust of the respondents less cumbersome. However, the fact that the researcher was studying people of the same nationality with whom he identifies made him liable to researcher bias, and some of the data is analysed in relation both to the larger literature already cited on this topic but is also may be influenced by the researcher's insider experience. This position gave the researcher particular insights into the issues that migrants face and the trans-local connections embedded in international migration. However, the researcher was also of the assumption that the respondents might give misleading responses given the researcher's national identity. To this, the researcher heightened emphasis on the academic purpose of the research as a counter bias measure.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which lockdown restrictions affected the level of interaction in face-to-face interviews. In this case, respondents initially hesitated to hold face to face interviews, as this had the potential risk of contracting COVID-19. However, it is worth noting that it was much easier to secure face-to-face interviews that virtual interviews as online engagement was perceived to be even more risky than divulging information to someone whom you can see. As such, the best approach was to engage the respondents face-to-face. This had implications on the number of respondents, as the researcher ended up having a lot of missed appointments.

3.10 Reliability and validity

In this study the researcher adopted the broader perspective offered by Ritchie (2003) that validity means “well grounded” and reliability means “sustainable,” which is much closer to qualitative research because it assists in giving understanding on the strength of the data. To ensure the findings from this study are valid or can be replicable if the same methods are used, the researcher was guided by the following principles during data gathering processes. The researcher ensured that the sample consists of all the characteristics of the targeted population thus giving consideration to the multiplicity of variations that differentiate small undocumented migrants in South Africa. Therefore, the sample frame represented and reflected the different backgrounds of the undocumented migrants. The fieldwork process allowed participants to have sufficient time and motivation to exhaust their experiences and fully express their views as undocumented migrants in the context of COVID-19.

3.11 Conclusion

The chapter detailed the methodology that was employed to answer the research questions. Qualitative methodology was chosen as the most appropriate for investigating the experiences of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Masiphumelele, Cape Town. This took the form of face to face interviews and direct observation.

Chapter Four: Presentation and analysis of findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is comprised of responses from research participants of this study attained through semi-structured interviews and direct observation methods. The responses were grouped under themes emerging in line with the aim of the study and research questions. The presentation attempted to keep the flow of the interview as well the sequence of themes as outlined in the literature. Direct quotes from respondents were used extensively to ensure that their voices and views were articulated as closely to their form as possible. In cases where participants shared similar experiences, the data was combined with only a few testimonials representing the overarching view. This presentation attempted to accurately represent the responses given by the participants. The presentation is also coupled by a discussion of the findings linking them to the theoretical framework which helps explain the data. The discussion contributes to understanding the drivers of migration and the translocal relationships that dynamise it. It also helps in making clear the effects of the pandemic to the wellbeing of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa and their capacities to respond to them. Efforts were made to relate this discussion to the reviewed literature in chapter two for similarities and differences in the findings.

4.2 Migration as a livelihood strategy

This study is situated in the "aspiration/ability model" which sought to establish the conditions under which people decide to migrate in circumstances where challenges that include high travelling cost, dangers associated with border jumping as well problems associated with being an illegalised migrant (Carling and Schewel, 2018). The data collection process began by investigating the political, socio-economic as well as other factors driving undocumented Zimbabwean migrants who have migrated to South Africa. Debate has been growing among scholars on whether categorising migration as resulting from 'push-pull' factors offers a complete view of migration. Emerging in contemporary migration literature are more nuanced analytical frameworks on the fluid and shifting driver paradoxes that dismisses any notion of 'factors' driving migration decisions and processes but rather refers to a combination of 'drivers' operating (Carling and Collins 2017). According to Van Hear et al (2017), drivers of migration interact with each other in shaping the changing structural space in which people make their mobility "decisions." Before elaborating on the primary purpose of the study, the researcher deemed it necessary to give background on the drivers of migration itself and what

it means for the migrants and their significant others. All the participants had insightful views that helped shed light on the issue being researched. When asked on what drove them to migrate to South Africa, a majority of the responses given indicated that the search for better economic opportunities was the biggest driver for migration. This corroborates what was documented by Crush & Tevera (2010), who cited that South Africa was attracting migrants from Zimbabwe due to the availability of jobs and perceived better living conditions. One of the study respondents R1 stated:

> *I was doing nothing; I had just recently graduated from university. I came here to South Africa to look for a job opportunity. You know, in Zimbabwe employment opportunities are limited due to the economic challenges, and there is little to no hope regarding whether the state of affairs will change anytime soon.*

In the interview above, R1 says that he was doing nothing. Jones (2014) refers to doing nothing as involuntary immobility. As evidenced in the interview, R1 wanted to use his qualification to be gainfully employed but he was displaced in place as he could not participate in the "econoscape" (Appadurai, 1990) through real work. In other words, it can be argued that he did not envisage a temporality of modernity living in Zimbabwe. The conditions of being unemployed to R1 suspended the possibility his full and proper personhood in Zimbabwe as his expected lifescape was not coming along. Personhood is constituted by the ability to work and take care of others (Morreira, 2013). Through unemployment and doing nothing, the sense of which the promise of *going to university, graduate and being employed* had been betrayed. In this way migration became a way of coping with symbolic uncertainties of Zimbabwean life. R2 had an almost similar response to R1 indicating that:

> *I was just hustling in Zimbabwe, buying, and selling anything I could. Seeing that I was not making ends meet, I decided to come here to South Africa and see how things are on this side. As you can see it seems there is something here that makes you to want to stay. I thought I will be here just for 3 months only, but I am still here.*

Jones (2010) refers to the selling of anything as kukiya-kiya (kukiya kiya economy). Jones (2010: 285) explains that in a kukiya kiya economy "the discourse of necessity justifies any kind of economic act from selling everything, illegal currency dealing to prostitution and

mugging". In a kukiya kiya economy, people secure livelihoods in a battle with circumstances and that survival is a matter of persistence and out right force (Jones, 2010, Nyakabawu, 2020).

