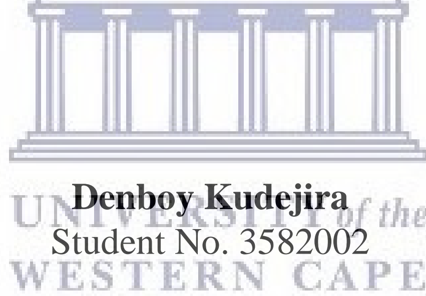
MOVEMENT OF ZIMBABWEAN IMMIGRANTS INTO, WITHIN AND OUT OF THE FARM LABOUR MARKET IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

A full thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MPhil (Research) in Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies at the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Western Cape.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents findings from ethnographic research conducted over a period of 17 months in the Blouberg and Molemole local municipalities of Capricorn District in Limpopo province with the aim of exploring mobility patterns of Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the South African farm labour market, and understanding how these movements are linked to access to food and other livelihood opportunities. Limpopo serves both as a transit province for Zimbabweans who wish to proceed further south to other provinces of South Africa and a destination for irregular migrants who live and work on white-owned commercial farms. Although constrained mobility, which results from their illegality and remoteness of farms from public services, limit their access to sources of food, irregular Zimbabwean migrants in Blouberg-Molemole area perceive that moving into South African farm labour has improved their food security and livelihood statuses. The South Africa farm labour market provides opportunities to earn income, and enables them to make long term investments in their families back home above immediate individual food security needs. Horizontal and vertical social networks established among Zimbabwean migrants in the Blouberg-Molemole area do not only serve the purpose of facilitating information sharing, but are also forms of social capital on which individual members depend on for their food security and livelihood needs.

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Key words

South Africa, Limpopo, Commercial Farms, Zimbabwean Farmworkers, Social networks, Food security

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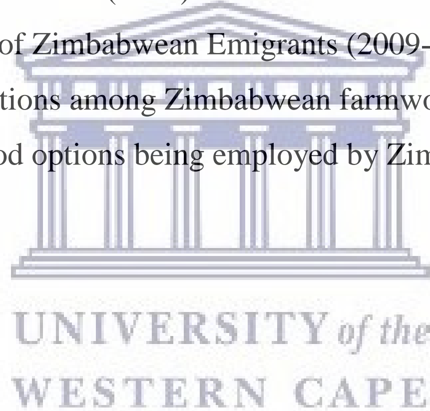
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List of Acronyms

BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DZP	Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ETDs	Emergency Travel Documents
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ISALS	Internal Saving and Lending Schemes
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LFCLS	Labour Force and Child Labour Survey
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAD	Native Affairs Department
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAMP	Southern African Migration Programme
TLCs	Transitional Local Councils
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WFP	World Food Programme
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
Zimstat	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
ZSP	Zimbabwe Special Dispensation Permit

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This thesis presents findings from an ethnographic study exploring patterns of movement of Zimbabwean migrants into, within, and out of the South African farm labour market. The aim of this thesis is to advance the understanding of how these patterns of movements are linked to access to food and other livelihood opportunities. Field work for the research was conducted in two local municipalities, Blouberg and Molemole (henceforth referred to as Blouberg-Molemole area) of Capricorn District municipality in the centre of Limpopo Province. Arguments in the thesis consider the contribution that labour migrancy into South African farms (both legal and irregular) has helped to alleviate a seemingly socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe.

Limpopo province, which borders Zimbabwe to the south, boasts of abundant agricultural land which makes it one of South Africa's prime agricultural regions. Because of its proximity to the Zimbabwean border Limpopo serves as both a transit route for legal and illegal Zimbabwean migrants who pass through to seek employment in Southward provinces, and a receiving province for those working and seeking employment in the border farms. Notwithstanding the legal and geographical hurdles that many face, migration into South Africa has profound effects on both short term and long-term livelihood prospects for most Zimbabweans. Because of the relatively stable economy compared to that of Zimbabwe, South Africa is considered a "viable destination option and a land of money-making opportunities for the thousands of candidates to migration" (Tati, 2008, p. 439), and the farm labour market is believed to have absorbed (and continues to do so) a significant proportion of Zimbabweans who are working and living in South Africa on irregular basis (Hall, 2013; Visser & Ferrer, 2015; IOM, 2009; Kritzinger, et al., 2004).

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The influx of Zimbabwean migrants into the South Africa farm labour market, and particularly on commercial farms in the Limpopo province, has raised important policy and research questions, with researchers and human rights organizations wanting to understand their migration patterns, their living and working conditions and the extent to which they are protected by South African labour legislation (e.g. Crush & Tawodzera (2016), Visser & Ferrer (2015) and Human Rights Watch (2006)). Academics largely agree that migrant farmworkers

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belong to a particularly vulnerable group which is subjected to ill treatment by their employers and other South Africans (HRW, 2006; Bloch, 2008; Crush & Tevera, 2010; Wisborg, et al., 2013). An issue that has not been adequately addressed, and still needs to be investigated further, is the reason why despite this ill treatment, Zimbabwean migrants continue to flood white commercial farms and the entry routes that they use. While Kok et.al. (2006) noted by 1966, between 50 000 and 75 000 black Rhodesians were believed to be employed on white owned farms and on mines in South Africa, the numbers have increased dramatically over the years. It is estimated that in Limpopo alone, white owned commercial farms employ 15,000 to 20,000 Zimbabweans, making up between 70% to 80% of the total population of farmworkers in the province (Rutherford & Addison, 2007; Hall, 2013). The ways in which older patterns of migration have influenced later ones are also still not well enough understood (Crush, et al., 2017, p. 2).

Ethnographic studies by Maxim Bolt and Addison Lincoln have attempted to define and explain social-cultural relations and processes that exist among Zimbabwean farmworkers, and described the paternalistic nature of the farm labour regime in Limpopo (Addison, 2014; Bolt, 2015). Additional research is however still needed to explain the mobility patterns of Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market in Limpopo province. While the historical existence of family and community relations across territorial boundaries, and their roles in facilitating trade and employment are well documented, it is paramount to investigate the functionality of these relations within the context of contemporary mobility patterns of Zimbabwean migrants within the South African farm labour market. An interrogation of how such relations facilitate entry into, within or out of the farms, or how Zimbabwean farmworkers use these relations to access food and other livelihood opportunities, can deepen our understanding of the current dynamic nature of the South African farm labour market.

The research is premised on two core objectives; first, to understand the patterns of mobility of Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market; and second, to explain how these patterns of mobility influence undocumented Zimbabwean migrants' access to food and other livelihood opportunities. Key questions that the research seeks to answer are;

(a) How do Zimbabwean migrants find work on commercial farms in Limpopo?

(b) What is the role of social capital in the movement of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market?

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(c) How relevant are social networks among Zimbabweans in Limpopo in facilitating undocumented migrants' access to employment, food and other livelihood opportunities?

In developing arguments in this thesis, I employ the social capital conceptual framework with the aid of the network theory of migration. The concept of social capital is useful when analysing labour market inequalities and to understand "the social empowerment of individuals or social groups and defining the level of individuals' participation in the social sphere" (p. 104). This concept has been used to demonstrate how family or community membership aids migration. For instance, Chipo Hungwe's work in Tembisa and Kempton Park in Johannesburg drew from the social capital framework to analyse the role of family and religious networks as sources of social capital in facilitating the migration and social integration of Zimbabwean migrants (Hungwe, 2015, p. 121). The concept is equally applicable to a study which seeks to understand aspects of the social context, mobility patterns and survival tactics of undocumented Zimbabwean farmworkers.

The network theory of migration has its origins in sociology and anthropology. It explains how migrants create and maintain social ties that perpetuate mobility even when there are physical and legislative barriers (Kurekova, 2011; Haug, 2008). The theory regards migration as a path-dependent process in which later migrant flows are influenced by interpersonal relations that have been developed and maintained with earlier migrants (Castles, et al., 2014). According to Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana (2016), "these networks reduce the costs and risks of movement of people, and increase the expected net returns of migration" (p. 24).The theory will help understanding the nature of social ties that exist among Zimbabwean migrants within and out of the farm labour market in Limpopo, and to interrogate how farmworkers use these networks to access employment, food and other livelihood opportunities.

The farm labour market in Limpopo is made up of complex systems and processes, including beliefs, attitudes and cultural behaviours which can only be better understood if one spends time interacting with individuals within these contexts. As such, an ethnographic approach was the best research technique that could be could be employed for gathering data to answer the above research questions succinctly. As noted by Ejimabo (2015), the approach "allows researchers to examine the patterns of meaning which emerge from the data collected from a selected group of participants in any given study" (p. 361). Through interacting with farmworkers in their own settings, and drawing from secondary data sources (including

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academic publications, reports from international non-governmental organizations and South African government agencies), the approach allowed me to construct a well framed picture of the social contexts, processes and systems that define Zimbabwean migrants' movement within, and out of the farm labour market in Limpopo. The fieldwork was spread over a period of 17 months, from January 2016 to May 2017 and within this period, I conducted a total of four repeated field visits, each lasting for two weeks. During the course of these visits, I interviewed 51 Zimbabwean farmworkers, 5 Zimbabweans who have moved out of the farm labour market and 6 Zimbabwean professionals living and working in the Blouberg-Molemole. In designing the research, my initial intention was to get onto the farm compounds so that besides interviewing the farmworkers, I could also observe their living and working conditions. However, I could not get permission by the farmers to get into the compounds and as a result I adjusted my research approach. Instead of getting onto the farms, I resorted to looking for farmworkers in public and social places where farmworkers gather after work or during the weekends. This became important to me as it added a layer of analysis to understanding the politics around entry onto farm compounds and what this means to the farmworkers.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The next chapter provides an overview of the background literature which informed the focus of my study, and in particular, provided a basis for refining the research questions. The chapter reviews literature on global debates about labour migrancy and livelihoods and labour movement between South Africa and Zimbabwe. It also presents a discussion of the political economy of migration which led to commercials farms in Limpopo being assigned exemption zone statuses. Lastly, the chapter will present literature on the connection between migration and food security.

In chapter 3, I describe the approach that I used during the research. The chapter presents the general and specific questions that the research aimed to answer, and provide details of the ethnographic research approach which was used, including justification for the research and its limitations. The last section of the chapter explains how ethical issues were considered during the research.

Chapter 4 begins with a socio-economic profile of the Limpopo province and a brief description of the study area. This includes an analysis of the development status of Limpopo, its political economy and the history of the border zone, and labour migrancy over time.

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Chapter 5 introduces some empirical findings from my fieldwork. It describes the factors that influence Zimbabweans to seek employment on the farms and the entry routes that they use. It also presents Zimbabwean farmworkers' individual experiences and stories as they negotiate their way into the South African farm labour market.

Chapter 6 offers a description of the food environments on commercial farms within the study area with the aim of understanding how access to food is influenced by architecture of existing social networks. In addition, the chapter demonstrates how access to food and other livelihood opportunities is linked to individual's social capital and networks.

In Chapter 7 I provide a detailed analysis of the research findings and draw conclusions from them. I assess whether the results confirm, or not, my original expectations. I also reflect on limitations in my study approach and discuss the implications of these limitations based on the conclusions that I draw. By bringing together findings and arguments developed in the paper, I suggest recommendations on directions for future inquiry.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

To begin this chapter, I will present the theoretical underpinnings on which this thesis is based. Specifically, I will present a discussion on the applicability of the concept of social capital and the network theory of migration in studying the movement of farmworkers into, within and out of the farm labour market. This will be followed by a review of the literature on global debates about labour migrancy and its connection to food security and livelihood outcomes, and then a discussion on the historical political economy of migration in Southern Africa. This includes a review of literature on the architecture of the South African farm labour market, and most importantly, the role that migrant labour has played in sustaining the South African's agriculture sector. The chapter concludes by pointing out some of the significant gaps in literature and knowledge that this thesis intends to address.

2.2 Theoretical foundations of the research

This thesis draws from the theories of social capital and migration networking. These two theories are interlinked and they both emerge from the field of sociology. While they are broad, my discussion focuses on aspects of these theories that enables the understanding of the architecture of migration patterns, including; (i) the efficacy of transnational networks in facilitating migration and finding work; and (ii) the way in which social groups are created among individuals in migrant destinations and how these groups enable interdependence, thus enhancing the food security and livelihoods of individual migrants. The sections below provide a detailed description of the two theories.

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Social Capital Concept

There is still no agreed definition of the concept of social capital, and its effects are disputed. The root of the controversy, according to Alejandro Portes, is because the concept was imported to other social sciences and into the public discourse from sociology (2000, p. 1). Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, anthropologist and one of the early proponents of the concept, conceptualized social capital as a form of capital which is realised when people intentionally construct relations for the value that they would generate later. Hence to him, social capital is acquired through investment of some material resources, and possessing some cultural knowledge that enable individuals to cultivate and maintain relations with others (Portes, 2000; Carrasco & Bilal, 2016). From Bourdieu's perspective, social capital ought to

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be owned and invested. “This ownership shape class relations in society and allowed for further acquisition of more social capital, reproducing the exiting class structure” (Carrasco & Bilal, 2016, p. 128).On the other hand, James Coleman differed with Bourdieu; he emphasized the importance of community ties – social capital as a form of primordial social ties guaranteeing the observance of norms (Carrasco & Bilal, 2016; Portes, 2000, p. 2). Yet for Portes, conceptualization of the term itself is problematic; according to him, “a subtle transition took place as the concept was exported into other disciplines where social capital became an attribute of the community itself" (Portes, p. 3). The concept of social capital has however been refined over the years. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides a more simplified definition of social capital as a formation of networks of shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups”[1]. Beresnevièiûtë’s emphasis that it is a construct of individual and group relations which are anchored on trust and shared values (2003, p. 104) as well as Lafferty et.al.’s (2016, p. 29) description of social capital as “the nature and extent of people's connectedness to their communities” (p. 29). According to Nan Lin (1999), the importance of social capital is that it reinforces group identity and recognition. Lin further argues that, “[b]eing assured and recognized of one's worthiness as an individual and a member of a social group sharing similar interests and resources not only provides emotional support but also public acknowledgment of one's claim to certain resources” (p. 31).

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Dolfsma and Dannreuther (2003)’s categorization of social capital into two forms, i.e. ‘bonding social capital’ and ‘bridging social capital’, makes the concept useful to the study of groups and labour market inequalities, and indeed to understand the nature of dependence or interdependence of individuals that make social groups. In recent years, researchers have adopted the concept of social capital in the study of labour migrancy; for instance, Douglas Massey and María Aysa-Lastra used it in a research which concluded that both individual social capital and community social capital operate to promote and sustain international migration from Latin America trips to the United States (2011). The concept of social capital was also employed by Julie Hotchkiss and Anilhis Rupasingha (2018) to determine how individual social capital, relative to community social capital, affects individual migration decisions. It was also used by Hungwe to analyse the role of family and religious networks as sources of social capital in facilitating the migration and social integration of Zimbabwean migrants in

[1] https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3560

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South Africa (Hungwe, 2015). Given its usefulness to the social sciences research (Portes, 2000), the concept is being used in this thesis to generate useful arguments about the nature of migrancy of Zimbabweans into the South African farm labour market. This will be complimented by employing the network theory of migration discussed in the section that follows.

Network theory of migration

The network theory has extensively been used to explain how migrants create and maintain social ties that facilitate international migration (Kurekova, 2011; Haug, 2008). It is assumes that "migrants are constantly building new ties in new places as well as negotiating existing long distance ties" (Ryan & D'Angelo, 2017, p. 148), and as discussed in my introductory chapter, it regards migration as a path-dependent process in which later migrant flows are influenced by interpersonal relations that have been developed and maintained over time (Castles, et al., 2014).

According to Russel King (2012), "migration networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, non-migrants and former migrants in webs of kinship, friendship and shared origin. They can be considered a form of social capital stretched across migrant space, and therefore facilitate the likelihood of international movement because they provide information which lowers the costs and risks of migration" (p. 21). He further provides three advantages of using the network theory in the study of migration, which are; (a) it helps to explain dynamics of differential migration; (b) it allows for the prediction of future migration; and (c) it resolves theoretical distinction between the causes of migration in time and space (ibid). Kyle Davis and his team for instance, used the network theory to conduct a time-series analysis of global migration trends. From their work they found that "global human migration network became more interconnected during the latter half of the twentieth century and that migrant destination choice partly reflects colonial and postcolonial histories, language, religion, and distances" (Davis, et al., 2013, p. 1). Therefore, employing network theory does not only help one to understand the nature of social ties that exist among migrants, but it also helps to understand how the formation and nature of these networks have evolved over time. The discernible connection between the social capital and social networks which King (2012) highlighted makes it sensible to apply the two theories in the study of Zimbabwean farmworkers in Limpopo. Having discussed the theoretical foundations of this thesis, I now move on to discuss

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international migration trends. I will start by giving a global picture of migration flows before zeroing down to the Southern Africa region.

2.3 International migration flows – The global and regional picture

International migration is not a new phenomenon; it has however changed in extent and nature over time. Over the years, there has been a noticeable increase in the stock of international migrants. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of international migrants increased from 75 million in 1965, to 84 million by 1975, 105 million by 1985, and 150 million in 2000 (IOM, 2000, p. 5). By 2017, the population of international migrants was approximately 258 million (UNDESA, 2017, p. 1), up from approximately 244 million who were there in 2015 (IOM, 2017, p. 2). According to the World Bank, "two-thirds of the world's immigrants reside in North America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and high-income countries of the Middle East and North Africa [while] East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Sub-Saharan Africa … host only 15 percent of global migrants" (World Bank, 2018, p. 6). While statistics of migrant labour are scanty, it is estimated that in 2013, 150 million international migrants (65%) were in the labour forces of the destination countries (Martin, 2016), and as of 2003, the largest number of international migrant (about 106.8. million or 71.1%) were engaged in services while manufacturing and agriculture sectors accounted for 26.7 million (17.8%) and 16.7 million (11.1%) respectively (IOM, 2017). These statistics show the fluidity and non-static nature of global migration.

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In Southern Africa, cross-border labour migration is well established. It is mostly an intraregional phenomenon (Gonzalez-Garcia, et al., 2016), and significant regional movements date back to the pre-colonial era (Crush, et al., 2005). People have traditionally moved between countries "in response to political and economic pressures" (Wilson, 1976, p. 451), and in search of work and other livelihood opportunities (IOM, 2017). With the coming of the settler colonial regime, international migration became "the single most important factor tying together all of the various colonies and countries of the sub-continent into a single regional labour market" (DHA, 2017, p. 8). Colonial capital accumulation in Southern Africa was built on a discriminatory migrancy system which depended on labour exportation "in exchange for currency through remittances" (Segatti & Landau, 2011, p. 25).

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There are no reliable estimates on the current migrant stock in the region, but it is estimated that there were at least 4 million migrants in 2013, excluding 'irregular migrants'[2]. The definition of an 'irregular migrant' is broad, and the term can be interchanged with clandestine, illegal or undocumented migrant, meaning someone who "infringes a country's admission rules and any other person not authorized to remain in the host country" (IOM, 2004, p. 34). Jonathan Crush and Vincent Williams (2010) further provided a simplified typological representation of irregular migration **(Table 1)** which "distinguishes between lawful and unlawful entry to a country; and (b) lawful and unlawful residence in a country" (p. 20).

Table 1: Typologies of irregular migration

Typology of Irregular Migration				
	1. Entry lawful; Stay lawful	2. Entry lawful; Stay Unlawful	3. Entry Unlawful; Stay Lawful	4. Entry Unlawful; Stay Unlawful
No. of Migrants	• Work permit holders • Mine/Farming contracts	• Retrenched workers who remain working in different sector • Overstayers	• Forced migrants (refugees) • Immigration amnesty beneficiaries	• Border jumpers • False documents • Trafficked
No. working legally	• Contravening work permit conditions • Holding valid visitors permit	• Working in different sector • Expired work permits	• Some forced migrants (refugees)	• Border Jumpers • False documents • Trafficked

Source: Crush and Williams (2010, p. 20)

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The typology above is useful in understanding the context of irregular Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. According to Ramathetje and Mtapuri (2014), some Zimbabweans come into South Africa with travel documents but become illegal due to overstaying when their travel documents expire. Others fraudulently enter the country without any form of travel documentation. In addition, Hammerstad (2011) found that other illegal Zimbabwean migrants obtain fraudulent South Africa identity papers with the assistance of corrupt officials within the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Anecdotal evidence shows that Zimbabweans migrant who enter South Africa illegally are largely semi-skilled or unskilled and many of them end up entering the farm labour market.

[2] https://www.iom.int/southern-africa

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Unfortunately, no attempts have been made (partly because it is extremely difficult) to estimate the number of migrants in the Southern Africa region who fall within each category. One striking feature of international migration within the Southern Africa region which makes it difficult to estimate migrant stock is that unlike other regions across the world, migration in the sub-region has had an oscillating non-settled nature (Wilson, 1976, p. 2). Segatti & Landau (2011) point out that "because of the vast numbers of [irregular] migrants, actual migration flows are not captured in migration statistics" (p. 12). Adepoju laments that the challenge of clandestine migration will continue to persist due to lack of employment opportunities for millions of people who get into the labour market annually (2001, p. 45).

South Africa, as an economic hub of the Southern Africa region, has served as a major recipient of migrants over the years. However, as Reed (2012) pointed out, "because of the paucity of good life-course studies, and the apartheid government's censoring of data about the black population, existing knowledge about historical patterns of black migration within South Africa is incomplete at best" (p. 72). The 2011 national census suggests that approximately 3.3 per cent (about 2.1 million) of South Africa's 51,7 million population are migrants (DHA, 2017). However, these official census statistics do not include migrants who have entered the country clandestinely. The simplified 'irregular migration typology' presented by Crush and Williams does not only help to portray complexities associated with estimating number of cross border migrants with precision, but it also sets the basis for investigating patterns of migration as well as inherent behaviours and attitudes of Zimbabwean migrants working on commercial farms in South Africa.

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2.4 Linkages between labour migrancy and food security outcomes

Major bodies of literature acknowledge the link between cross-border migration and food security outcomes of migrants and their families. Although the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) noted that "households consider migration as a strategy to improve their livelihood, minimize their risks and diversify their income sources" (FAO, 2017, p. 1), there are divergent views on the nature of the food security-migration nexus. On one hand, some scholars (e.g. Choithani (2017)) believe that labour migration equips households with improved purchasing power, "and remittances contribute positively to household food security" (p. 192) while others, like Craven and Gartaula (2015), found that "changes associated with large-scale out-migration have the potential to make the agricultural sector at origin more vulnerable, unproductive, unsustainable or unattractive, leaving a longer-term

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impact on food security" (p. 455). According to Crush and Caesar (2017), the link between migration and food security has not been critically investigated – studies have focused much on the remittances discourse, and "neglected [the] question of the relationship between migration and food security in migrant destinations" (p. 10). A remittance-based analysis of the role of international labour migrancy on food security is inadequate as it tends to ignore the food security situation of the remitting family members. Investigating the food security situation of the remitting workers themselves therefore provides a more genuine and clearer picture to understand the migration-food security nexus.

In his article entitled 'Linking Food Security, Migration and Development', Crush (2013) further argues that the assertion that remittances contribute positively to household food security might be misleading, as it creates an impression that household use remittances to purchase sufficient food, and yet ignores the fact that labour migrancy creates a void in the supply of productive labour to the family of the migrant. Crush's claims point to some significant gaps in literature. He points out that, "the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy since 2000 has pushed hundreds of thousands of desperate food-insecure people out of the country. The meltdown has affected the poor but has also ravaged the urban middle-class leaving migration as the main exit option" (p. 71). This indicates class differentiation among migrants – the poor, semi-skilled and skilled, and yet no studies have been conducted to show how livelihood and food security outcomes of migration manifest among the various migrants classifications. In other words, the question which still needs to be answered is, 'are the livelihood and food security outcomes of migration different for different social classes?' Crush observes that scholarly evidence on the nexus between migration and food security is still patchy, and as a consequence, the food security agendas of international organisations and states fail to incorporate the reality of internal and international migration (Crush, 2013). Zimbabwean farmworkers form a significant proportion of the migrant stock in South Africa, therefore understanding their livelihoods and food security situation would unpack some hidden facts about the nexus between migration and food security. An important aspect of this thesis is to understand the contribution of forms of social capital and networks established on, and beyond the farms in enabling Zimbabwean farmworkers in to access food and other livelihood opportunities. The propensity to move is determined by their food security situation. The following sections therefore provide key highlights of how the food environments on South African commercial farms are structured. This sets the foundation for my discussion on the role

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of social capital and networks among Zimbabweans (both within and out of the farm labour market) in facilitating farmworkers' access to food and livelihood opportunities.

2.5 Food environments on commercial farms

According to Swinburn et .al (2014), food environments 'are the collective physical, economic, policy and socio-cultural surroundings, opportunities and conditions that influence people's food and beverage choices and nutritional status' (p. 3). The physical dimensions of food environment describe availability, quality and convenience; economic dimension measures food affordability while policy and socio-cultural dimensions describe fiscal regulations or laws governing food and food desirability (individual attitude, norms and values) respectively (Herforth & Ahmed, 2015; Claasen, et al., 2016). Previous research identified food availability and accessibility as important descriptive determinants of the living and working conditions of farmworkers (Bolt, 2015; Kleinbooi, 2013; Kruger, et al., 2005; Ramathetje & Mtapuri, 2014; Rutherford, 2008). An overview of the nature and structure of food environments would therefore offer an opportunity to comprehensively explaining mobility patterns of migrant farmworkers into, within and out of the farm labour market.

The concept of food environment helps to describe pathways that people use to access food within the constraints of the environments where they live, work and purchase food (Kroll, 2016). With its strong geographic emphasis, it also provides a useful lens through which to consider farm workers' food security status. It allows for an elaborate understanding of' "… the nature and extent of food insecurity, the determinants of food insecurity … as well as the connections between the formal and informal food systems" (Tawodzera, 2016, p. 1).

There is limited literature about the food environments on South African commercial farms. Available bodies of literature have focused much on urban food environments (Crush, 2012; Kroll, 2016; Crush & Tawodzera, 2016; Makina, 2007), a narrative which do not apply to the situation on the farms. Bolt (2015) and the Human Rights Watch (2006), provide scanty evidence of the physical components of the food environments (mostly limited access due to long distance from grocery shops) while Tawodzera (2016)'s attempt to present food geographies in rural South Africa falls short of explaining the structure of food environments on commercial farms. Because of the limited literature, it is difficult to describe with precision the nature of food environments that exist on commercial farms in South Africa, and to understand how these food environments are linked to the livelihoods of migrant workers. This

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thesis begins the work of closing the stated literature gaps by providing an insight into the food environments that exist on commercial farms and explaining how these are linked to mobility patterns of Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the South African farm labour market.

2.6 Livelihood diversification among migrant farm workers

Given the low wages which are associated with farm work (Kleinbooi, 2013; Lekunze, et al., 2016; HRW, 2006), livelihoods diversification has been identified as a critical anchor for supplementing incomes among poor and vulnerable households, including farmworkers (Bolt, 2015; Tawodzera, 2016). An important component of this section is therefore to review literature on the various modes of livelihoods diversification among farmworkers as a preface to explaining the situation of Zimbabwean migrants within the farm labour market.

Livelihood diversification is defined as a process whereby individuals or families increase the range of their means of living through constructing an assortment of actions and social sustenance capabilities for survival (Padilha & Hoff, 2011; Alemu, 2012). It is a strategy that has long been practised to cushion households against climatic and other shocks or as a complement to existing resources (Hussein & Nelson, 1998; Asfaw, et al., 2015; Ellis & Allison, 2004). The process includes pursuing alternative options to generate supplementary means of living in addition to the mainstream source of livelihood, and it involves production of subsidiary goods and/or services, the sale of one's labour to obtain supplementary income, self-employment, or other strategies undertaken to reduce risk (Israr, et al., 2014).

Alemu (2012) grouped the motivation for livelihood diversification into two broad categories – 'ex ante' (push factors such as minimisation of risks, liquidity constraints, labour, land, and seasonality) and 'ex post' (strategies based on comparative advantage in non-farm work e.g. proximity to urban areas with the potential to create non-farm employment opportunities). These categories are important in understanding the nature of, and motivation for livelihood diversification, among Zimbabwean migrants working on commercial farms in South Africa.

As pointed out by Warren (2002), several conditions determine farmworkers' behaviour to diversify livelihood options, including, (a) assets availability (e.g. labour, education, access to market or employment opportunities); (b) maximization of return per unit of labour - for instance, seasonality of farm labour may lead to a cyclical shift in time allocation from on-farm to off-farm sources of revenue; (c) opportunities – such as personal contacts play an important

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role in pulling farm workers towards livelihood diversification; and (d) identity and vision of the future - individual identity and vision of the future, for example, intergenerational strategies, savings and career plans, might also shape diversification decisions. Researchers have observed a wide range of livelihood diversification activities being adopted by Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers in South Africa (Wisborg, et al., 2013; Zaheera, 2012; Bolt, 2015; Kleinbooi, 2013).

It is important to explore livelihood diversification strategies that Zimbabweans working and living on commercial farms in South Africa. This helps to further describe the food environments that exist on the farms, and would enable me to do a detailed analysis of available livelihood options that individual farm workers pursue, including a deep analysis of how these relate to forms of social capital and social networks that exist, and critique how these options motivate migrant workers to stay on the farm, push them to other farms or out of the farm labour market. As a preface to the discussion on the movement of Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the South African farm labour market, the following sections provide a detailed historical account of migration trends that have shaped the dynamics and configuration of present day migrant labour on the farms. This includes a discussion on apartheid migrant labour recruitment and labour regulation systems as well as presentation of a sequence of events that have led to the current situation where debates about farm labour in South Africa are consider not complete without the mention of Zimbabwean migrants.

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2.7 Migrant labour recruitment and South African agriculture sector – A historical overview

Literature on the historical background of labour recruitment in South Africa provides a basis for understanding how the role of migrant labourers in South Africa has changed, and perhaps more importantly, how historical trends have shaped farm labour regimes since the end of the apartheid era. Settler colonists began to actively recruit farm labourers from the Southern Africa region as early as the 1840s, and this intensified during the late years of the 19th century following the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1884 (Sparrow, et al., 2008; Tati, 2008; Magubane, 2001). Discovery of minerals resulted in the South African economy shifting from being "… a predominantly subsistence agricultural economy into a modern capitalist economy" (Whiteside, 1988, pp. 1-2), giving unskilled "… black men chances of entering the growing cash economy, as before this farming was virtually the only employment available" (Harington, et al., 2004, p. 66). According to Wentzel (2003), the reasons why black men

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entered the cash economy were because, “cash was needed due to changes in the economic structures of communities, forced labour laws and restrictions on the use of land that made independent subsistence farming virtually impossible as well as colonial taxation” (p. 3). As noted by Warwick (1977), “[in] 1890 the number of African workers employed on the gold mines was 15,000; by 1895 the labour force had risen to 50,000, and by 1899 this had more than doubled to 107,000” (p. 104). The net effect of the exodus of labourers from the agricultural sector was a reduction in the availability of labour to work on white owned commercial farms (Sparrow, et al., 2008; Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1974; Wentzel, 2003; Bolt, 2015; Fine, 2014; Whiteside, 1988). From Wilson (1976)’s observations, the 1900s experienced sharp decrease in the number of workers employed in agriculture compared to the mining sector as evidenced by the fact that employment in agriculture increased more slowly than natural population.