Some respondents also indicated that they had their skill, which they believed could be useful in South Africa as opportunities back home were dwindling. R 3 remarked:

> *I used to make sofas in Zimbabwe (upholstery). In Zimbabwe, the government destroyed our home industries in 2005 through an operation called Murambatsvina (Restore Order) where informal settlements and houses . So, there was nothing to do in Zimbabwe since my business had been destroyed and all big industries had been closed-- our country was in bad shape. We decided to come here to look for job opportunities.*

Operation Murambatsvina was an urban clean up exercise that destroyed informal sector business, trading locations and houses that had were considered to have contravened city by-laws. The operation was so severe that it affected over 700 000 people countrywide and the United Nations was forced to institute a fact finding mission. The experience of R3 is called in situ displacement. Magaramombe (2010: 364-65) define in situ displacement as "the physical destruction of production assets and dismantling of production systems as people are separated from their ecosystems, workplaces and livelihood opportunities". R3 except shows how his way of livelihood in Zimbabwe was destroyed and chose to leave the country in search of greener pastures elsewhere. Apart from the skills and the education R3 possessed, R3 indicated that having a relative facilitated migration. This shows the importance of social capital in understanding migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Since migration involves movement into a new country, social networks become indispensable. Castles (2003:207) notes the importance of social network in easing the movement of people into a new destination and providing assistance in finding work and other needs on arrival. Thus it can be argued that migrants from Zimbabwe came if they could link with existing family members in their social networks. R1 indicated that she had a sister who encouraged her to come, R5 had an uncle who sent them money to migrate and R7, R9 and R 10 had relatives who live in Cape Town who assisted with settlement in the migrant destination area. R 8 indicated that they migrated through a connection with someone they knew from church. There is also evidence from the interview findings to show that the availability of support mechanisms for the facilitation of migration and settlement in the destination area is another factor that drives migration. This is consistent with several studies that suggest that the motive and capacity to migrate, as well as

migration patterns, are driven by household resource levels (De Haas 2011, Dzingirai et al., 2014). Households with adequate financial means are more likely to sponsor the migration of one or more members than those with insufficient funds (Dzingirai et al., 2014).

Apart from the aspect of migrant sending households aiding migration through financial backing, risk averse households build kinship networks that span locations and serve as conduits for information and assistance, influencing choices (Campbell, 2011). Persons whose commitments and obligations are to households in the sending area make up shadow households in the destination region. These individuals may be especially prone to aid in the migration of other members of the household or family (Campbell, 2010). In this case, household members facilitate migration through offering information on the migration trip, offer accommodation and assist with integration (Andersson, 2002). In other words, this "translocal" livelihood system is reflected from the very facilitation of migration itself. A transnational connection between an aspiring migrant and current migrants becomes enhancers of mobility itself (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013).

It was also apparent from the interviews that while some migrants had never worked and were going to look for work for their very first job, other migrants migrated as a result of loss of a job. In this connection, R7 stated that:

> *The company that I was working for had been closed and I had been retrenched. After I had been retrenched, I could not find another job. There were no jobs in Zimbabwe at that time, and worse, the money was valueless. For example, you could buy bread like now for 1 dollar, and within the next 2 hours it would have increased to 2 dollars. The situation was tough. We came to seek green pastures here.*

In the above interview excerpt, R7 demonstrates the nature of Zimbabwe's inflation especially from 2007 to 2008. Crush and Tevera (2010) demonstrate how shopping became so difficult in Zimbabwe that if one chooses to compare prices from different retail outlets and choose to go back to the initial store, the prices would have changed. It was these kind of conditions that made people to leave their home country.

It is apparent from the findings presented above that the key driver for all the migrants interviewed, despite different backgrounds and circumstances, have been to look for better

economic opportunities in the face of hardship and lack of opportunities to sustain livelihoods at home. In other words, migration is viewed as a livelihood resilience strategy that is engaged to make sure that it improves the wellbeing of not just the migrants, but the migrant sending households as well. Many of the interviewed respondents remarked that failure of the Zimbabwean economy to provide them with jobs was one of the main reasons they had to migrate. Zimbabwe has an unemployment rate of more than 90% and the worsening economic environment has made it difficult for those that are skilled to find employment and for informal workers to make meaningful profits from their enterprises. Although the sample is small, combined with data arising in other literature reviewed in this thesis, it can therefore be generalised that many Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa are seeking the proverbial 'greener pastures' owing to the difficult economic conditions back home that have made earning a living very difficult. This can also be supported by the fact that all the respondents indicated that they were out of work at the time of their migration to South Africa. This then underscores the idea that migration was identified in the narratives as a vehicle for economic empowerment. This concurs with the evidence in literature which indicates that migration as offers an opportunity for the diversification of income and livelihoods. They emphasise the benefits of diversifying income and livelihoods, similar to the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) approach (Tebboth et al.,2019).

There is also evidence from the interview findings to show that the availability of support mechanisms for the facilitation of migration and settlement in the destination area is another factor that drives migration. This is consistent with a number of studies that suggest that the motive and capacity to migrate, as well as migration patterns, are driven by household resource levels (De Haas 2011, Dzingirai et al., 2014). Those households that have the monetary resources are better placed to fund members so that they migrate compared to those that do not have the monetary resources (Carling & Collins, 2018; Dzingirai et al., 2014).

4.3 Vulnerability under the COVID-19 situation

This study is using the concept of vulnerability to determine the extent to which undocumented migrants a susceptible to alienation from socio-economic services and opportunities, and furthermore, how they cope and adapt to the alienation (see Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013). It is a finding of this study that many factors contributed towards the vulnerability of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. Both undocumented and documented

migrants are largely a vulnerable group who are susceptible to psychological, physical and other negative social health outcomes. The factors that contributed to the largely to the vulnerability of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants related to the lack of documents to validate their citizenship in order to be eligible for social support during the pandemic (Nyakabawu, 2020).

Nyakabawu (2022) argues that immigration law hinders undocumented immigrants' access to services as it creates spaces for citizens, legal migrants and undocumented migrants. Bauder (2008) building on Bourdieu's concept of capital argues that citizenship and legal status is a form of capital that manifests itself in reproducing economic privilege for the citizens and legal migrants. As noted elsewhere, the South African government offered social support to its citizens during the pandemic in the form of unemployment insurance and social relief grants. The vulnerability of undocumented migrants was because they are not recognised at law. Nyakabawu (2020) argues that an undocumented status excludes people, limits rights, restricts services, and erases personhood. The undocumented migrants were not eligible for social support and they could not work at the same time, which erases their personhood and motive of migration, which was to earn a living and send remittances back home.

Morreira (2013) defines personhood as referring to what constitutes a person and includes elements of living a 'proper' or 'dignified' life including the caring of family and sending remittances. In this regard, a person is only human when enmeshed in a web of social relationships. Thus, in this case, a person is not considered a person unless there are intricate connections to other people: to be human is to maintain relationships through, for example, caring for family members, sending remittances or paying bride wealth (Morreira, 2013). It could be argued that the pandemic was a form of legal violence (Abrego and Lakhani, 2011; Nyakabawu, 2022) in that the implementation of restrictions affected the ability to earn livelihoods for the undocumented migrants. Nyakabawu (2020: 125) argues that "legal violence occurred through a temporary debarment from or cessation of a privilege to earn a living, progress socio-economically and erasure of personhood."

To fully understand how the COVID-19 affected the welfare of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Masiphumelele, the researcher sought to understand whether or not the respondents were employed when COVID-19 struck and how it affected their social resilience. The in-depth

interview findings indicate that all the respondents had their income affected, each in their own way. In relation to this, R1 indicated that:

> *I was working at [anonymized restaurant] as a waitress when the pandemic started. Our restaurant was closed during the first lockdown. When the lockdown restrictions were relaxed, the number of people who were allowed in restaurants was limited again. Yet as waitresses, we get more money through many people. The limitation of numbers meant a limitation in the way we get money. Plus, people were no longer tipping like they used to do before. We also started to get fewer shifts per week as I was working only 2 days per week, unlike before where I used to work six days a week. Since we are paid per shift, fewer shifts mean less money.*

The same experience was shared by R2, a waiter who also demonstrated the lockdown restrictions affected both international and domestic tourism arrivals, which translated to a change in the number of shifts she could work per week. This scenario meant that this was an automatic reduction of income because they mainly rely on tips to complement their meagre salaries. Restaurants had also been reduced to the function of a take-away, which again impacted negatively on their ability get tips. A similar experience was also heightened by R5 who indicated that:

> *I was a stay out domestic maid at a house of some white people. COVID-19 affected me so much because before Covid. I used to work 5 days, but when Covid came, my days were reduced to 1 day. The reason has been that my boss said they cannot afford to pay for the other days since their income was also affected by the pandemic. Now I am paid per day unlike before when I used to receive a monthly salary. My days were reduced, and worse off I can't get another job - most white people are scared to hire you as a maid especially when you stay in the high density because they think you will bring them Corona.*

However, other respondents indicate that they have been out of work ever since COVID-19 struck. This was mainly because the COVID-19 restrictions resulted in the total closure of some businesses whose first response was to lay off workers. For the majority of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants this then meant that they did not have an income since by virtue of being foreigners, they did not qualify for the COVID-19 relief grant that was availed by the South

African government. Relative to this, another respondent indicated that his friend had helped him to find a job at a sign-making shop in 2007. He explained that the company specialises in making signs and doing vehicle branding, shop branding, and t-shirt printing. R4 stated:

I was still working at this shop when COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns gripped the country. I was affected big time because I was retrenched from work and was not given any money. Until now l am not even working as it's very difficult to find a job for undocumented people like myself. I am out of work now because of the pandemic. I am losing hope of getting another one; it seems the COVID-19 virus is here to stay, and more companies are closing.

R5 was also affected by the global pandemic and remarked that:

I was now working for a certain construction company. The company that I was working for was closed and we were not given a retrenchment package because we were just working, and we were not registered anywhere. Because even when you get injured at work you were not even compensated. I never thought of him giving us something because the company is closing, plus, we were too many workers. I don't think he could afford it. Things are now bad for me. I am now struggling, but we only thank God that we are still alive and none of my relatives have been sick or died as a result of COVID. However, it did affect me because building jobs are now difficult to get because construction companies are closing. Piece jobs are also difficult to get-- you must know someone to get it.

Shedding more light on the loss of work as one of the effects of COVID-19 on their employment and income generation, R6 said:

I was working as a housekeeper at a guesthouse. I was retrenched from my workplace. I was told that they were going to call me once COVID is over. Now I am just at home- there is no hope of been called again. Because it's almost a year just staying at home. I can't find another job, that's the problem especially like the one I was doing because tourists are not coming because of COVID-19. Guesthouses are always full of tourists.

Apart from using income as an employee, there is evidence to show that even those who were doing their own businesses also had their income affected. This is apparent in the words of R7 who indicated that:

> *Since 2009, I never changed my job as I have been doing this welding business. But I now have 2 extra boys that I work with who are both from Zimbabwe. During the first lockdown we were all inside the house as no one was allowed outside. Even these spaza shops were closed. we couldn't work during that time because we had to comply with the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions-. Even when the lockdown restrictions were relaxed, it was difficult to kick start the businesses and other livelihood ventures from scratch as we didn't have much stock to sell. Further to this, the huge majority of our local customers didn't have money to buy what we were selling because their streams of income were also affected under the circumstances of the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. In the end it was vending migrants like myself who were most affected.*

It is thus evident from the above interviews that there was a disruption of both businesses and employment for undocumented migrants in South Africa and each was affected in their own way. Whereas some faced significant cuts in income, others were totally retrenched. Those who were doing their own businesses were affected because they depended on customers which had income constraints as well which had a negative spillover effect on them as well.

There is ample evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative effect on the employment and income of the undocumented migrants that were interviewed. Some respondents had their income significantly reduced and some were even retrenched in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas international migration is perceived as improving the coping capacities of the migrants and their families back home, the COVID-19 pandemic affected this significantly. The fact that they could not earn much and in some cases, could not earn anything at all, meant is a significant impeded the social resilience system through remittances as indicated by a majority of respondents. The significantly reduced incomes meant that undocumented migrants could not financially support their families, dependents, and associates in their social networks. It also meant that they could not rely on their social networks for financial help because the majority of them were working as informal traders or had been retrenched hence were facing the same financial problems. This affected the ability of and expectations around international migration to enable translocal social resilience, which is discussed in the following section.