Several ‘Ordinances and Acts’ were instituted to govern ‘master and servants’ employment relationships (Bhoola, 2002; Bergh, 2010). These Ordinances and Acts, (for example the Masters and Servants Act of 1856) were designed to enforce discipline and protect the interests of the ‘master’ without granting significant labour rights of the ‘servants’ (Magubane, 2001; UNESCO, 1974). The differential incorporation of races by the South African state through these legislative frameworks left Africans with no formal power to modify fundamental institutions, “and only in the Bantustans or reserves could [native] Africans exercise rights of citizenship (1976, p. 1061). Legislation which followed the Ordinances and Acts (for example the Natives Urban Areas) Act No 21 of 1923, the Industrial Conciliation Act No 11 of 1924, the Minimum Wages Act of 1925, the Wage Amendment Act of 1930, the Bantu Authorities Act No 68 of 1951 and the Natives Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act of 1953[3] laid a basis for the improvement of migrant labour rights but these largely applied to the mining sector (UNESCO, 1974). During this time, the farming sector fell outside the parameters of regular labour rights legislation (Helliker, 2013; Whiteside, 1988). In Merle Lipton’s view, the reason why agriculture was not getting much attention in labour reforms is because early parliaments of South Africa under the apartheid regime were dominated by white farmers whose influence

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was reflected in legislation which benefited them against the interests of black workers and urban whites (1974). According to Lipton:

> An elaborate system of influx control measures (the 'pass laws') was set up to control the movement of labour and the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 (and subsequent amendments) prevented blacks from freely seeking work in the towns and was administered in such a way as to direct labour to and keep it on farms. No farm labourer [could] get a 'pass' to work in a town unless he [had] permission to leave from the district Labour Control Board, on which local white farmers and officials serve[d] (Lipton, 1974, p. 44).

Irregular migrants were given the option of working on commercial farms instead of being deported (Fine, 2014; Department of Labour, 2007). In 1947 the Native Affairs Department (NAD) issues a decree, through the Smit Circular on farm labour, that all illegal migrants were to be diverted to farms The police had started rounding up illegal migrants, 'imprisoned them in special depots and gave them the choice of signing a farm contract for at least 180 days or being put over the border and sent home' (First, 1959, p. 14). While Lipton (1974) believed that the use of convicts, especially during the 1950s improved the supply of farm labour, the system did not yield desired results: rather it was costly to the South Africa government - out of 6,032 illegal migrants who were arrested in 1947, only 502 agreed to sign contracts to work on the farms; and from 3,474 men who were arrested in 1948, only 95 signed up for work on the farms (First, 1959). From a neo-Marxist perspective, which considers cheap labour exploitation as a basis for capital accumulation, South Africa's agriculture sector could not have survived without the supply of African cheap labour (Lipton, 1974). As succinctly argued by Laurence Wilse-Samson, and in support of Merle Lipton's argument, "farmers negotiated competing claims on black labour through lobbying the state, rather than through increasing wages and improving working conditions"[4]

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Through the use of recruitment agencies and associations, colonial capitalism created economic nodes where peripheral countries to South Africa could serve as labour reserves. Cheap migrant labour was drawn from these reserves for capital accumulation (Tati, 2008). Bearing this background in mind, it is therefore necessary to understand how labour recruitment for the agriculture sector evolved over the years, and interrogate how this is important to Zimbabwean migrant seeking employment on white owned commercial farms. Established in 1900, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), originally recruited migrant labour for all

[4] http://www.columbia.edu/~lhw2110/wilse_samson_apartheid.pdf

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industry, including agriculture, but its subsequent activities were confined to labour for gold mining (Wilson, 1972). The justification why it ended up being a gold mining specific recruitment agency is not available. WNLA succeeded the Rand Native Labour Association which was set up in 1896 specifically to supply labour for the mines. New recruitment agencies were formed during the 1960s which helped in the recruitment of farm labour. One of the largest and most popular being 'the Hex Rivier Boere Groep', which was set up in the Western Cape (Wilson, 1972, p. 60). This form of recruitment had been effectively used to recruit Mozambican migrants. Agencia Algos, a recruitment agency which was formed following the signing of a bilateral treaty between Mozambique and South Africa in 1964, has survived to this day, and continue to assist Mozambican migrants through mediating workplace disputes and repatriating deceased workers' bodies. Agencia Algos has been negotiating service contracts between farmers and their employees (HRW, 2006). Zimbabwean migrants could not benefit from these arrangements because the country had no bilateral labour agreements with South Africa until the 1990s when 'Section 41 exemptions' were initiated (ILO, 1998; Wentzel, 2003; Crush, et al., 2000; HRW, 2006).

A system of labour brokerage emerged in the early 1980s when the Labour Relations Act, 28 of 1956 introduced an amendment that 'permitted temporary employment agencies to be classified as employers of those whom they placed to work with a client, provided that they were responsible for paying their remuneration' (Benjamin, 2013, p. 3). Labour brokers are required to register with the Department of Labour (Benjamin, 2013). The practice of labour brokerage has been criticized for exposing migrant farmworkers to greater risk of exploitation and depriving them of the right to bargain for better working conditions as stipulated by the Labour Relations Act (No. 66 of 1995). In addition, it has been regarded as a form of 'human trafficking', and a cause of xenophobic attacks which have been experienced in South Africa in recent times. For instance, following attacks on 14 and 17 November 2009, which saw approximately 3 000 foreigners (mostly Zimbabweans) chased away from the town of De Doorns in the Western Cape (Hågensen & Nicola, 2009), "South Africans in the community alleged that labour brokers prefer to employ Zimbabweans and therefore they led attacks to force them out of De Doorns and from employment as farmworkers" (Perberdy, 2010, p. 5). The literature still does not explain how labour brokerage has facilitated the entry of illegal Zimbabwean migrants into the South African farm labour market in recent times. Another missing link is an account of how the practice is linked to the bilateral migrant labour facilities (Special Dispensation Scheme, Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project and the Zimbabwe

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Special Dispensation Permit) that South Africa and Zimbabwe implemented to regulate the stay and employment of illegal Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. However, the arguments above reflect a regulatory deficiency, and present a clear picture that from a historical perspective, labour brokerage has had implications on the living and working conditions of migrant farmworkers.

Other key historical characteristic of migrant labour into South Africa were its racialized nature, its genderedness and its non-permanency. From Francis Wilson's writings, it appears the term 'migrants' in the context of labour migrancy in South Africa was only used to refer to 'black' workers who lived either inside or outside South Africa, and who, through the circular migration system, were living at work without their families (Wilson, 1976, p. 2). There is also agreement that migrant labour recruitment systems employed by the apartheid regime favoured the white settlers. In a World Bank publication that Aurelia Segatti co-edited with Loren Landau, she referred to the apartheid migrant labour recruitment system as a "two-gate policy." According to her, "The front gate welcomed people who corresponded to the criteria of attractiveness defined by the governing minority. The back gate served a double function, preventing unwanted migrants from entering and allowing cheap and relatively docile labour in for temporary periods" (Segatti & Landau, 2011, p. 34). Janice Fine (2014) further elaborated that through the 'two-gate system', the front gate was reserved for the whites only, primarily from Western Europe, while blacks were confined to the back gate where they were subjected to prevention of entry, if they were unwanted, or allowed in on temporary contracts only (Fine, 2014, p. 5) . While I will not attempt to investigate the extent to which 'the two-gate' system has been de-operationalized by the post-apartheid South African government, my thesis builds on Aurelia Segatti and Janice Fine's arguments to show how the farm labour market still serve as a repository of cheap and 'short contracts' migrant labour.

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At this juncture, it is critical to discuss the apartheid government residency policy, which, as we will see later in this chapter, has shaped (or has been replicated by) the post-apartheid government's policy response to the growing number of Zimbabweans crossing the border into South Africa.

Migrants were denied "permanent rights to work or [take up] residence in South Africa, regardless of the overall length of their employment, and were obliged to return to their countries of origin before they could negotiate new contracts for the same employment"

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(Wentzel, 2003, p. 5). Employment contracts were limited to a maximum of 24 months (Prothero, 1974; Wilson, 1976). Bilateral agreements signed with the governments of Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi and Swaziland made it compulsory for migrant workers to remit money to relatives and dependents, but it was voluntary in the case of Lesotho. Wilson (1976) added that the nature of labour migrancy shaped the economic development of South Africa. In his words, he said; "the migrant system enabled more efficient allocation of resources to take place and hence caused economic growth, including the creation of jobs, to occur in a way that [could] not have happened had the oscillating pattern not been there" (p. 24). Relevant to this thesis is his admission that migrants lacked political power and that they were vulnerable to abuse. Later on in this chapter I will show findings from previous scholarly work on how the current employment system, particularly casualization of farm labour, continues to disempower migrant workers.

Interestingly, Prothero observed that by 1974, South Africa was already experiencing some form of clandestine recruitment of farmworkers. He wrote, "workers do enter clandestinely from neighbouring countries and obtain work illegally with the connivance of some employers who benefit from the low wages they can pay" (Prothero, 1974, p. 386). Wilson (1976) further noted that before the South African government began to tighten up control in the 1960s, there had been "substantial free-flows and clandestine migrations … from *limitrophe* countries", in particular from former 'High Commission Territories' (now Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) where passports to enter South Africa were not required (p. 7). From a historic perspective however, the notion of 'clandestine migration' into South Africa came into being as a result of arbitrary borders which were set up by the colonial regime during the 1885 Berlin Conference (Englebert, et al., 2002; Kotzé & Hill, 1997). These borders, which were then used by the settlers to control labour, did not respect the setup of African society (Tati, 2008). Following the parcelling out of territories at the Berlin Conference, migration laws followed. The laws did not only restrict the migration of foreigners into South Africa, but they were also used to curtail native South Africans from moving into, and settling in urban areas. According to David McDonald, "migrants came and went virtually as they pleased until pass laws and compounds were introduced to curtail and control their movement" (McDonald, 2000, p. 14). He also tells us that within the so-call 'irregular migration' set-up, migrants could cross the border into South Africa on foot and "an elaborate word-of-mouth information network told [them] where to look for work and whom to avoid" (p. 17).

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McDonald's argument shows that even during the colonial era, migrants had already been devising and using sophisticated ways of crossing the borders and finding work without being detected, and these techniques were anchored on trust between new migrants and those who knew 'where to look for work'. With technological revolution, one would assume that the techniques of crossing the border and exchanging information have become even more sophisticated. Similarities and differences between colonial and post-colonial techniques of crossing the border and finding work on the farms can best be understood through an ethnographic research which draws from the concept of social capital as well as the network theory of migration. I will park discussion about these linkages until I get to Chapter 5 where I introduce my empirical findings on mobility. In the paragraphs that follow, I will continue to provide some historical background by discussing the evolution of apartheid and post-apartheid labour policies that have shaped South Africa's farm labour market.

Scholarship from both the colonial and post-colonial eras confirms the genderedness of the apartheid labour migration. Dorrit Posel (2003) and Francis Wilson (1976), for instance, agree that apartheid migration patterns among the blacks were characterised by black men moving and living in restricted mining compounds or on closed white owned commercial farms. In reinforcing this point, Carol Camlin and her colleagues, maintain that "male temporary labour migration was a cornerstone of South Africa's segregationist economy" (Camlin, et al., 2013, p. 529). In Glaser's words; "[it] was virtually unheard of for a woman to migrate without a formal attachment to a man" (2012, p. 885). Clarke believes that the exclusion of African men's dependents was meant to reduce indirect costs associated with migrant labour employment (Clarke, 1976). In contrast, and drawing from the two-gate system' concept, until the mid-1980s, whites came primarily as "family class" citizens, with women accompanying their working spouses (Lefko-Everett, 2007, p. 7).

Nonetheless, despite the colonial policy which restricted African women from labour migrancy, women could still find their way into South Africa through clandestine means. For instance, Lefko-Everett notes that, "while temporary migration [during the apartheid era] was always male-dominated, some women did accompany their spouses or left on their own for South Africa where they worked in beer brewing, cooking, laundry and commercial sex" (2007, p. 7). Camlin et.al. (2013) suggest that since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women have always migrated independently to and within South Africa (p. 7). This assertion is valid in the sense that arbitrary borders established by the apartheid regimes could not have dramatically

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dismantle pre-colonial ties which existed amongst ethnical communities within the Southern Africa region. So it only makes sense to assume that communities, including women continued to visit and interact with each other even after the pass laws of the late 1880s were enacted. For instance, during their research in the Limpopo province, Blair Rutherford and Lincoln Addison (2007) learnt that most of the Zimbabwean workers who used to work on border farms in the province were Venda from the Beitbridge area. According to Rutherford and Addison, "they were said to have family ties to South African Venda living in the Soutpansberg area so the border control for them was quite lax. It enabled them to cross over and visit family and friends and to work on the white farms" (p. 623)

The gendered dimension of migrant women's pre-occupations during the apartheid era which Lefko-Everett raised is interesting - beer brewing, cooking, laundry and transactional sex. More interesting is to see how these historic pre-occupations are emerging within the context of alternative livelihood strategies among women migrant workers within the post-apartheid South African farm labour market. While my thesis will not focus much into this issue, which has been dealt with by The Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2006), Rutherford (2008) and others, I will capture personal stories from Zimbabwean women migrant farmworkers as a way of demonstrating how marginalized groups create room for themselves in a way to liberate themselves within a suppressive legislative and political context. In particular, the thesis will show how networking as a form of social capital is enabling them to move into, within and out of the farm labour market, and to access food and other livelihood opportunities. In the following section, I will now present a more expanded discussion of paternalistic systems which characterised the farm labour market.

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Paternalistic farm labour systems.

Apartheid labour legislation and labour recruitment practices have significantly shaped labour relations on South African commercial farms. Du Toit argues that these relationships have both positive and negative impacts to the workers. Based on his work in the Western Cape, he argues that, the farm has served as a place "that binds workers and farmers together in a complex and intimate relationship. … it institutionalised farmers' obligations, and probably lessened the degree of naked exploitation and brutality that existed. But it also brought dependence and vulnerability" (Du Toit, 1993 , p. 316). He points out that these paternalistic relations have given farmers the advantage of controlling farmworkers' personal life, their movements and even their domestic affairs. Both Du Toit (1993) and Bolt (2016) view paternalism as an

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organic and hierarchical relationship not only between the farmer and worker, but also among farmworkers themselves. Bolt's work reveals that "workplace hierarchies spill over into compound life more generally, and shape vertical paternalist ties … [and result in the formation of a] 'domestic government' on white farmers' land" (2016, p. 912).

Paternalistic systems which drew from a series of colonial Master and Servants Acts entailed a mixture of punishments and rewards. Farmers place themselves in the position similar to that of a father of a family, and living and working on a farm means being part of the family. Hence every aspect of life of the farmworker's survival (money, housing, water, electricity and even food) is bound up with the world inside the farms (Du Toit, 1993). Eriksson (2017) describes the paternalistic system as "a violent system, in which farmers assumed the roles of patriarchal father figures, ruling on the basis of discipline and punishment as well as favouritism and acts of benevolence" (p. 251). Use of prison labour and establishment of closed farm compounds ensured white farmers' total control of labour. Connor (2013) and Bolt (2015) observed that 'payments in kind' have traditionally been used by white farmers not only as incentives for workers to remain on the farms, but also to tie them to the farm labour market. Farmworkers would receive a monthly ration package containing basics maize meal, cooking oil and sometimes meat as a form of payment (HRW, 2001, p. 55). In the following text, Lauren Segal emphasizes how farmers have used payments in kind together with farm shops as a way of solidifying their influence:

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> Payment of workers in kind solidifies the farmer's role as patriarch. The tiny sum of cash that the workers receive represents a form of "pocket money" rather than a substantial wage income. Moreover, the worker sometimes hands over the money to the farmer for safekeeping, along with other valuable possessions. In so doing, the worker inadvertently entrenches his child-like status. In some cases, workers have little option but to buy at a farm shop where the prices of goods are likely to be more expensive, since they are determined by the farmer. Workers often run up substantial debts which further creates dependency relations with the farmer (Segal, 1991).