4.4 Translocality

According to Greiner and Sakdapolrak (2013), translocality emerges as an everyday lived practice for migrants as they settle in the area to which they have migrated. The practices are said to be created through reciprocal relations between a migrant's place of origin and their new homeland. Translocality has in the past been conceived as mainly a transnational practice across borders. However, other studies are suggesting is evidence of translocality within national borders. Katherine and Ayona (2011) define trans-localism as the local-to-local connections across national boundaries that are created through everyday practices of transnational migrants. Thus translocality can be understood to describe a variety of open processes, which are able to result in interrelations between different people and places. These interrelations are created and maintained through networks that are constantly reworked. Migrants mainly keep in touch with their home area through the sending of financial and material remittances to their dependents. In this case, the COVID-19 crisis can be said to have weakened and disrupted translocal connectedness. In this case, the translocal livelihood systems became vulnerable and this affected migrants in places of destination and the migrant sending households and families in places of origin.

The very factors that are key to the success of social resilience for migrants were the most affected by COVID-19 particularly the closure of places of work. This tended to bring migration as adaptation to its limits as the very mechanisms connecting places such as remittances were disputed. The measures put in place to contain the pandemic hit migrants especially hard as they were retrenched and experienced salary reductions among other challenges.

4.5 The obligation of remittances

Migrants keep in touch with their home countries through food, medical supplies, and monetary remittances on a regular basis due to the social obligation placed on them (Dzingirai et al., 2015). The study established that undocumented migrant in South Africa are bread winners who migrated so that they could be able to support their families financially. The majority of the migrants interviewed have families back home that look forward to receiving groceries and money as remittances. However, the pandemic severely affected the ability of undocumented migrants to raise an income for themselves and their families back in their

parent country. The little funds they were raising were not enough to sustain themselves, let alone to send back home. Some respondents had to split whatever they were making because their dependents back home do not have alternative ways of making an income. It follows therefore that obligations and burdens of remittances further worsened the vulnerabilities of undocumented migrants who were hardly making enough to sustain themselves due to the stringent lockdown restrictions which had made it difficult even to trade informally. This was confirmed by R6 who remarked that:

> *I came here to south Africa so that I not only escape the difficult economic situation in Zimbabwe but also to get a job that will give me an income to support my wife and children. Sending money home is not something that I have to think about twice because that is why I came here and if I do not send that money no one will support my family financially. So, by hook or crook I must earn an income so that I have something to send back home on a regular basis. Things are hard but the options are limited as well because if I do not send that money back home no one will.*

This concurred with Carling (2014:1), who cites that "Migrant remittances reflect individuals' commitments, priorities, and difficult decisions." This is mainly because most of the migrants were 'bread winners' whose responsibilities included financial support to the families they had left back in Zimbabwe. In this regard, their vulnerabilities were therefore further worsened by the fact that they had financial obligations they were supposed to consistently fulfil despite their precarious conditions under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As noted earlier, the key driver of migration has been to get better opportunities and generate more income and facilitate translocal livelihood resilience. In this case, migrants are faced with the obligation to remit so as to respond to the expectations back home. Given that challenges that migration presents on migrants, the inability to remit places a burden and attracts labels from the migrant sending households and families back home (Kankonde, 2010). These processes are a clear indication that there is increased vulnerability both the migrants and their families back home. In this case, one can say that coping capacities have been highly compromised such that the translocal family network is unable to sustain their resilience. Further to this, social resilience is also shaped by access to resources, and it has been documented above that undocumented migrant are presently struggling to access resources, including food and finance during the pandemic. Social resilience is also shaped by the

structure of the livelihood and responsive social institutions (Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013). It is a finding of this study that the transformative capacities of undocumented migrants were weakened by what seemed to be a coordinated resentment from institutions that normally extend humanitarian and psychosocial support. In the case of South Africa, the evidence above has shown that the main institutions are not in support of undocumented migrants, and they create a hostile environment for them. This has had the effect of worsening the vulnerabilities of undocumented migrants who could not openly seek help from churches, hospitals, and police stations among others. According to Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013), community social resilience can be viewed in the broader socio-political and economic context. In South Africa, the current social trends reinforce existing inequalities as the measures to support individuals during the pandemic continue to be exclusionary in nature.

4.6 Translocal social formations

Migrants remain a functional social unit with their families and friends in places of origin (de Haas, 2021). In this regard, translocal connections play a crucial part in resilience building for both migrants and their sending households through remittances. Further to this, the social networks established by Zimbabweans who had migrated to South Africa have been described as one of their survival strategies (Hlatshwayo and Wotela, 2017).

The narratives of respondents show that translocal social formations were not able to help that much because the conditions of the pandemic had affected everyone despite their occupation or social status. It follows therefore that translocal family network did not do much sustain their resilience because the pandemic rendered everyone even their traditionally reliable networks vulnerable as everything had almost halted due to the lockdown. This was confirmed by R4 who rhetorically inquired:

> *My brother, who do you think will give you money to sustain yourself and your dependents in these difficult circumstance? Everyone I can think of has been affected by this pandemic and are therefore they are preoccupied with trying to make sure their immediate families have food on the table. I badly need financial help, but I know I will not get it from family and friends because they are also struggling to take care of their own obligations.*

Translocal networks were severely weakened due to the lockdown restrictions hence many of the respondents had to now rely on faith-based organisations that were giving vulnerable people meals and food parcels. The lack of income meant that undocumented migrants could not accumulate assets and also, they could not participate in any form of collective action to lobby for some form of relief. This then meant that undocumented migrants had engage adaptive capacities in many forms of entrepreneurship to ensure they have an income to survive and also to support their families. The effects of the COVID-19 called for the need to adapt to the changes and restore well-being. This study noted that many undocumented migrants engaged welding, vending, carpentry, phone and gadgets repairs and hairdressing as some of the informal businesses that enabled them to raise an income to sustain themselves and be able to financially support their dependents.

4.7 Migrant entrepreneurship as a coping capacity under the COVID-19 conditions

There is a large literature that has shown how local entrepreneurship often in the informal economy has helped migrants to maintain livelihoods in South Africa (Crush et al, 2017; Mbatha and Koskimaki, 2021). Migrants open small businesses as vendors, hairdressers, mechanics, electricians, builders and others have been venturing into risky business that includes pirate taxis, illegal gold mining and smuggling cough mixtures, beer and banned cigarettes (Macheka, 2008). The above mentioned USAID definition of resilience as "the ability …to mitigate, adapt to, recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth" (USAID, 2012) is based on that all communities, even victims of disasters have absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities at their disposal to respond better to events that disrupt their lives, commonly known as shocks and stresses (Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013). The second is that in the event of a disaster, it is important to understand the various opportunities that are available to help them get back on their feet and be even in a better position than they were before the event. As defined by Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013 in the literature review, coping capacities relate to how people react to disasters while adaptive capacities refer to the ability to anticipate future hazards, and adjust one's lifestyles accordingly.

Social resilience has been perceived to be multi layered in that it refers to "the capacity of actors to access capitals in order to cope with and adjust to adverse conditions and search for and create options" (Obrist et al., 2010). In this connection, the researcher made an in-depth

inquiry into the strategies that are being used by migrants to respond to the negative effects of COVID-19. Given that all the respondents testified to having faced some adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was imperative to understand the measures that they are taking to respond to them and the outcomes thereof. This section presents the capacities each respondent had to adopt or rely on to survive under the conditions of the pandemic. In this regard, R1 reported that:

> *Since I was no longer working most of the time, I started to sell vegetables and fruits, but the business did not do well. Since I was working 2 days only at [anonymous restaurant], I had to look for another job that I could do during the other free days. I got a Char for 3 days that is part-time work as a domestic maid. Plus, I joined a Stokvel group with other Zimbabwean ladies. We make a monthly contribution like 500 Rands to buy groceries in bulk as ladies. It's cheap in that one since we go to buy the groceries in bulk at Box wholesale. We then share the groceries equally amongst the group members. Most of my groceries go to Zimbabwe to my family. Because of this pandemic, you can't afford to buy things in bulk alone like in the past.*

In this connection, R2 had this to say:

> *Before COVID-19, I had some savings which I used to buy this food trailer where I am now selling hotdogs and hamburgers. I bought it for 30 000 Rands. When I am not at the restaurant just like now, I am selling hotdogs and hamburgers and that 50 Rand that I make here makes a difference. It's better than waiting for an NGO or someone to help you. I can manage to feed myself through this business. But things are not good as they were before. Just that we are strong that's why we are still here.*

R3 further indicated that:

> *I am now self-employed. I am using the skills that I acquired at my former job here I can write for you signs for example at a price. People who want their vehicles branded here in Masiphumelele I do it for them. Plus, I assist my friend who is in the vending business when he is busy, and he gives me something as a token of appreciating my support. As you can see, I am based at his workstation. Through this, I know by end of the week l have an income which will help me to take care of my myself and my immediate needs.*

It's better because I no longer have to trouble my relatives asking for money to settle transactions of small things like electricity tokens. I understand that they also are facing financial challenges under these difficult times.

This confirmed that many undocumented migrants could not rely on their family networks for financial support as most of them were facing financial difficulties. Businesses had to close, some people were laid off and for other they had to go for months without receiving a salary hence they could not assist friends and family and others within their networks. However, they drew from coping capacities and "survival strategies" through developing businesses or working within the community to get by.

Some migrants also indicated that they had plans of engaging in entrepreneurship as they had to put up to the circumstances that were brought by the outbreak of the pandemic, R4 pointed out that:

I am just working that one day only. I was thinking if I find enough capital, I am going to start a small business.

R5 also shared his coping capacities noting that:

I am now selling boiled eggs here in Masi. I walk around with them here in Masiphumelele one costs 2.50 rand. Plus, my wife sells paraffin here at our house. Some of my friends who are still working usually connect me to part-time construction jobs at their workplaces. But now I am not getting anything- its winter and the construction business gets quiet.

To complement the above evidence, the researcher noticed some eggs on a 5-liter plastic container which the respondent was selling. Relative to the coping capacities, R6 highlighted that:

For now, I am just staying at home, and I can't do anything because even if want to start a business I don't have money to do so. Most of the money now goes to rent and to food you are left with nothing to start to business. Plus, people in Zimbabwe are expecting you to send money, groceries, or household property on a regular basis. You can't save

even save 500 Rands to start a business. I am just depending on my husband who is still working. He works in a restaurant, and they have also been affected by these lockdowns.

R7 also indicated her own set of capacities as she stated that:

During that hard lockdown we survived because we had some savings. Plus, we stopped eating for luxury like before we were now eating to survive. The plan was to make the stomach full only. We were eating one strong meal per day. We just living each day as it comes.

The above findings show that migrants had to adopt coping strategies in reaction to the circumstances bought by the pandemic. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic is something that happened when people least expected, there is ample evidence of reactive capacity as migrants were adjusting to the adverse effects of the pandemic. Narratives collected from undocumented migrants show that there are numerous challenges they face in their day to day lives affecting their general wellbeing. These challenges faced by undocumented migrants include harassment from the police, threats of deportation, inability to access health facilities, unemployment and in the event they are employed they suffer from unfair employment practises. The undocumented migrants cited formation of immigrant businesses as a prime coping capacity when they are in South Africa. This is mainly because they face huge challenges in getting meaningful jobs because they are classified as 'illegal'. The study established that the undocumented migrants resort to the selling of fruits and vegetables, vehicle repair, barbershops, motor panel beating, vending by roadsides and traffic lights as all these businesses require little capital. It was also established by this study that undocumented Zimbabwean migrants are also circumventing their vulnerabilities by venturing into cell phone repairs, illegal mining, selling of cooked food at market places, operating car wash ventures, and smuggling of local commodities as well as operating pirate taxis. It follows therefore that riding on social capital, undocumented migrants of Zimbabwean origin have been creating and capitalising on available economic opportunities in South Africa thereby facilitating transnational activities.

As was reported by Crush et al. (2015), Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town have been engaging in small businesses which created jobs and contributed to the economic sector of the country despite the fact they are prejudiced against and criminalised for not having the legal

status to run a business. What is key to note is that little attention has been given to how on migrant entrepreneurship relates with reactive and proactive capacity in the face of stress and shocks.

This study sought to establish the relationship between the negative effects of COVID-19 for undocumented migrants and migrant entrepreneurship. In this case, social resilience is perceived to be highly dependent on interactions between enabling factors and capacities. Through migrant entrepreneurship, this study found that there was no complete realisation of social resilience as the migrant entrepreneurship was disturbed by constant harassment by police officers as well as anti-migrant movements, which meant that from time to time they have to hide to protect their lives and small income generating ventures.