From their work in Limpopo province, Rutherford and Addison (2007) observed that the nature of paternalism has changed in response to post-apartheid labour legislative agrarian restructuring. Their findings reveal that most farmers now deduct payments for housing and food as 'fees' from farmworkers' wages. They also found that paternalism on the farms is mixing with neoliberal 'free market' logic in various ways, and how it shifts is a very localized

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question. For instance, while farmers are replacing free paternalistic services like food and housing with fees deductible from the farmworkers' remuneration, this largely affects the casual or seasonal portion of the workforce. "… for permanent and highly skilled workers it is likely paternalistic 'entitlements' continue to be provided" (p. 630). Despite policy and legislative developments that have happened over the years, including liberalization of the agriculture sector, institution of new and new pro-worker labour and tenure legislation, power relations on the farms remain visibly unequal (Ewert & Hamman, 1999). Explaining how paternalism has changed, Addison (2014) states that, "Farm owners channel benefits, incentives and their personal attention to the relatively few permanent and skilled workers, while the majority of workers – seasonal, part-time, migrant – are left outside of the paternalistic contract and fending for themselves through largely informal, off-farm survival strategies" (p. 288). During his research in Limpopo, Bolt (2015) found that these 'few permanent and skilled workers' become powerful in controlling labour on the farms.

Paternalism on the farms has also attracted the critique of gender scholars. Paternalist employment relations have always defined women's subordinate position to men within employment on 'family farm'. In the past women were mostly employed as seasonal workers – "seasonal labour demands were met through the recruitment of women who lived on farms with their husbands" (Webb, 2017, p. 50). Orton, et al. (2001) believe that new employment strategies that farmers have adopted in response to agrarian restructuring and legislative reforms are producing contradictory outcomes for women. On one hand, the reforms are opening up new opportunities for women while on the other hand recruitment systems reproduce historical forms of gender inequality in labour, including the dominance of men in the recruitment process as well as social life on the farms. In his work in Limpopo for example, Addison (2014) learnt that women provided sex to farm managers or other foremen whenever they demanded it. Knowledge of the structural nature of paternalistic relations on the farms provides a contextual background which is relevant to understanding mobility of migrant workers into within and out of the farm labour market. It also calls for a discussion on changes that have happened in farm labour recruitment practices.

Reforms implemented by the South African government since the early 1990s changed the architecture of paternalism on the farms. These reforms were not only important for removing some aspects of paternalism, but they also extended labour rights to the farmworkers. The next section proffers a more detailed discussion about these reforms.

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2.8 Farm labour reforms in South Africa

Growth, employment and redistribution (GEAR) policies implemented since the 1990s had influence on the farm labour market. "These included deregulation of the marketing of agricultural products; abolishing certain tax concessions favouring the sector; reductions in budgetary expenditure on the sector; land reform; and trade policy reform" (OECD, 2006, p. 2). Removal of agricultural subsidies and government sponsorship of the agriculture sector forced farmers to become more competitive in the global market (Hall & Cousins, 2015; IOM, 2013). In addition, introduction of progressive laws governing farm labour, and the extension of existing legislation to the agriculture sector provided some legal basis for migrant farmworkers to claim their rights (HRW, 2007).

The Sectoral Determination for Agriculture supplemented other labour legislation by imposing minimum wages and working hours, leave days and termination rules for the agriculture sector (Visser & Ferrer, 2015; Murray & Van Walbeek, 2007; Wisborg, et al., 2013). Within the South African context, a Sectoral Determination, whose terms and conditions are reviewed and amended every three years, provides legislative control on terms and conditions of employment in sectors like farm work and domestic work which do not have collective bargaining and which are subject to arbitrary, individualistic and discretionary employment conditions. The first Sectoral Determination for farm workers (Sectoral Determination No.8) came into force in 2002. It was replaced by Sectoral Determination No.13 in 2006 following concerns which were raised by farm workers (Devereux, et al., 2017, p. 8). Enactment of these legal instruments shows some commitment by the post-apartheid South African government to address omissions and commissions of the past. It is also an indication that white farmers no longer had as much influence in controlling legislative decisions as they had during the apartheid era.

The efficacy of these legislative improvements in promoting the labour rights of farmworkers however remains questionable. Contrary to claims by the South African government that the Sectoral Determination has been highly successful, independent studies have identified significant shortcomings. For instance, during a parliamentary submission in November 2011, The Employment Conditions Commission chairperson, Mamagase Nchabeleng, claimed that there had been a significant decline in the level and depth of poverty between 2001 and 2007. He attributed this to the Sectoral Determination. In his own words he said, "in households with at least one worker covered by a Sectoral Determination in South Africa, the percentage of

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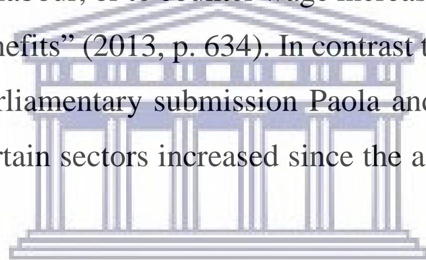
poor individuals, under the poverty line, declined significantly from 54.4% percent to 42.7%". These claims have however been disputed by independent researches. A study to determine the extent to which the Sectoral Determination for Farmworkers was being implemented on selected farms in the Eastern Cape led by Lalitha Naidoo found that farmers were complying with the statutory instrument on a selective basis, and that although wages had been increased, most farmworkers did not receive the minimum wage. The results also showed that levels of compliance varied between and within farms in relation to the type of work, type of employment relationship and the geographical area. Although the instrument is meant to improve the conditions of work of farmworkers, the research team discovered that the sectoral determination had not fundamentally altered the working, living and tenure conditions of farm workers (Naidoo, et al., 2007, p. 36). Miriam Di Paola and Nicolas Pons-Vignon found that while the establishment of minimum wages through the sectoral determinations "seems to have helped increase sometimes extremely low nominal wages, … many employers have in response found ways either to casualise labour, or to counter wage increases by shifting to hourly or task payment, or reducing other benefits" (2013, p. 634). In contrast to the Employment Conditions Commission chairperson's parliamentary submission Paola and Pons-Vignon found that the number of poor workers in certain sectors increased since the adoption of a determination (p. 631).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The resistance by some white farmers to labour legislative reforms have shaped relations between the farmers and farmworkers to this day, and in particular, can be interpreted as the root cause of perceived antagonistic relations between white farmers and local South Africans. Instead of acknowledging that their influence during the apartheid period has had impact on the current farm labour market configuration, white farmers choose to attribute their heavy reliance on migrant farmworkers to laziness among South Africans. Studies conducted by through the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) have revealed that, from white farmers' view point, the poor representation of South Africans in the farm labour market is not caused by low wages: instead they perceive locals as being lazy and unwilling to work in the fields and orchards (Crush, et al., 2000, p. 20). This stereotypical attribution seems to have also been transmitted to the migrant farmworkers themselves. For instance, while soliciting views of migrants about Xenophobic attacks in South Africa, Bronwyn Harris was told by one Zimbabwean migrant that they were being attacked because South Africans feel Zimbabweans were taking their jobs, and yet "South Africans are very lazy and we are hard workers" (Harris, 2001, p. 114). Results of a research conducted in rural communities around the Richards Bay

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by Gamuchirai Chakona and Charlie Shackleton are dismissive of these allegations. They found that most people are willing to working in the fields, and have been sustaining their families by doing so. Nevertheless, just like any other communities around the world, they found that there are a selected few who are “lazy and do not want to work, and who depend on food parcels from the Department of Social Development” (Chakona & Shackleton, 2017, p. 5). Therefore, according to Visser & Ferrer (2015), the generalized claims that local South Africans do not want to work, because they are lazy and they rely on government support do not add up. Instead, the poor working conditions, including low wages, long working hours “are powerful deterrent for South Africans” (Crush, et al., 2000, p. 21), and because of their vulnerability and desperation, irregular Zimbabwean migrants have no choice but to accept the conditions and low wages (Rutherford & Addison, 2007). An important overtone here is that the farm labour market that these illegal Zimbabwean migrants get into, has been heavily casualized and job security is never guaranteed. In the text below I give a description of farm labour casualization and explain its implications on farmworkers.

Beatrice Conradie defines farm labour casualization within two parameters; namely, “a seasonal component and a winter, or off-season, component” (Conradie, 2007, p. 174). She draws from Levy (1977)’ s categorizing of employment on the farms into three models; the permanent worker (who is assured that, unless he or she is dismissed, employment – and thus earnings – will be provided on a regular basis); the casual worker (who doesn’t have such certainty, and employment is provided entirely at the discretion of the employer); and the seasonal worker (who may be employed either on a regular or a ‘casual’ basis for the duration of the season) (pp. 174-175). According to Du Toit and Ally (2003), casualization ought not to be confused with externalization. They argue as follows,

> … the key distinguishing element [is] that in the latter relationship labour is externalised. The employment relationship is not directly with a farmer. Instead, the farm concludes an agreement with a third party, who is then responsible for bringing workers onto the farm. As far as the farm is concerned, the service is supplied in terms of a commercial contract and has nothing to do with an employment relationship (p. 17).

Casualization is believed to create an unstable workforce, to reduce farm workers’ powers to negotiate for better working conditions, and to provide opportunities for employers not to adhere to labour laws (Women on Farms Project & Centre for Rural Legal Studies, 2009; Rutherford & Addison, 2007). Rutherford & Addison (2007) found that farmers in Limpopo

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now resort to engaging seasonal labourers during peak production periods. Based on their research in the Western Cape, Margareet Visser and Stuart Ferrer (2015) gave two reasons which have motivated farmers to casualize farm labour, and which can also be applicable in the context of Limpopo; first, it is more cost effective to employ workers on seasonal basis, and second, farmers engage seasonal workers as a way of avoiding the provision of the Extension of Security and Tenure Act of 1997 (ESTA), which mandate them to grant security of tenure to workers living on farms. Visser and Ferrer concluded that, "one of the unforeseen consequences of ESTA has been to contribute to the process of casualization" (p. v).

From the discussion above, it is evident that regulations have not succeeded in significantly improving conditions. The post-apartheid government lacks capacity to monitor implementation of legislation on farm labour (Munakamwe & Jinnah, 2015; Sandrey, et al., 2011), partly because the inspectorates are divided into different functions and different departments, and because annual budget allocations do not give priority to these inspectorates. In view of this, Halton Cheadle and Marlea Clarke observe that the new democratic government seems to have "inherited dispirited and divided inspectorates with minimal impact" (2000, p. 6).

So far, I have shown how farm labour has been regulated, including the influence of legislative and policy reforms, as well as the paternalistic structure of the farm labour market. This leads us into a discussion about migration trends between Zimbabwe and South Africa.The discussion is informed by a review of literature on the patterns and volumes of Zimbabweans entering South Africa since the turn of the 21st century, a period which coincided with radical changes which the country's socio-economic and political context.

2.9 Trends in the flow of Zimbabwean migrants into South African since independence

An important preface on the discussion about the flow of Zimbabwean migrants into South Africa is to trace the history of post-independence migration between South Africa and Zimbabwe. I will focus on how Zimbabwe has continued to serve as a source and a conduit for cheap migrant labour for South African farms even after the colonial period. Major landmark events in post-colonial Zimbabwe, including the Gukurahundi atrocities of the 1980s and political and economic crises which began in year 2000, and how these contributed to the influx of Zimbabwean migrants into South Africa, will also be discussed at length.

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Upon assuming office in 1980, the new government of Zimbabwe led by Robert Mugabe, announced that it would not permit active recruitment of its citizens to South Africa. This was in defiance of the existence of the 1975 agreement that the Rhodesian government had signed with WNLA to supply contract labour to South Africa mines (Whiteside, 1988; Crush, et al., 2000; Leslie, 2008; Crush & Williams, 2010; Wentzel, 2003; Clarke, 1976). This policy position appears however not to have had much impact on emigration flows of Zimbabweans into South Africa.

The exodus of white commercial farmers

The first wave of post-colonial emigration was experienced during the early years of independence and this mainly comprised white farmers voluntarily leaving Zimbabwe and setting up new farming ventures in South Africa. The emigration of white farmers was as a result of speculations and fear that their established way of life destroyed by a vindictive black government. This followed threats that had been previously issued by senior figures of the incoming government. For instances, Jeffrey Herbst quoted Eddison Zvobgo, a leading figure in the nationalist movement, as having vowed during the Lancaster House Negotiations that, "[the new government] intended to seize land owned by white farmers and pay not a penny to anyone" (Herbst, 1989, p. 44). Robert Mugabe had previously issued similar threats during the Geneva Conference which was held in 1976 with the purpose of trying to agree on a new constitution for Rhodesia and to end the guerrilla war which had started around 1975. According to Rory Pilossof, Mugabe threatened that, "none of the white exploiters will be allowed to keep a single acre of their land" (Pilossof, 2012, p. 80). Despite Mugabe's conciliatory speech of April 1980 in which he tried to allay whites' fears and preached reconciliation, white farmers remained sceptical of their future, and some could not adjust to the new political realities of an independent Zimbabwe. During interviews with white farmers on borderline farms in Limpopo, Maxim Bolt was told of how some of the farmers who have now settled in Limpopo province crossed the border into South Africa through the Limpopo river together with the farmworkers and the farm implements that they had in Zimbabwe (Bolt, 2015).

Bolt's account does not clarify whether these migration flows, which were fronted by white farmers, were considered to be 'legal' within the South African legal framework. However, his findings are important as they show that some Zimbabweans moved onto South African farms on the initiation of, and accompanying white farmers. It also provides an argument on how

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some Zimbabwean migrants have established permanence and have been incorporated into the paternalistic structures for the farms and how this has helped to reproduce migrant farm labour over the years. By 1988, at least 100,000 whites had left the country, leaving a population of about 110,000 (Herbst, 1989, p. 45) and only about 4,000 of them on the farms (ibid. p. 47). It is estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 of the whites who left Zimbabwe crossed into South Africa (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2010; Mawadza, 2008; Ramathetje & Mtapuri, 2014).

Gukurahundi atrocities

The second phase, between 1983 and 1987, consisted of Ndebele refugees who fled political violence in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces during the '*gukurahundi era*'. The *gukurahundi* operation was orchestrated by government through a North Korea trained Fifth Brigade of the national army between 1983 and 1985, with the aim of stamping out dissidents (those who were perceived to be supporting the Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU)). Research conducted by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) and the Legal Resources Foundation established that the operation resulted in the deaths of between 10,000 and 20,000 unarmed civilians in Midlands and Matabeleland provinces of the county, and forced thousands to flee the country (CCJPZ & LRF, 1991). The Fifth Brigade outfit was only withdrawn following the signing of the Unity Accord between ZAPU and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) led by Robert Mugabe on 22 December 1987 which gave birth to the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) (Cameron, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). While no official statistics have been produced, it is believed that many of the '*gukurahundi'* victims who fled the country went to South Africa (de Jager & Musuva, 2015). Scholars like Musiwaro Ndakaripa attributes voting patterns in Matabeleland and some parts of Midlands until the July 2013 harmonised elections as evidence that the resentment over the atrocities is far from over (2014, p. 36). In this thesis, I will neither dismiss nor support Ndakaripa's reasoning, rather the arguments that he presents will help me to describe forms of social capital and networks that exist among Zimbabwean farmworkers in Limpopo. I will attempt to establish, though not to a greater extent, if social networks among Zimbabwean farmworkers are ethnical-based, and whether the resentment that Ndakaripa alluded to is also evident among Zimbabweans on the farms.