Evidently, transformative and adaptive capacities have been observed to remain elusive and most of the migrants indicated the desire to go back home. In as much as most of them seemed to be coping by way of getting income for food and other necessities, there is a lot of improvising with some migrants changing their diet while other had to go and live-in shacks so as to reduce expenses. The hardships are proving to be hard to overcome such that a majority of the migrants showed the desire to go back home to Zimbabwe as they felt they could make a better living than in South Africa. This can be said to conform the assertion by Peth and Sakdapolrak (2020:20) who argues that "the nexus between migration and resilience is blurred and contested." The COVID-19 pandemic affected undocumented migrants' access to income to the point where they were fighting for their own survival a scenario which is also affecting the lives of their dependency in limbo as they hold on to an expectation and promises of remittances from their bread winners in the diaspora (WHO, 2022).

4.8 Humanitarian support as adaptive and transformative capacities

In the face of all the challenges that were brought by the pandemic, the researcher then sought to understand if there was any humanitarian support given to undocumented migrants in South Africa and from whom. In the event that humanitarian support structures exist for undocumented migrants, this would be a significant step in making sure that there is transformative social resilience as these structures would inform and sustain social resilience in the event of future stress and shocks. It was apparent from the findings that some respondents

managed to receive some assistance from NGOs while others were not so lucky to get the same privilege. In connection to this, R1 reported that:

> *During the first lockdown, we got food parcels from NGOs. Some links have been forwarded on WhatsApp about food parcels and I just applied. Also, at church we were given food parcels. My aunty in the UK (United Kingdom) sent me money for rent during the first lockdown but it was just for one month.*

R6 also indicated that she managed to receive some food parcels but just once from NGOs. She stated that:

> *My former boss during the first three months of the lockdown gave me some money and some food parcels. But when the lockdowns continued to be increased, he stopped giving us something*.

While others had multiple sources of support, that is, the church relatives and employers, those who were retrenched attested to receiving no form of support whatsoever from their former employers. This was noted in the statement by R3 who stated that:

> *I didn't receive anything like a retrenchment package because l was employed on a temporary contract at [the sign shop] for 13 years. I was retrenched and given nothing. Such that the landlord of where we used to stay run out of patience with us and he had to evict us out of the house because we could not pay rent for a couple of months. We had to move from a brick house to a shack. Yes, we did receive some food parcels from NGOs l think for 3 months only. My greatest help was from my relatives especially those whose jobs were not affected by COVID-19.*

There is also evidence that some of the respondents that the interviewers spoke to did not receive any form of support whatsoever. 3 of the respondents that the researcher spoke to did not get assistance from government agencies of or humanitarian actors. R4 precisely indicated that, '*I did not get any assistance from anyone*'.

R5 also indicated that:

I registered for food parcels that were being provided by NGOs, but l did not receive anything. But my young brother used to receive some food parcel which he shared with me. Like when he was given 10 kgs of mealie meal, he would give me 5 kg. But personally, I never received anything. My wife at some point received some pampers for our child from one lady that knows me from Kumbulekaya burial (society). That is the only help I got. But I got nothing from that stuff that people were being told to register for. But some of my church mates and friends did assist us with small things which they saw we were lacking in the house when they visited us (mostly food). One of my friends also gave me 400 Rands to start a business of selling paraffin.

R7 also shared the same experiences as she stated that:

We saw other people receiving food stuff and cooked meals from NGOs, but many were denied as the support was said to not cover foreigners. They were certain people who were selected by the NGOs within our area to register all names. I did register through them, and personally got nothing. None of my relatives could help me because they were also not working. If you had not saved some money you could end up fighting with your landlord and they could evict you. If the landlord was person who does not understand. I knew people who were in that situation they were evicted from their homes because they do not pay rent.

The findings shows that the fact that all the undocumented migrants were affected profusely by the pandemic, there was a dire need to make sure that support is availed to the migrants. The measures taken to curb the pandemic were too drastic such that it forced undocumented migrants to adjust in real time, something that they were not capacitated to do. As such there was a dire need for support in the form of food, money, shelter, clothing, and other essential services to ensure their day-to-day survival. Evidence shows that the undocumented migrants were not afforded any form of support whatsoever by the South Africa government. The only respondents who attested to having received some form of support from formal local institutions are those who were being given packages by their employers, NGOs, and churches. However, this level of support was not sufficient to ensure the social resilience of the migrants as it was rather short lived. The support also seems to have been exclusionary in nature as some respondents indicated that they applied for it and could not get anything except from their own informal support networks that is relatives, friends, and neighbors. This support was largely

inadequate to cater for all the needs of the undocumented Zimbabwean living in South Africa. Some undocumented migrants were struggling to get a form of humanitarian support from formal organisations like churches and other civic organisations and thus had to rely on informal businesses and support from family and friends in their social networks. As such, it is a finding of this study that humanitarian support was largely inadequate to be able to build adaptive capacities for undocumented migrants such that they had to resort to other measures of making sure that they restore their wellbeing.

4.9 COVID-19 experience and future translocal resilience

One of the keys aims of the study was to establish lessons that undocumented migrants take from experiences such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the adjustments that they made to ensure that they are capacitated to deal with future risks and shocks. In this connection the researcher then went on to ask the respondents on their plans for the future taking into account the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was apparent that most of the respondents indicated the desire to go back to Zimbabweans they felt it would present better survival opportunities than being economically disadvantaged in a foreign land popularly referred to as return migration (Carling and Erdal, 2014). 5 respondents that were interviewed indicated a strong desire to return to Zimbabwe and they made the following remarks:

R1 indicated that.

> *I am planning to go back home. It's better to suffer at home than here. This COVID-19 situation is better when you are at home. At home, you will be staying at your family house no need to worry about things like rent and stuff. Home is best for now.*

R9 and R3 shared the desire to go back home stressing out that:

> *Since I have been here for a long time, it seems things are going down. Returning home seems to be the solution. There is no future here.*

The same sentiments were shared by R4 who stated that:

> *I don't think I will remain here for long. At first, I used to think things will change but it seems things are getting tougher here.*

In the same connection, R5 had this to say.

> *Life is now difficult l think it better we return home. I just wish to raise some money here then I return home to do a small business.*

The same feeling was shared by R6 who indicated that.

> *In the next 2 years going home will be the best. Even this year if I get the opportunity to go home it will be good. Because here there is nothing now. Things are now tough. Even the prices of food have increased.*

R 8 indicated that they are regretting the decision migrate, and R10 further stressed that given an opportunity to choose again, they would opt against migrating to South Africa because of the difficulty the migrant life has presented them.