Socio-economic crisis associated with ESAP

Jonathan Crush and his SAMP colleagues described the third wave of Zimbabwe international migration patterns, which started in the 1990s, as more complex than during the early years of

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independence. They noted that migration patterns prior to 1990 were largely circular, homogeneous and cross-border movements between Zimbabwe and South Africa were relatively stable, hovering around 200 000 people per annum. It is generally accepted that this third wave of migration was motivated by economic and political factors (Bloch, 2008; de Jager & Musuva, 2015; Kleinbooi, 2013; Ntuli & Gwatidzo, 2013; Zanamwe & Devillard, 2010). The number of emigrants started to increase radically after 1991 when Zimbabwe joined other African countries persuaded by the IMF and World Bank to embark on an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) (Crush, et al., 2012, p. 7). The Zimbabwean ESAP failed to deliver its intended results, instead it resulted in more economic hardships on the poor and mid-income households (Crush, et al., 2012). There were major retrenchments in the agriculture, textile, clothing, leather and construction industries, with estimates varying between 45,000 to 60,000 job losses by the end of 1993 (Kanji, 1995). According to Crush et al. (2012), the service could have lost 23,000 jobs between 1991 and 1997. Urban employment, which had risen from 454, 000 in early 1980 to 620, 000 in 1991, fell back to 590, 000 by the end of 1995 (Bond, 2000, p. 179). An evaluation commissioned by the AFDB revealed that found that due to ESAP, overall unemployment rate increased from 22% in 1991 to 35% in 1996 (AFDB, 1997). While ESAP was limited to 1995, the negative impacts persisted, and reproduced beyond its implementation timeframe. Mawadza (2008) noted that the consequences of ESAP manifested in a downward spiral characterised by an inflationary macro-economic environment and soaring unemployment that had started to affect many poor rural and urban households in 1999. Growing unemployment and economic hardship led to what Crush et .al (2012) called 'mixed migration', referring to movement of both skilled and unskilled out of the country in search of employment opportunities. As presented in **Figure 1** below, Crush et.al, extrapolated official South African statistics to show the pattern of legal entries from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Although these statistics do not include irregular migrations, they show that number of Zimbabwean migrants into South Africa coincided with the ESAP, peaked in 1995, and then slid back in response to visa restrictions that had now been imposed by the South African government.

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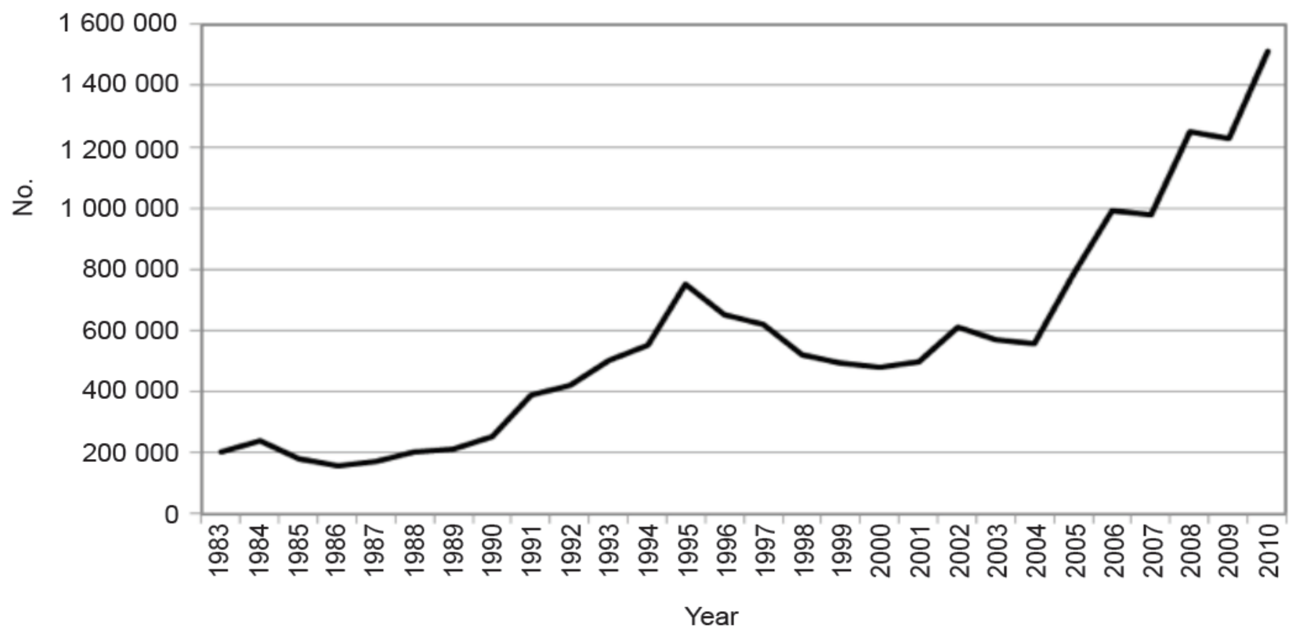

Figure 1: Legal Entries to South Africa from Zimbabwe (1983–2014)

Source; Crust.et.al (2012, p. 8)

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Year 2000 and onwards

The year 2000 heralded the beginning of a new wave which shaped the landscape of migration patterns of Zimbabweans throughout the decade, and even beyond. The national referendum of 2000, farm invasions which started the same year, political violence associated with contested elections of 2002 and 2008 and deep economic crisis which peaked around 2009, all contributed to an unprecedented exodus of Zimbabwean migrants into South Africa. Dramatic emigration trends depicted in Figure 1 should therefore not be a surprise. Tara Polzer chooses to describe the period since 2000 as a phase "which has been the largest concentrated flow in South African history" (2008, p. 4). The sections that follow do not only provide a chronology of these events, but also show the juxtaposition of these events with emigration flows, thereby providing a justification on why they are important in problematizing the issue of Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers in Limpopo. The contribution of these events to the influx of Zimbabweans into South Africa are not to be treated in isolation, instead, they are cumulative to each other, or one event could have led to another, leading to another or could even have happened within the same timeframes.

(a) Referendum and invasions of white owned farms

Angered and frustrated by the rejection of the new constitution, war veterans began a wave of invasions of commercial farms under the banner of *'fast track land reform'*. The spontaneous

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land occupations were characterised by violent attacks, and not only were white farmer targeted, but black farmworkers as well. This is reflected in Blair Rutherford's observation during that time:

> "With about 80% of the 4600 or so commercial farmers in Zimbabwe today being of European descent, this group has been publicly castigated by ruling party politicians and state-controlled media as "settlers" since Independence in 1980 not only for having stolen the land from Africans but also for their mistreatment of African workers. In turn, the 300,000 or so farm workers are not only publicly viewed as being exploited by whites but also as being the dupes of the whites, as "sell-outs" for working for white farmers, and as "foreigners" who should be deported if they go against ZANU-PF" (2000, p. 194).

Many of the farmworkers of Zimbabweans of Malawian and Zambian origins who had been absorbed into the then Southern Rhodesia as migrant workers (see Wilson, 1976).

Lloyd Sachikonye estimates that by end of 2000, between 180,000 and 200,000, and only about 100,000 farm workers were left at beginning of 2003 (2003). According to Crush et al., "as many as one million families [farmworkers plus their families] were replaced by only 140,000 families who were resettled on the expropriated farms" (2012, p. 12). It is critical to note that these farmworkers where being displaced out into a socio-economic environment which was already facing ESAP induced employment challenges. Zoe Groves found that workers evicted from the farms could use their family networks to pursue alternative livelihoods or accommodation, while those "whose origins were outside Zimbabwe struggled to access land in the communal areas when their farms were invaded. They found themselves homeless and jobless, and left for the towns and cities, where they relied upon relatives for support …. and many looked south to find work on the farms in the Limpopo region of South Africa" (Groves, 2012, p. 344).

(b) Elections and political violence

Eldred Masunungure traces back political violence to the colonial era (Masunungure, 2011), but of course this thesis will not attempt to go that far. Instead, I will focus on the post-2000 period which provides a meaningful reference to promise discussions about the dramatic influx of Zimbabwean into South Africa migrants and the stringent policy positions that the government of South Africa later adopted. The presidential election of 2002, the parliamentary elections of March 2005 and the harmonized presidential and parliamentary elections March 2008 were all marred with political violence which affected many casualties. For instance, a

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local media outlet, The Independent reported in October 2002 of politically-related death toll, mainly targeting members of the opposition, MDC as having risen to 151 since 2000[5]. The HRC reported that more than 3,000 people are known to have fled the violence during the 2008 elections, and had now been internally displaced, an "an unknown number have fled across the borders to Mozambique, Botswana and South Africa" (2008, p. 1). From a study to establish the role of politics in the migration of Zimbabwean teachers to South Africa, Dick Ranga found that most migrant teachers in South Africa were coming from rural Zimbabwean schools that had been affected by political before or after the 2008 presidential elections (Ranga, 2015). From Masunungure's point of view, the exodus of both skilled and non-skilled people in during the decade which ended in 2010, "was a result, in response to the syndrome of [political] crises triggered by the regime beginning in 2000, which gravely disrupted the mainstay agricultural sector and had ripple effects throughout the economy" (p. 51).

(c) The economic crisis and the emergency of hyper-inflation

Emerging from the negative impacts of ESAP, the government implemented policy decisions negatively strained the economy. Decisions to appease war veterans by allocating Z$50,000 each, army involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 1998 and 2002, and increased civil service allocations in the run-up to the 2000 had negative impacts on the economy. In response, inflation increased from 70% in October 1999 to slightly more than 100% in November 2001, and by end December 2016 it had spiralled to 1280%, before sky-rocketing to quadrillions by November 2008 (Ndhlela, 2011; Crush, et al., 2012).

The economic crisis resulted in the closure of companies, disappearance of basic commodities, increased informalization of the economy and a surge of unemployment to more than 90% by 2009 (Munangagwa, 2009). The ensuing economic situation forced many Zimbabweans to leave the country, and being strategically positioned as the immediate destination of choice, South Africa is believed to be the major recipient of these Zimbabwean migrants (Mawadza, 2008). South Africa provides many pull factors which make it an attractive destination for Zimbabwean migrants. In addition to the existence of historical ties and socio-cultural affinities between the two countries, post-apartheid South Africa has also maintained a stable democracy and a stronger economic position as compared to other countries within the region (de Jager & Musuva, 2015).

ttps://www.theindependent.co.zw/2005/05/13/political-violence-persisted-in-2003-report/

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No polls have been conducted, in as much as it is not practical to do so, to determine with precision the number of documented and undocumented Zimbabwean migrants who have taken up occupation within the South African farm labour market. The only factual statistics about the extent of Zimbabwean migration to South Africa refer to those who have crossed legally and those deported and are registered with the DHA. Otherwise estimates of the population of Zimbabweans living and working in South Africa range from several hundred thousand to about three million, and neither the Zimbabwean nor the South African government can provide a reliable estimate of the migratory flows (Hall, 2013; HRW, 2007; Visser & Ferrer, 2015; Bolt, 2016). Given the socio-economic and political context, the number of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa can only be on the increase.

According to estimates the population of Zimbabweans living in South Africa was about 131,887 in 2001 (Crush & Tevera, 2010). Crush an Tevera also quoted the World Bank as having approximated the number of Zimbabweans in South Africa to 510,084 in 2005. These estimate however do not have any basis. Out of 141 550 temporary residence permits (TRPs) which were issued by the DHA in 2012, the highest proportion were issued to Zimbabweans (17,2%), followed by Nigerians at 10,0% (Statistics South Africa, 2013). The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) also showed that in 2013, South Africa, was number one among the top 5 destinations for Zimbabwean migrants **(Table 2).**

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Table 2: Migrant stock by destination (2013)

Top 5 countries or areas of destination	
South Africa	358 109
UK & Northern Ireland	115 708
Malawi	35 287
Australia	34 034
Botswana	28 832
Total	571 970

Source: UNDESA[6]

Though the estimates do not show us how the number of Zimbabweans who entered South Africa irregularly has been fashioned over time, the extent to which Zimbabweans were seeking to regularise their stay in South Africa gives an indication of the challenge of

[6] https://esa.un.org/miggmgprofiles/indicators/files/Zimbabwe.pdf

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irregularity that the DHA was confronted with. In 2003, 2,588 Zimbabweans filed for asylum, the number increased to 111,968 in 2008 and by 2009 the number had increased to 149,453. At the same time the number of Zimbabweans who were being deported from South Africa has been increasing **(Figure 2).**

Year	New Asylum Seeker Applicants	Zimbabwean Asylum Applicants
1998	11,135	0
1999	31,592	0
2000	12,226	0
2001	16,325	4
2002	24,187	115
2003	41,741	2,588
2004	41,369	5,789
2005	43,289	7,783
2006	53,361	18,973
2007	45,637	17,667
2008	207,206	111,968
2009	223,324*	149,453
2010/11	124,336	117,194**
2011/12	81,708	55,873

Year	Total Deportations	Zimbabwean Deportees	Zimbabwean Deportees as % of Total
1990	53,445	5,363	10.0
1991	61,345	7,174	11.7
1992	82,575	12,033	14.6
1993	96,697	10,961	11.3
1994	90,682	12,931	14.3
1995	157,075	17,549	11.2
1996	180,704	14,651	8.1
1997	176,349	21,673	12.3
1998	181,286	28,548	15.7
1999	183,861	42,769	23.2
2000	145,575	45,922	31.5
2001	156,123	47,697	30.5
2002	135,870	38,118	28.0
2003	154,808	55,753	36.0
2004	167,137	72,112	43.1
2005	209,988	150,000	71.4
2006	266,067	127,000	47.7
2007	312,733	200,000	64.0
2008	280,837	170,000	60.5

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Figure 2: Asylum Applications and Deportees in South Africa (1998 – 2012)
Source: Amit & Kriger (2014, p. 272&282)

While Zimbabwean migrants are scattered all over South Africa, most 'irregular' entrants are concentrated in the Limpopo province and along major migration routes where they seek employment and work on the farms (Hall, 2013; Crush, et al., 2000; Wisborg, et al., 2013; Rutherford, 2011; Addison, 2014). Rutherford and Addison (2007) and Hall (2013) believe that 15,000 to 20,000 Zimbabweans are living and working on commercial farms Limpopo, making up 70%-80% of the total population of farm workers in the province. The Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) put the number of all irregular migrants in South Africa to about 2,5 million as of 2010 (CDE, 2010).

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The question of how many Zimbabweans live and work in South Africa can never be answered with great certainty mainly because of the paucity of data. Nonetheless, it is undisputed that the Zimbabwean population in South Africa has increased significantly since 2000. Due to swelling numbers of irregular migrants, the South Africa government came up with policy measures to regulate migration flows, and specifically as a response to the influx of Zimbabwean migrants entering the farm labour market. These policy measures are discussed in the section that follows. Implications of these policies for Zimbabwean migrants who were seeking employment or were already working on white owned commercial farms in Limpopo also form part of the discussion

2.10 Zimbabwean migrants within the South African migration policy framework

In line with the provisions of an exemption clause in the 1991 Aliens Control Act, white South African farmers in the northern provinces had, by the mid-1990s, negotiated a 'special deal' with the DHA where they were permitted to register their illegally resident farmworkers in order to escape prosecution. Besides being a response to labour deficits that farmers were experiencing, this special deal was also justified by the existence of cultural ties between ethnic groups on either side of the border (Rutherford & Addison, 2007). Zimbabwean migrant workers were issued with 'Section 41 exemptions'[7] which allowed them to stay and work in South Africa as long as they remained with their employer (ILO, 1998; Bolt, 2015; Wentzel, 2003; Crush, et al., 2000). By the late 1990s, this arrangement became a distinct 'special employment zone' in which farmers were exempted from going through bureaucratic migrant recruitment channels (Rutherford, 2011). Zimbabwean migrants could obtain 'BI-17 permits' which attached them to a particular farmer, and allowed them to be incorporated into the South African farm labour market. Through this arrangement, only South African farmers registered with a local agricultural union were allowed to employ Zimbabwean migrants and were supposed to register their workers (Crush, et al., 2000). This produced a distinct border agricultural economy in which farmers could set their own terms and determine workers' conditions (Bolt, 2015). The legality of the BI-17 permits was disputed. During their research in Limpopo, Rutherford and Addison (2007) learnt that Zimbabwean farmworkers farm workers could still be raided and deported even when they held the permits. They also deduced that the history of this arrangement conditioned "the responses of state officials on occasion

[7] See Section 41 of the Aliens Control Amendment Act, 1995 (http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=52c148c94)

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and create[d] an insecure terrain for the livelihood practices of these Zimbabweans" (p. 623). By 2005 the arrangement had been ceased due to the massive criticism it had received from within the government, academics and other stakeholders as it was only benefiting white minority farmers. "Many farmers [did] not bother to utilise this system, preferring to avoid the fee charged. The chances of prosecution [were] very slight and most farms [had] a high labour turnover. In these circumstances, registration [was] not an attractive option…" (ILO, 1998, p. 13). Cessation of the zone of exemption was also as a result of threats by the DHA to evict all Zimbabwean farm workers from the borderline region in 2001 as well as provisions of the newly amended Immigration Act (2002)" (Rutherford, 2011).

In October 2004, South Africa and Zimbabwe agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to regularize the status of Zimbabweans in the country and on the farms. Part of the measure included the government of Zimbabwe issuing emergency travel documents (ETDs) to the workers in lieu of passports (Zaheera, 2012). By 2005 farmers could employ Zimbabwean farm workers through the legally recognized 'corporate permits scheme' which was a provision in the 2002 Immigration Act (Rutherford, 2011; Zaheera, 2012). The scheme provided a legal alternative for South African commercial farmers to employ immigrants from other countries. The corporate permit scheme allowed corporate entities, including mine groups and farmers, to apply to the DHA to employ a predetermined number of migrant workers[8]:

> The DHA [determined] the maximum number of foreigners the corporate permit applicant may hire. Farmers [were supposed to] submit proof of the need to employ the requested number of foreigners … and provide a job description and proposed remuneration for each foreigner … The corporate permit holder [would] ensure that the passport (or the ETD) of the foreigner is valid at all times, that the foreigner is employed only in the specific position for which the permit is issued, and that the foreign worker departs from South Africa upon completion of the job (HRW, 2006, pp. 14-15).

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The 'corporate permit' system did not yield desired policy results (Crush & Williams, 2010). Even though farmers were required to pay 'a flat fee of only R1, 520 (US$215) irrespective of the number of corporate workers hired' (HRW, 2006, pp. 14-15), many farmers avoided the bureaucratic process of registration, and continued to engage undocumented Zimbabwean migrants outside provisions of the 2002 Immigration Act (Bolt, 2015). This could be explained by the increasing use of casual labour by the farmers which do not instil any form of obligation

[8] See http://www.dirco.gov.za/milan_italy/Visas/corporatepermit.pdf

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

to them to assist the workers obtain permits.

While no statistics are available on number of farmers who applied for the corporate permits, or farmworkers who benefited from the facility (Lucas, 2014), Zimbabwean farmworkers (awarded the permits) who were interviewed by Alice Bloch in 2009 felt that they were now more secure than ever before. The farms provided some form of inclusion which allowed Zimbabwean migrants to a livelihood through harsh working and living conditions. Through this inclusion, new forms of paternalism emerged. Firstly, the Zimbabwean farmworkers' inclusion was made possible because of the forms of authority at the farms and the willingness to implement administrative regulations associated with the corporate permit facility. Secondly, the ability of farmworkers to stay and work, and to be incorporated remained within the control of the management of the farm (Bloch & Chimienti, 2012, p. 43).

While the number of undocumented Zimbabweans continued to swell, by 2009 South Africa did not have a clear policy framework to regulate Zimbabwe immigrants (Zaheera, 2012; Hammerstad, 2011). Only after the xenophobic attacks of May 2008 which left 63 people (including Zimbabweans) dead (Kerr, et al., 2017), did the South African government respond by introducing a 3-phased dispensation facility to Zimbabwean migrants:

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Phase 1 - Special Dispensation Scheme: This was the first phase of the dispensation process and was introduced in April 2009 in response the high influx of Zimbabwean migrants into South Africa. Through the scheme, the South African government promised to relax requirements for the issuing of permits to qualifying Zimbabwean migrants[9].Key objectives were: "to regularise undocumented Zimbabweans, curb the deportation of undocumented Zimbabweans, reduce pressure on the asylum and refugee system, and provide an amnesty to Zimbabweans who had obtained fraudulent South African documents" (Moyo, 2018, p. 17) The South African government dropped visa requirements and issued free six months work permits to Zimbabweans upon production of a valid Zimbabwean passport and proof of employment in South Africa (IRRI, 2009). According to Moyo, the motivation for the South African government to issue this scheme, was a response to the deplorable political situation in Zimbabwe which resulted from the disputed 2008 elections. Political and the deepening economic crisis forced may Zimbabweans to migrate to South Africa to seek economic

[9] See https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/13428/

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

recourse. He added that because most Zimbabweans who arrived that time could not get regular work permits on the basis that they did not qualify, they ended up applying for asylum and refugee status. As the numbers soared beyond the capacity of the DHA to deal with asylum and refugee applications, and that it was difficult to validate the authenticity of reasons given for asylum and refugee applications, the South African government was forced to put in place need "a special response to the undocumented Zimbabwean migrants", the special dispensation facility (ibid. p. 6-7). In 2008, South Africa received more individual asylum applications than any other country in the world, leaving the United States a distant second, and in 2009 the number of Asylum seekers in South Africa "was as many as the 27 member states of the European Union combined" (CDE, 2010, p. 21). While the immediate results of the scheme were a moratorium on the deportation of Zimbabwean migrants from South Africa, its effectiveness was compromised by a view by the DHA that "lower-skilled migrants were not in the country legitimately" (Amit & Kriger, 2014, p. 273). Moyo referred to the posture by the DHA as "ambivalent hospitality in governing the unwanted" (Moyo, 2018, p. 5). The Special Dispensation Scheme was abandoned in September 2010 following negotiations with the government of Zimbabwe. This culminated into the Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project (DZP), which was an improved version of the initial special dispensation.

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Phase 2 - Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project (DZP): This initiative was a follow-up to the 'special dispensation' scheme. It was the aim of the DZP, which was commenced in September 2010, to create a record of Zimbabweans who had, until then, been living illegally in South Africa (Zaheera, 2012; Hammerstad, 2011; The Solidarity Peace Trust & PASSOP, 2012). It was envisaged that through the documentation process, Zimbabweans who had been using fraudulent South African identity documents would be provided with an amnesty allowing them to submit their applications without all the usual supporting documents, such as passports. The DHA also waived some permit requirements and application fees.[10]

Under this initiative, the DHA "received a total of 294 511 applications, 242 731 were granted permits while 51 780 [were] either rejected or not finalised"[11]. Slightly more than 9,000 undocumented Zimbabweans on farms in the Limpopo province were processed, a figure far much far much lower than the estimated number of Zimbabweans who were working in South Africa at the time (The Solidarity Peace Trust & PASSOP, 2012; Hammerstad, 2011; Zaheera,

[10] See https://africacheck.org/factsheets/what-does-the-new-special-dispensation-permit-mean-for-zimbabweans-in-sa/
[11] See https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/17791/

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

2012; de Jager & Musuva, 2015). Amit & Kriger laments that the lack of reliable estimates of the total number of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, makes it difficult to assess what proportion of the Zimbabwean population this represents (2014, p. 289). No research has been conducted to provide a succinct explanation on why many Zimbabweans did not apply for the facility, but according to the Solidarity Peace Trust and PASSOP (2012) report, "reasons why Zimbabweans did not apply vary from suspecting it was a ploy to deport them, not getting passports from the Zimbabwean consulate, to not even knowing that it had occurred" (p. 17). Suspicion of being deported and lack of proof of employment have also been attributed to the failure of the ZDP scheme (Jager and Musuva 2015, Hammerstad 2011). In addition, Amit & Kriger (2014), believe that failure of the scheme to attract many Zimbabweans could be attributed to the fact "the short lead-up time left many offices unprepared for the process, and many migrants and their employers uninformed about the requirements and possible implications" (2014, p. 287).

Phase 3 - Zimbabwe Special Dispensation Permit (ZSP): Following cessation of the DZP in December 2014, the ZSP was initiated as a new regulatory policy framework effective January 2015. The ZSP, which was valid until 31 December 2017, allowed holders of DZP permits to continue "to live, work, conduct business and study in South Africa for the duration of the permit" (Rogers, 2014, p. 1). The ZSP is based on specific qualification criteria. "Only applicants that are on the DZP database – even if they were denied a DZP permit – may apply for the ZSP. No new applications [are] considered and applicants must possess a valid Zimbabwean passport and evidence of employment, business or accredited study"[12]. Several conditions were attached to the ZSP; "the permit was non-renewable and the permit holder did not qualify for permanent residence on the basis of the time spent in South Africa on this permit. On the expiry of the ZSPs, Zimbabweans were required to leave and return home to apply for work or other permits in South Africa without a guarantee that these will be granted to them" (Moyo, 2018, p. 7). Zimbabwean citizens who had not been registered under DZP, and hand no proper documents remained irregular.

Phase 4: Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP): In September 2017, The South African minister of Home Hlengiwe Mkhize announced that the government was introducing new permits, ZEP, will which would replace the ZSP that were expiring on 31 December 2017. ZEP

[12] https://africacheck.org/factsheets/what-does-the-new-special-dispensation-permit-mean-for-zimbabweans-in-sa/

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applications were opens on 15 September and closing date was initially pegged as 30 November 2017[13], but later extended to 15 February 2018[14]. The ZEP is only applicable to 197 941 ZSP permit holders and is valid for four years. Just like the ZSP, ZEP permits are not are not renewable and conditions attached to them cannot be changed as long as the holder is in South Africa (Moyo, 2018). No data is available yet to show the number of Zimbabweans who have applied for this facility, but obviously, it cannot go beyond the 197 941 limit.

An unfortunate facet of the migration policy reforms, the ZEP, the ZSP or the DZP, was that they were not informed by an understanding of the context. A common denominator in the application process for all the regularization facilities offered to Zimbabwean migrants was a requirement to provide proof of employment in South Africa. But these requirements could not easily be met in a labour market (agriculture) that had been heavily casualized. Most farmers were reluctant to commit to farmworkers who came and go because of the seasonality and casualization of the labour market Migrant farmworkers continue to be misrecognized and categorised ass 'unwanted' migrants, yet they are providing cheap labour to the agriculture industry.

The policy schemes were crafted and implemented in an 'elitist' way, seemingly to regularize the stay of skilled Zimbabwean migrants and criminalize the existence of undocumented farmworkers. Consequentially, there is no doubt that policy decisions implemented by the South African government have failed to effectively deal with the influx of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants into that country. Despite stringent controls on either side of the border and massive deportations by the DHA, many undocumented Zimbabweans citizens still find their way onto commercial farms in Limpopo. It is therefore necessary to investigate the methods and techniques they use to cross the border, and to understand if these techniques are different for those that were being used since the apartheid era. Hence the following section presents literature on the migration routes and methods that illegal migrants have recently been using manoeuvre their way through the restrictive regulatory structures and end up occupying South Africa's farm labour market.

[13] http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49184:sa-introduces-new-rules-for-zim-permit-holders&catid=87:border-security&Itemid=188
[14] https://news.pindula.co.zw/2018/02/02/south-africa-extends-zimbabwean-exemption-permit-zep-application-deadline/

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2.11 Emerging routes of entry into the South African farm labour market

Salient and important routes of entry into the farm labour market emerged from the year 2000 in response to a relatively high supply of cheap labour from desperate illegal Zimbabwean migrants and asylum seekers. Direct employment by farmers, and the involvement of Zimbabwean farm supervisors as entry points became visible. With a ballooning number of immigrants seeking political asylum prior to implementation of Zimbabwe Documentation Project; churches and exhibition halls in towns such as Musina and Johannesburg had become sources of shelter for thousands of prospective Zimbabwean asylum seekers (Mayisa, 2013; Idemudia, et al., 2013; Rutherford, 2011). In Musina, these also served as strategic 'hunting grounds for commercial farmers working with immigration officers in the Limpopo province' (Derman & Kaarhus, 2013, p. 163). Existing social networks, especially family relations and friends in facilitating entry of Zimbabwean migrants into the farm labour market was observed by Addison (2014) and Bolt (2015). More research is however needed to understand the relationship between historical migration trends and existence of social networks that currently facilitate entry of Zimbabwean migrants into the South African farm labour market, and to investigate other routes that migrants use.

It appears from the literature, that contemporary farm labour recruitment regimes capitalize on the desperation of Zimbabwean migrants. However, as Deborah Johnston shows, analysis of the reasons why farmers seem to exploit migrant labour is complex and cannot be simplified to the story of wage differentials with local workers only. Beyond reduction of labour costs farmers also benefit from the docility and flexibility of migrant labour. According to Johnston, "employers claim a charitable motive in the provision of employment for these poor migrant [workers] ... and yet the ability to limit their employment of South African workers reduce their exposure to current and anticipated legal obligations towards those workers" (2007, pp. 507-508). These recruitment systems disempower migrant farmworkers who cannot negotiate for legally provided living and working conditions because of the fear of losing their jobs. Conditions of work continue to be a major subject in researches that target migrant farmworkers, and farm dwellers, to some extent. The following section therefore provides a review of literature on living and working conditions on South African farm. This is not only meant to provide a broader characteristic picture of the farm labour market, but the literature also enables one to draw informed inferences on how living and working conditions facilitate the movement of migrants into, within and out of the labour market.

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2.12 Living and working conditions of Zimbabwean migrant labourers on South African farms

Analysis of gaps in the jurisdictional oversight and enforcement of labour laws has been mainly skewed towards the rights of local farm workers, with a special focus on land reform and tenure rights (Lemke & van Rensburg, 2014; Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014). There has been only limited inquiry into levels of evasion of labour legislation that have a bearing on the wellbeing and legal rights of migrant farmworkers. An exploration of this subject, which is however beyond the scope of this thesis, would provide an in-depth understanding of the extent to which migrant farmworkers' rights are protected within the South African labour framework.

Migrant labourers continue to live and work under very poor conditions (Kerr, et al., 2017): most of them do not have long-term contracts, workers lose their jobs for being sick or pregnant, and in some instances the farmers do not observe safety procedures (Kleinbooi, 2013; Memedovic & Shepherd, 2009; Bolt, 2015; Addison, 2014). From a study conducted by Jinnah Zaheera (2012) on farms around Musina, Zimbabwean migrant farm workers were complaining of poor, and at times illegal, labour practices including low wages, unlawful deductions from wages, poor sanitation and heath conditions in lodgings, lack of safety and protection measures at work, and intimidation or assault from employers. Most farm workers' earnings were below the minimum wage of R 1316.69/month (in the 2010 fiscal year). The study also found that workers were not receiving their legal entitlement of 15 days of paid annual leave and other leave provisions such as paid sick leave, family responsibility leave, and paid or unpaid maternity leave as provided by the Sectoral Determination Act S21-25. These findings are supported by Wisborg, et al. (2013), and Rutherford (2011), whose work in Limpopo province found that long working hours, low wages, physical abuse employed by management, and lack of access to social and health facilities were of major concern among Zimbabwean farm workers.