On the other hand, there are other respondents who highlighted the desire to stay in South Africa as returning home would most likely make things worse for them.

> *If I go back home what can I do. It's better here- I can't spend a day without dollar. In Zimbabwe you can sleep two months without making that dollar because there are no jobs. Which company do you think needs a boilermaker? Its better here because I can make 100 or 200 Rand one day another day you can get anything, but you can't spend a week without a cent. Home is best, but I will go when the situation there is good.* -R7

Another respondent showed the desire to stay in South Africa as he stated that:

> *I am used to be here, and the truth is even if I go to Zimbabwe the same challenges we are facing here are also there in Zimbabwe. I would rather be here.* -R2

It is apparent from the above findings that the sampled migrants do not have high levels of adaptive and transformative capacities and thereby are a poorly positioned to be able to realise a significant level of resilience. In as much as the undocumented migrants have been noted to be taking measures to survive, the environment seems to have a lot of barriers and constraining

factors such that translocal social resilience impeded. The fact that a majority of the respondents are thinking of going back home is a major indication that even their coping capacities are too weak to get them to the desired level of wellbeing thus affecting their household in the place of origin.

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter the data collected through semi-structured interviews and observations with undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa has been presented. The themes employed began with the respondents' drivers of migration, how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected them, the humanitarian support that they have been given, their coping strategies and future plans in the context of the pandemic. The participants' views and experiences were then captured as these were critical in addressing the purpose of the research. These findings were further discussed and shows that undocumented migrants were affected severely by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study however found out that given the scant availability of support from humanitarian actors in the area, most undocumented migrants relied on coping capacities to ensure that they can generate some form of income. These capacities were central only to the point of making sure that they realise their own resilience. A majority of the research participants could not ensure adaptive and transformative capacity such that they were overly eager to go back home as they felt they are incapacitated to change things for the better.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This study sought to study how undocumented Zimbabwean migrants are coping with the increased socio-economic vulnerability posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The study assessed the kind of strategies they have in place, and what kind of capacities that they have or need in order to restore their level of wellbeing and ensure social resilience. There is growing emphasis in literature that undocumented migrants face a lot of vulnerabilities that impede social resilience. These vulnerabilities have been noted to be a result of the adverse effects of the COVID-19 which saw a serious disruption of livelihoods. Despite having ambitions and the burden to remit back home through translocal obligations, undocumented migrants find themselves subject to structures and systems that constrain them such that their coping capacities are rather limited.

In giving a background and context to the study, the thesis began by breaking down in the overview how undocumented migrants have been affected by the COVID-19 and how they have attempted to respond to these. The thesis also highlighted the impact of national response plans in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and how these have not only excluded undocumented migrants but also worsened the negative impact of the pandemic on undocumented migrants. Social resilience theory has been key to the understanding of migrant experiences and their responses to the pandemic.

The next chapter reviewed literature related to the purpose of the study. In establishing a background to the main purpose of the study, literature on the history of migration in Zimbabwe was presented to get an understanding of the processes that shape migration and also the motives thereof. This was in the effort to fully establish the translocal nature of the resilience that migration seeks to realise through a various form of exchange. The chapter also presented literature on the vulnerability as a result of being undocumented, shedding light on the various challenges that undocumented migrants face. The chapter further described transnationalism and translocal social resilience, as these are concepts that are embedded in international labor migration, a variant that this study focuses on. This is further complemented by the explanation of the study's theoretical framework.

Qualitative research methodology was used for this study and described in the third chapter of the thesis. The research paradigm, approach and design which shaped the research were also presented. The primary qualitative data collection tool employed was the semi-structured interviews and observation methods. The research sought to collect rich, descriptive data that would reflect participants' views experiences as undocumented migrants in the context of COVID-19. There was also the provision of the sampling strategy as well as the respondent selection criteria. The steps taken in the analysis of data was also presented as well as the ethical issues observed.

The data collected in the research was presented and discussed in the fourth chapter and was synthesized under key themes as gleaned from literature. As the focus of the study was undocumented migrants, most of the data collected was centered on their knowledge and experiences of the phenomenon under study. The data collection began by eliciting information the drivers of migration, how the COVID -19 pandemic has affected their wellbeing, how they have respondent to the challenges induced by the pandemic and the outcomes of such responses. The data collection then moved on to ascertaining the coping capacities in a bid to ensure translocal resilience of migration as a form of livelihood meant to improve the well-being of both migrants and the migrant sending households in place of origin. In this case, the chapter teased out the coping capacities that emerged in the study connecting them to the social resilience theory. The implications that these capacities have for translocal resilience was also established.

5.2 Summary of key findings

Based on findings discussed in chapter four, this section summarises the research findings, conclusions, and significance to theory and scholarship.

With regards to the processes that shape migration and the motives behind, the study's findings show that the main motivation for migration is to get better economic opportunities. This has been found to be perceived as a key determinant to improved wellbeing for both migrants and their household back home. In most cases, migration is facilitated by both the migrant and their families back home who send remittances once the migrant start to earn an income. In other words, the very facilitation of the migration process has been noted to be a collective process

either through the actual decision making or through resourcing the migration. In some cases, migrant connections in the destination country facilitates migration through offering information that then informs the decision to migrate, or they send money to finance the migration process. Upon arrival, relatives and friends in the host countries have been noted to facilitate settlement as well by providing accommodation until one is on their feet. Of importance on this finding is the fact that migration is characterised by a lot of expectations, and an innate drive and obligation to maintain transnational connectedness through various forms of exchange.

In relation to how migrants respond to COVID-19 induced challenges, it is apparent that a majority of the respondents indicated that they engage in small businesses. Vending is the key income generating activity that most migrants engage in, and this has its own limitation in terms of income generation. As such, the resultant effect of the coping mechanisms is that they just go as far as cushioning migrants such that they are able survive. In other words, there is little evidence to show that the small businesses that migrants engage in are resulting in the restoration of wellbeing and as a result, they foresee themselves returning back home. This put to question the sustainability of migration as a translocal livelihood resilience strategy.

In terms of coping capacities, what is evident in the study is that undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in the study area have managed to realise coping and adaptive capacities through making sure that they devise mechanisms to survive. However, the transformative capacity has and still remains a challenge for the undocumented migrants as they have not managed to adjust their livelihoods such that they are able to withstand the shocks and stress that they face. It is critical to note that whole some of the respondents indicated that they are unable to send money back home or even call because of shame, and a few indicated that they manage to send, though less frequently. Another dimension of the sustenance of translocal connectedness was witnessed in a situation where the migrant sending household sent money to cushion the migrant as the get desperate for income.

The study also sought to establish whether or not migrants managed are being included in humanitarian structures that cushions vulnerable people from a disaster. There is evidence that there is little to no support provided to Zimbabwean undocumented migrants in South Africa. Only a few respondents reported to having received some form of assistance, and this was only received once or twice. As such, there was a huge pressure on the undocumented migrants to

try and find ways of creating other avenues or income or support that would help them survive. As such, there has been little to no effort by the South African government to create structures that offers undocumented migrants humanitarian support. Undocumented migrants can be said to be conditioned to be vulnerable in as far as humanitarian support in concerned. The risk that they get through the lack of policies that support them is multi-dimensional as it also includes health and mental wellbeing concerns. Coping (and somewhat adaptive) capacities of the undocumented migrants ranged from starting small enterprises as electrical appliance technicians, selling vegetables, opening spaza shops as well as reducing expenditure on meat, oils, and other food items that they classified as luxuries due to the circumstances. It is therefore a finding of this study that there is need for more engagement and cooperation between stakeholders that include the South African government, civil society organisations and community networks coming together to ensure transformative capacity can be achieved. The current status were many people are in the country without the legal documents prevents the attainment of transformative capacities of undocumented migrants.

5.3 Conclusion of the results

This section sketches out the conclusions arising from this study. To appreciate these conclusions, it is important to summaries the major conclusions and then what scholars say about undocumented migrants in the COVID-19 context.

- In respect to the drivers of international migration, the study reiterates the observations in literature that Zimbabweans are largely migrating to South Africa is the search for better economic opportunities. This confirms the migration trends in literature that migration is mostly marked by the movement from poor to better economies as a livelihood strategy. The study is also in agreement with observations in literature that international migration is characterised by expectations for remittances. As such, the migrants themselves are obliged to remit and fulfill an expectation.
- As regards vulnerabilities around undocumented migrants the study confirms what is in literature that undocumented migrants are highly vulnerable. They have an “illegal” status and do not have entitlements to a lot of social, health and economic services. This tends to make their survival compromised as they are left with a few opportunities for income generation. Such socioeconomic vulnerability has a negative impact on their connectedness with their places of origin through remittances. This has been noted to call for coping capacities and the study adopts the social resilience theory which has

been used in migration studies before but focusing on relatively significant migration concerns. These vulnerabilities have always existed for undocumented migrants, but they have been noted to be worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. This was marked by loss of jobs, the closure of open spaces where some migrants used to work and the reduction in salary. As such, this affected the coping capacities of migrants and again, this is in agreement with observations by other scholars.

- There is evidence that every migrant interviewed in this study seemed to have an idea of what is needed to make their lives better, but the environment just was not enabling for them to fully embrace the most effective options. As such, they ended up resorting to options that seem rather inadequate to see them realise the much-needed resilience for them and their households back home. Some of these strategies includes migrant entrepreneurship by way of vending and skilled labor. While some studies have looked at migrant entrepreneurship before, there was a focus on how this has been affected by repressive policies and xenophobic tendencies. Literature also looks at migrant entrepreneurship and the contribution that it makes to the economies of the host country. However, there is little focus migrant entrepreneurship as a strategy to ensure translocal resilience and reduce the vulnerability of undocumented migrants. What this study flags out as one of the important additions to literature is the linkage between migrant entrepreneurship and translocal resilience in the context of COVID-19.

5.4 Recommendations

This thesis further confirms the vulnerabilities of undocumented migrants from Zimbabwean who are in South Africa. Recommendations are made based on finding from the study:

- There is need for government, faith-based organisations and churches, and civil society organisations to further engage in arrangements that would help to ensure that undocumented migrants have access humanitarian and other essential support, in the event that their wellbeing and survival is at risk. The South African government needs to ensure that humanitarian assistance is accessible to all human being who are in need despite their legal status in the country. This will help ensure that more organisations come out to assist undocumented migrants in times of crises.
- There is need to lobby for a situation where factors that are causing undocumented migrants are addressed in Zimbabwe. This study established that the main reason why

Zimbabweans are flocking to South Africa is in search of better economic fortunes so that they earn a decent life. It follows therefore that South Africa must play a leading role in trying to assist Zimbabwe to create legal and socio-political conditions that help the country to attract foreign direct invest which will create decent jobs.

- The government of South Africa and possibly NGOs should ensure the creation of associations that facilitate the integration of migrants abroad and facilitation of small businesses and employment. This will go a long way in reducing the vulnerability that is associated with extortion from the police, criminal gangs as well as reduce exploitation and unfair labour practises when undocumented migrants find employment.
- Civil society organisations, humanitarian community and developments actors must consider mediation that is sensitive to undocumented migrants existing coping and adaptative capacities. Through collaborating with organisations that undocumented migrants trust like faith -based organisations and with the local communities where undocumented migrants live. The aim of the interventions is not to create new structures but rather develop existing social networks and solidarity efforts to increase access to financial support and basic social and health services.
- Further research is needed into the challenges of 'migrant illegality' and the way that permit system influence the ability to access assets or adaptive capacities.
- There is need to put in place policies that protects small businesses for undocumented migrant entrepreneurs. In this case, they should be given legal right of protection from looting, which will go a long way in ensuring that they are registered and contribute especially to the township economy.
- Implement specific measures and budgets to prevent and address discrimination and stigmatization in COVID-19 response plans. These must include efforts to prevent violence and hate crimes against migrants and their groups based on nationality or ethnicity.
- South Africa must also consider introducing permits for traders who want to enter and exit their country on a more regular basis. This will assist many undocumented migrants many of whom confessed that they will rather establish their businesses back home if an opportunity presents itself. Most of the undocumented migrants send their remittances through middlemen and they would welcome the opportunity to be able to cross the border with relative ease to buy merchandise for resale at home.

- The South African government must ensure that in times of a disaster all the vulnerable people living within their borders must be given help they need in order to survive. Social protection measure must be afforded to all vulnerable people despite their legal status. Covid has shown that to effectively manage a disaster all communities need to be included and cooperate with the government's efforts. Leaving behind a certain sector of the society will only make the situation worse for everybody.

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