Although labour legislation protects the rights of every worker in South Africa regardless of their citizenship, most undocumented Zimbabwean migrant farm workers do not report cases of rights violations by their employers. The most cited reason for this reluctance to report is the fear of being apprehended and deported. Through their engagement with Zimbabwean migrant farm workers, Rutherford (2011) and Tati (2008) learnt that at times farmers avoid paying undocumented seasonal employees' wages at the expiration of their contracts by calling in authorities to round up and deport them before pay-day. As alluded to in Section 2.5, the

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fear to report cases of violations derives from the paternalistic character of the family farm – workers risk losing their jobs. As a result, they pursue their economic survival within a "precarious transnational terrain" (Rutherford & Addison, 2007, p. 619).

Bodies of literature reviewed in this chapter have attempted to present a rounded portrayal of the South Africa farm labour market, beginning from the history of labour migration, to conditions of work which exist on white owned commercial farms and plantations. In concluding the chapter, I will present a synthesis of the literature, pointing on major lessons and gaps which motivated my formulation of the three research questions.

2.13 Conclusion

From the literature, important lessons emerge which will be taken up in the next chapters. The bodies of literature reviewed have shown how the South African farm labour market has been changing over time, with indications that techniques of crossing the border irregularly and farm labour recruitment regimes are even becoming more complex. An investigation of contemporary strategies that undocumented Zimbabwean migrants use to cross the border will add to these bodies of literature.

While South Africa has implemented major labour law reforms since the collapse of the apartheid regime, the agriculture sector has not been thoroughly transformed. From the literature, it emerges that despite progressive legislation, Zimbabwean farmworkers continue to face challenges as they negotiate their way within the South African farm labour market. Their precarity is compounded by the post-apartheid government's lack of capacity to monitor their implementation. Because of the fear of deportation and of losing their jobs, migrant farmworkers are reluctant to join unions or report violations. Previous attempts to assess how farmworkers are protected by labour legislation have focused much attention on tenure rights which is not a major issue to migrant farm workers who constitute a significant proportion of the farm labour force. The evolution of farm labour recruitment practices warrants further investigation. We have learnt from the literature how farm labour supply in South Africa was negatively affected by the discovery of minerals and how recruitment evolved from being a cohesive one when migrants were forced to work on the farms as punishment to a situation where the influx of Zimbabweans have resulted in availability of surplus cheap labour. The role of recruitment agencies and labour brokers in farm labour recruitment has also been dealt with. Given the fluidity of recruitment systems, there is a need to further investigate

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contemporary labour recruitment methods. This includes an assessment of how transnational familial networks and other forms of social capital are facilitating the entry of Zimbabwean migrants into the South Africa farm labour market.

Scholars have acknowledged that there is a direct link between cross-border migration and food security outcomes of migrants and their families. However, analysis of this link has been inadequate as it ignores the food security situation of the remitting family members. There are still gaps in knowledge to adequately explain how migrants' moves into and out of different food environments impacts on their food security. Generating more literature on this issue enables one to have a better understanding of the migration-food security nexus. Building on emerging lessons and gaps identified in the literature review, my research explored, in detail, patterns of movement of Zimbabwean migrants into, within, and out of the South African farm labour market, and how these movements influence their livelihoods and food security. Chapter 3 will describe the methodological approach that I used in collecting data to answer these questions.

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CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the ethnographic methodological approach on which the thesis is based, including a description of the research questions that the research aimed to answer, an identification of the research techniques that I employed as well as justification on why I chose those techniques. I will also explain the process of identifying participants for the research – where I interviewed them from, why, and how ethical issues relevant to the study were dealt with.

3.2 Aims of the Research and Research Questions

As previously stated the primary aim of this thesis is to explore how social capital and social networks influence the patterns of movement of Zimbabwean migrants into, within, and out of the South African farm labour market, and to advance the understanding of how these are important to migrants' access to food and other livelihood opportunities. The thesis postulates three key questions; namely, a) How do Zimbabwean migrants find work on commercial farms in Limpopo? (b) What is the role of social capital and social networks in the movement of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market? and, (c) How relevant are social capital and social networks in facilitating irregular Zimbabwean migrants' access to food and other livelihood opportunities? The basis for anchoring the thesis on these three questions is explained below.

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(a) How do Zimbabwean migrants find work on commercial farms in South Africa?

The literature, as presented in Chapter 2, has revealed that high dependence on migrant labour remains a key feature of the South African farm labour market, which has however has changed in form and structure over the years – from a situation where undocumented migrants were forced to work on farms as punishment for illegally crossing the border (Fine, 2014; Department of Labour, 2007), to a situation where commercial farms have become an attractive labour market because of the migrants' own socio-economic circumstances (Bolt, 2015; Addison, 2014). We have also learnt that methods of labour recruitment have not been static – from being an elaborate word-of-mouth information network where farmworkers would tell each other where to look for work and whom to avoid along the process (McDonald, 2000), to a system which relied heavily on labour brokerage (Benjamin, 2013), to a situation where refugee camps in the border town of Musina became hunting grounds for white farmers looking

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for migrant farmworkers (Derman & Kaarhus, 2013), and then a mixed recruitment system scenario. From a background of these dynamics, it is therefore important to understand the motivation to move, and contemporary strategies that are being used by irregular Zimbabwean migrants to find work on the farms. In order to establish these with fairness, the thesis asks three primary questions, i.e.; what are the migration factors that push Zimbabwean migrants into the South Africa farm labour market? what entry routes do irregular Zimbabweans use to cross the border into South Africa? and how do they end up being on the farms?

(b) What is the role of social capital and social networks in the movement of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market?

Previous research has shown that paternalistic and clientelist relationships between the farmer and farmworkers, and among social classes of Zimbabwean migrants working on the farms are key features of the farm labour market. These relationships determine working and living conditions as well as the mobility of farmworkers (Bolt, 2015; Addison, 2014). My thesis will thus explore this further by asking two specific questions; (a) What forms social capital and social networks exist among Zimbabwean migrants in the Blouberg-Molemole area? and What role do these play in the mobility of Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market?

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(c) How relevant are social capital and social networks in facilitating irregular Zimbabwean migrants' access to food and other livelihood opportunities?

From the pre-colonial period, the quest for improved livelihoods and food security has always been a key characteristic feature on migration patterns within the Southern Africa (Wilson, 1976). However, the role of migration a strategy to improve livelihoods has narrowly been studies – with researches mainly focusing on the contribution of remittances and forget the food security and livelihood situation in areas of destination. There is need to understand food security and livelihoods from the migrants' perspective, particularly examining how social ties and other forms of social capital facilitate their access to food and other opportunities. The stated research question was unpacked and responded to during the research by answering specific questions like; where do Zimbabwean migrants working on commercial farms in the Blouberg-Molemole area get food? How do they get to the sources of food? What is the role of on-farm and off-farm social networks in the provisioning of food for the Zimbabwean farmworkers? and besides farm work, what other livelihood strategies do Zimbabwean farmworker employ? I drew on the concepts of food environments and geographic vulnerability

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in analysing the food security situation of Zimbabwean migrants in the Blouberg-Molemole area.

In order to answer the three key questions above, I followed an ethnographic methodology which employed mixed qualitative data collection techniques. As I will elaborate further in the following section, using this approach did not only enable me to obtain a rich and detailed understanding of Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers' experiences but it was also the most appropriate methodology which enabled me to closely examine and interpret the farmworkers' social context and then come up with intuitive conclusions.

3.3 Ethnographic research Approach

Ethnographic research is a qualitative, scientific and systematic approach that entails studying subjects within their own cultural environment, and it uses multiple qualitative techniques – observations, interviews, visual recording, document analysis and diaries. According to Schensul et al. (2013), "one guiding principle of ethnography is its commitment to direct experience with a population or community of concern …. Ethnography always is conducted in the naturalistic settings conducive to face-to-face interaction with the people, event and social phenomena that constitute the research setting" (p. 2). It mandates the research to use both eyes and ears as primary tools of data collection (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010), and as Ejimabo (2015) further stated, "it allows researchers to examine the patterns of meaning which emerge from the data collected from a selected group of participants in any given study" (p. 361). Reeves, et al. (2008) put it this way, "[it] is the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations, and communities … and [its] central aim is to provide rich, holistic insights into people's views and actions, as well as the nature of the location they inhabit, through the collection of detailed observations and interviews." (p. 512). Ethnography enables the researcher to use both inductive and deductive approaches so as to build more effective and socially and culturally valid local theories which can be tested and adapted to the local context or elsewhere (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). In employing the ethnographic research approach, I took cognisance of Yazan (2015)'s advice that a qualitative research methodology "should rest upon multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and benefit from prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data analysis and collection" (p. 142).

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Because I was interested in understanding the social context and behaviours of Zimbabwean farmworkers, and derive meaning from that, ethnography was the most suited research approach that I could use. It is an approach applicable to small samples selected based on pre-determined criteria (Moriarty, 2011) – it emphasises thick description and analysis of a subject matter (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The research approach enabled me to immerse myself into the everyday setting of the farmworkers; observing how they do things, observing the socio-economic and cultural environment in which they survive, listening to informal conversations, and to conduct both formal and informal interviews with 51 Zimbabwean farmworkers in the Blouberg-Molemole area and 11 South African based Zimbabweans who are working in other sectors out of the farm labour market. Despite facing challenges getting into the farm compounds (as I will discuss further in this chapter), through visiting public places where farmworkers go after work or during the weekends when they are on duty, I gathered in-depth knowledge of the social world of Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers - their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories.

Blouberg and Molemole are two of the twenty-five local municipalities which make up the Limpopo province. Situated on the far northern part of Limpopo province, Blouberg Local Municipality, borders Zimbabwe and Botswana. The major economic sectors in Blouberg local municipality are Agriculture, Mining and Tourism[15]. Molemole local municipality is bordered to the south by Polokwane Municipality, to the North West by Blouberg Municipality, to the south east by greater Letaba Municipality and to the north by Makhado Municipality and it has a total population of 108 321 people[16]. Major national roads, the N1 and (R521) pass through these local municipalities, linking with Zimbabwe and Botswana respectively. Figure below shows the location of Blouberg and Molemole (which I will refer to as '*Blouberg–Molemole Area'* in this thesis) in relation to the other municipalities of Limpopo.

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[15] Capricorn District Municipality: 2016/17 -2021 Final Draft IDP/Budget
[16] http://www.molemole.gov.za/index.php?page=location

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

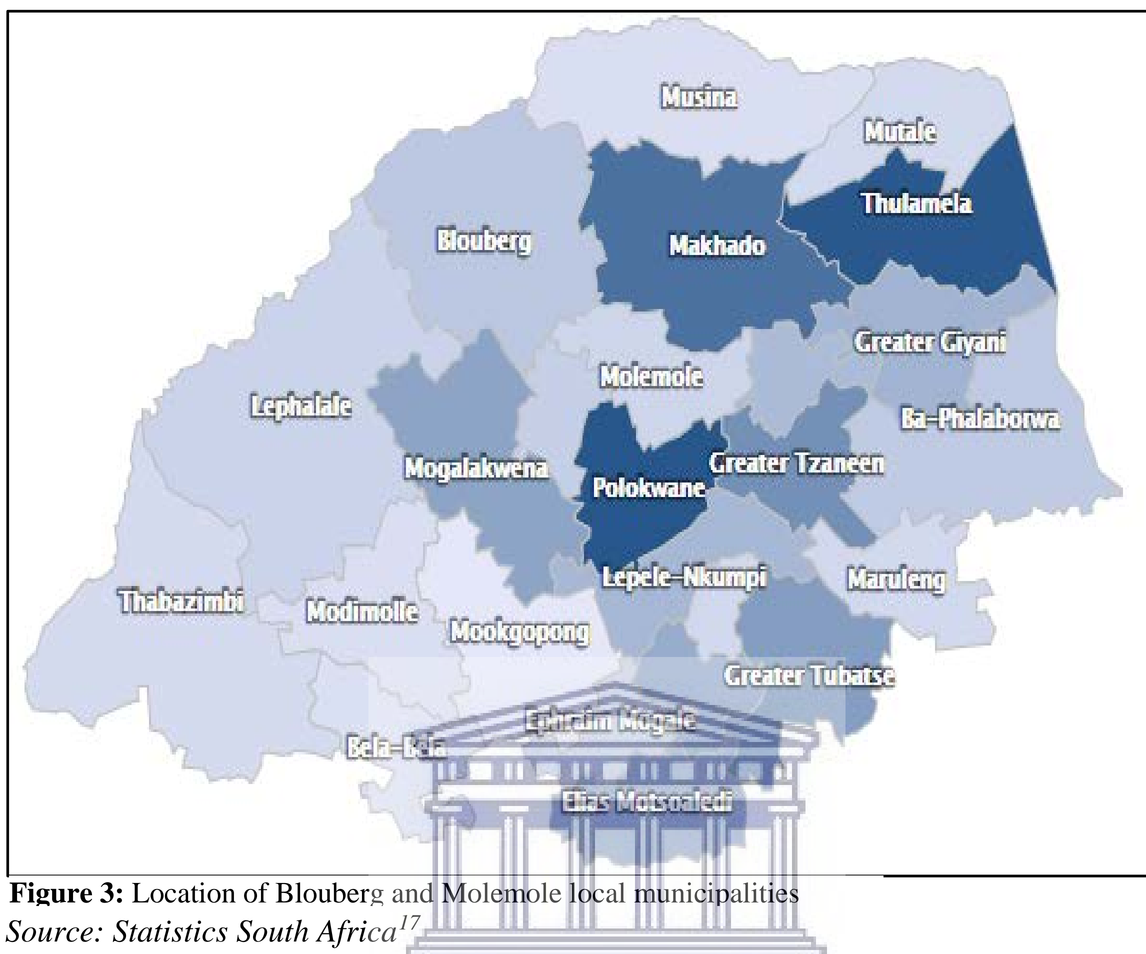

Figure 3: Location of Blouberg and Molemole local municipalities
Source: Statistics South Africa[17]

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Besides the rich agricultural activity and their nearness to the Zimbabwean borders, having a major national road that connects them to Zimbabwe, these two local municipalities serve as important migration routes for Zimbabweans who wish to proceed further south to other provinces of South Africa. Hence they represented an ideal site where Zimbabweans could seek employment on the farms. My decision to focus on Blouberg and Molemole was twofold; first, during designing of the project, a Zimbabwean friend, Collen, who teaches at one of the secondary schools in the Blouberg Local Municipality had confided in me that him and other Zimbabweans who teach in the area interact with a lot of Zimbabwean farmworkers in the area. "We buy game meat, fish and potatoes from some of them which they poach and get from the farms", he said. So I was convinced that Zimbabwean farmworkers were there. Secondly, during my preliminary review of literature I had found that many studies on Zimbabwean farmworkers have been concentrated in upper north municipalities (Mahkado, Musina, Mutale)

[17] http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=964

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of the province. So I felt it was important to expand research along the migration route, while still within the Limpopo province.

In the following paragraphs I will explain the fieldwork procedure that I employed, including exploratory visit and how important it was to my research as well as the techniques that I used to identify Zimbabwean farmworkers and Zimbabweans who are working in other sectors outside the farm labour market. This will be followed by a description of the ethnographic data collection tools that I used.

3.3.1 Exploratory visit to Limpopo – 'Network theory on trial'

On 20th September 2015, I left Harare, set for my exploratory visit to Limpopo and armed with a set of copies of a structured questionnaire that I intended to pre-test. I chose to use public transport – I travelled by bus from Harare to Musina – a distance of about 8 hours, then took a commuter omnibus from Musina to Vivo, where Collen would collect me. Vivo is a small town in the Blouberg Local Municipality and it lies south of the Brak River, in a gap between the Soutpansberg and the Blouberg Range, along the M521 highway which connects Musina town and Polokwane[18]. We were 12 passengers on the commuter omnibus (9 men and 3 women), and all the way, the driver of the commuter omnibus, which left Musina at about 7pm was playing Zimbabwean music, which to me was an indication that most of his clients are Zimbabweans. I had a brief chat with a girl (I estimated her age to be between 17 and 19 year) sitting next to me. She told me that she is from Masvingo (Southern Zimbabwe) and she came to South Africa in 2013 after finishing secondary school (Form 4). She followed her mother who came to work in South Africa around 2002. Her mother lives and works on a horticultural farm just about 50Km from Musina, along the N1 highway. When the girl came to South Africa, she worked as a casual labourer on the farm for 3 months before she got another job in a Chinese retail shop in Musina town. She stays with her mother on the farm, and commutes to work daily, except on Sundays.

I also followed a discussion involving three men sitting in front of me. From their accents, I could tell that they come from Chipinge (South Eastern Zimbabwe). They had had spent almost three hours at the border negotiating their entry into South Africa since they did not have passports. They were allowed in after bribing immigration officers manning the entrance

[18] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vivo,_Limpopo

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points. According to them, they took the evening omnibus to Vivo because, because "there will be no police to harass them again along the way" – and surely we did not see any police check point on the way. I was hesitant to join the discussion, so I could not get the details of how much they paid to the immigration officers. The three men, whom I assumed were not familiar with the area, as much I was not familiar as well, seemed they had already made arrangements with someone who was waiting from them. They kept calling the person as we were travelling, and at one point they gave the phone to the driver so that he could get instructions on where exactly to drop them since it was now dark. They were dropped at the gate of a farm about 30Km before Vivo. About 25 minutes before we got to Vivo, a Zimbabwean man who was occupying a seat just behind me, asked for my cell phone. He wanted to buzz his wife but his own phone had run out of power. After buzzing, the wife called back, and she was instructed to wait for him 'at the white gate' because he wanted her to assist with carrying some groceries. After a brief conversation with him, I learnt that the men had gone to Musina to buy some groceries to re-stock a spaza shop that he is running at the farm. As we were approaching Vivo, another man who was talking to a friend said, "I heard of a farm called 'Z and Z' which pays very well around this area, and I wish I could work for that farm". I later learnt that the exact name of the farm is ZZ-2. It is a farming enterprise operating mainly in the Limpopo Province, as well as in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Namibia, and it produces a wide range of products including tomatoes, avocadoes, mangoes and apples[19]. Another man, who was sitting at the back sit, "that's where I work, come during tomato picking time around June, there will be lot of work". The two men exchanged cell phone numbers and promised to keep each other updated on opportunities on the farm.

The omnibus setting was useful to me and it later informed the focus of this thesis. From the music that the driver played, through to the discussions which took place while we were on board, I was able to relate that to literature about the extent to which Zimbabwean migrants have moved into the Limpopo province (Addison, 2014; Bolt, 2015; Hall, 2013). In addition, it contributed adjustments that I later effected to my research approach after the exploratory visit. For instance, interview questions aimed at exploring livelihoods diversification techniques and how social networks facilitate mobility of Zimbabwean migrants within the farm labour market were influenced by the stories that I heard during the omnibus ride.

[19] http://zz2.biz/

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During the two weeks of my exploratory visit, we drove through farms in the Blouberg-Molemole area, visited some farm shops and shopping centers around the farms. We also visited pubs and bottle stores – where Collen told me that this is where Zimbabweans farmworkers come and quench their thirst during the evenings after work and on weekends. At one of the drinking places, I met a group of seven Zimbabwean farm workers (all were men) enjoying Zimbabwean music which was being played by the bar tender. I observed that not even one of them was drinking beer or even a soft drink, some were playing pool, and some were dancing to the music along some South Africa women holding quarts of castle and other brands. The scene helped me to critically think about my research focus and the potential questions that I had to reflect on – what social networks exist between farmworkers and people outside the farms? How are these networks formed? and how important are they to Zimbabwean farmworkers' access to food and other livelihood opportunities?

I was also introduced to an officer of the South African Police Service (SAPS). He owns a bar in Bochum, a major township in the Capricorn district. He is a very close friend to one of the Zimbabwean teachers who works in the area. The police officer knows Zimbabweans (based in Bochum) who have coordinated the establishment of an association of Zimbabwean farm workers – which assists farm workers during times need, for example when a farmworker is ill or dies. In addition, I observed the long distances that farmworkers had to walk to get to the nearest shopping centers where they could buy food – in some instanced these range from 10Km to 15Km stretches. I had informal interviews with 5 farmworkers, pretesting my questionnaire. Suspicion, and a continual fear of persecution and deportation among the Zimbabwean farmworkers, was noticeable. For instance, after introducing myself and my research, and even after showing him my university registration details, one Zimbabwean farmworker who I met during an inter-farm soccer tournament which was held at Indermark (a township located to the west of Vivo town) refused to talk to me, alleging that I was an undercover official who was disguised as a researcher in order to get his personal details. For those who were willing to engage I could still observe that they were always cautious when responding to questions. This potentially could result in the interviewees concealing crucial details about their personal migration accounts and subsequently compromise the research results. Ryan and Dundon (2008) cautioned that "an initial problem is the existence of suspicion on the part of the interviewees ... The respondent may agree to an interview, but be reluctant to divulge the level and detail of information required. The consequences can be highly problematic and even derail the entire research project" (p. 443). I considered this

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statement of caution seriously during the course of my research. The pretesting therefore did not only enable me to identify questions which were a bit sensitive and which the subjects were reluctant to respond to, but it motivated me to change the interview approach all together. Instead of having a semi-structured interview questionnaire, I ended up a 'mixed data collection approach' which consisted of structured and informal interviews, direct observations and the use of secondary sources. I will discuss further in this chapter the exact techniques and tools that I used for data collection, In Chapter 5, I will also present a detailed analysis of how the suspicion and continual fear of persecution among Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers is linked to their vulnerability.

I visited a farm compound, which was a bit secluded from the main farm, and had its own entrance separate from the farm's main gate, and asked a group of women how I could get in touch with the farm manager so that I seek formal permission to get onto the compound and do interviews. I was given the farm Manager's phone number. I called the farm manager with the intention of setting an appointment with him, but he openly told me that he was not willing to meet with me, and could not allow me entry onto the farm. On another farm, near Indermark, I was greeted by a Zimbabwean supervisor who comes from Bulawayo, Matebeleland. He seemed to have a twin role of being a supervisor and farm guard. His house was secluded from the farm compound – it faced the main entrance of the farm to the west, maybe 100Km from the gate or less, and on the south was what I thought is a warehouse – I saw broken farm machinery and other farm equipment which were piled outside the building. He promised to talk to the farm manager so that I could get permission, but after reminding him for more than 3 times, he still had not talked to the manager. In both cases, I sensed some form of suspicion and hostility – something which had also been observed by previous researchers when they tried to gain entry onto the farms in Limpopo (e.g. Human Rights Watch (2006)). In my initial design of the research, my initial intention was to get onto the farm compounds so that besides interviewing the farmworkers, I could also observe their living and working conditions. The refusal of entry to me became a 'blessing-in-disguise'. It challenged me to re-formulate the research design so that I could also investigate the politics behind entry onto farm compounds and what that means to the farmworkers. So instead of getting onto the farms, where farmers were reluctant to allow me entry - I resorted to looking for farmworkers in public and social places such as beerhalls, grocery stores and farm shops where they frequent. Direct observation, and participation in an inter-farm soccer tournament which was held in Indermark also enabled by to collect rich data for the thesis. These tournaments are organized by farmers

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and they bring together workers from neighbouring farms. However, the inability to get onto the farms also had some negative consequences. I could not speak to farmworkers who, because of their precarity, prefer to stay on the farms.

Overall, the exploratory visit provided me with the following benefits; (a) it inculcated in me an appreciation of the research site – its physical and social context; (b) it abled me to engage with communities relevant to the research, for instance the farmworkers and SAPS officer. According to the CIHR et al. (2014), this process of community engagement allows one to review the research design and adopt appropriate procedures that ensure that cultural norms and the interests of potential participants are respected. Therefore, through the exploratory visit, I identified ethical issues that needed to be considered during the course of the research; (c) it served as a trust building exercise – I introduced myself to some of the farmworkers and other Zimbabwean professionals that I met – we exchanged numbers, and I later followed up with them during data collection phase; and (d) it challenged me to sit back and reflect, and motivated me to re-design the research approach and to develop data collection tools which were relevant to the context.

3.3.2 The process of identifying research participants

As I explained above, prior to getting to the field, I had already established links with Collen who already had contacts with other Zimbabwean professionals in the municipality, and some links with Zimbabweans who are working on commercial farms in the Blouberg-Molemole area. This facilitated my entry into the study area, and since some form of trust had already been built between Collen and some of the Zimbabwean farmworkers, the burden of introducing myself and gaining the confidence of research subjects was significantly lessened.

Prior to my field visits, Collen had already set an appointment with James, a Zimbabwean farmworker who works at a game farm in Molemole. James is a familiar figure in the area because he sells poached game meat and fish to Zimbabwean teachers and other Zimbabwean professionals within the Blouberg – Molemole area. Applying the snowball sampling technique, James helped me to identify other Zimbabweans, who in turn nominated others. My interest was to gather personal stories, and make my interpretations and analysis based on them, hence I limited the number of Zimbabwean farmworkers that I interviewed to 51.

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In addition to the farmworkers, I also made a deliberate effort to identify Zimbabweans who used to work on commercial farms, and have since moved out. I wanted to learn about the factors that motivated them to move out of the farm labour market and how they did it. Since Zimbabweans who have moved out of the farm labour market cannot be identified and defined as a distinct group in the Blouberg-Molemole area the most practical method of identifying them was to use the snowball technique. While re-fuelling the vehicle that I was using during the exploratory phase of my research at a service station in Vivo, I was coincidentally served by Taurai, from Masvingo, southern Zimbabwe. Through a friendly conversation that I had with him, he disclosed he once worked at a farm before he became a fuel station attendant, and he knew other Zimbabweans who used to work on the farms. Taurai connected me with other Zimbabweans who have left the farm labour market. There are no statistics to quantify their number but I managed to interview 5 during my field work.

There is already a network of Zimbabwean teachers who work in schools around the Blouberg-Molemole area. They regularly meet and interact (restaurants and bottle stores) during weekends and after work. They use these network platforms to share updates on Zimbabwe socio-economic developments, teaching vacancies within and outside Limpopo, jokes and other information. Attending these platforms provided a rich dataset for my research. They talked about how they were benefiting from cheap farm products – eggs, chicken necks, fish, game meat, potatoes, cabbages and fruits – that farmworkers would either clandestinely or formally get from the farms and sell to them. Some talked of how they were assisting fellow Zimbabwean farmworkers by providing them with house cleaning and laundry piece-jobs, while others expressed their fear of the farmworkers – referring to them as “dangerous, thugs and robbers”. I had explained my research to them so they had consented to me taking notes during our discussions. Interviewing them enabled me to understand social classifications that exist among Zimbabwean migrants living in the Blouberg-Molemole area. In addition, data that I obtained guided my analysis and strengthened arguments in explaining the forms and nature of social networks that Zimbabwean farmworkers forge and how they use these networks to access food and off-farm livelihood opportunities.

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Demographic profiling of interviewed Zimbabwean migrants

Based on research which they conducted in 2004 and 2005 with 143 Zimbabwean farm workers (79 men and 64 women) in northern Limpopo province, Rutherford & Lincoln (2007) found that the workers’ ages ranged from 15 to 60 years old, and that the average age was 29 while

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the mode was 21 years old. Their study did not find any significant difference on the number of Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers by gender. Rutherford & Lincoln's findings are reflective of the national emigration trends that have been mapped out by the Zimbabwe Statistics Agency (Zimstat) during the 2014 Labour Force and Child Labour Survey (LFCLS), which shows that for the period 2009 to 2014 women have almost equally constituted the same volume of emigrants as men **(Table 3).**

Table 3: Percent Distribution of Zimbabwean Emigrants (2009-2014

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
15 - 19	9.3	10.2	9.7
20 - 24	32.1	31.1	31.7
25 - 29	24.4	24.5	24.4
30 - 34	15.9	13.8	15.1
35 - 39	7.8	9.6	8.5
40 - 44	4.5	5.2	4.8
45 - 49	2.9	2.5	2.8
50 - 54	1.0	0.8	1.0
55 - 59	0.3	0.3	0.3
60 - 64	0.7	1.1	0.8
65 - 69	0.7	0.0	0.4
70 - 74	0.2	0.3	0.2
75 +	0.2	0.6	0.3
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Zimstat (2014, p. 30)

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Of the 62 Zimbabweans that I interviewed during my field work, most of them were men (50), and the most represented age range was 35 – 39 years. The minimal representation of women during my field work could be explained by the fact that I met the farmworkers in public places - grocery stores, bars and soccer tournaments - so probably most women remained on the farm compounds. Nonetheless my findings corroborate with a profiling which was done SAMP which showed highest propensity amongst men within the 25 to 44 years age group to occupy the farm labour market (Crush, et al., 2012), and the mean age of 37 years among Zimbabwean farm workers that was observed by Bolt (2015) while conducting field work at the Grootplaas estates. The relative absence of women in the sample meant that I could not do a gendered analysis of the research data.

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Educational profile of interviewed farm workers

During the research, I attempted to establish the educational levels of Zimbabwean farmworkers and those who have been associated with farm work. The professional group (6 teachers) was left out of this aspect of my research based on the assumption that they already have some formal profession based on the nature of their work. I found that majority of the farmworkers had completed their secondary level education (Form 4), but they did not have specialized professional qualifications. This agrees with Mawadza (2008)'s findings that the agricultural sector is a key employment target for undocumented migrants who, in most case, do not possess professional qualifications. Visser & Ferrer (2015) have also confirmed that most jobs in agriculture are lesser skilled occupations.

Only two farmworkers told me that they had proper working documents – they benefited from the DZP facility. While most literature sources present a general picture that farmers in Limpopo have been, and are resistant to labour recruitment reforms, the fact that 2 farmworkers told me that they were assisted by their employer to acquire proper documents is an indication that there are farmers who are actually adhering to those reforms. In my enquiry I found that the two farmworkers have permanent contracts and had been working on the farms for more than 10 years each. A scrutiny of the of 197 941 ZDP beneficiaries, in particular, highlighting the number of beneficiaries per sector, would give portray a clear picture One ex-farmworker disclosed to me that that she fraudulently acquired South African identity documents. I will present her personal account in the next chapter.

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Where do the Zimbabwean farm workers come from?

Previous researches have always linked Zimbabwean farmworkers in Limpopo to southern parts of Zimbabwe (Matebeleland, and Masvingo). This in undoubtedly true given pre-colonial ties that existed between ethnical groups in northern South Africa, and those in the southern Zimbabwe. For instance, Rutherford and Addison found that most of the Zimbabwean workers were from the Beitbridge area had family ties to South African Venda living in the Soutpansberg area. They had been visiting each other as families and to work on the white owned farms (2007). During the 'mixed migration' phase which became more visible from year 2000, a more nationalized wave of irregular movement into South Africa's farms was witnessed, with migrants coming from as far as Harare, Mashonaland and other northern provinces (Crush, et al., 2012). A considerable number of Zimbabweans (33) that I interviewed during my fieldwork come from Masvingo, Matebeleland South or Midlands provinces, and a

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few migrated from Manicaland, Matebeleland North and Mashonaland West. I did not meet anyone from upper north provinces like Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland East. This confirms what other researchers - e.g. (Bolt, 2015; Hall, 2013; Ncube, et al., 2014; Crush, et al., 2000; Addison, 2014), have found - that the farm labour market in the Limpopo province still rely heavily on Zimbabwean migrants who come from the southern provinces of the country. I have so far discussed some of the ethnographic data collection techniques which I used. In the next section, I will elaborate on these, and explain in detail the tools that I used for data collection and why they were important for my research.

3.3.3 Field data collection

Field data collection was spread over a period of 17 months, from January 2016 to May 2017. Within this period, I conducted a total of four field visits, with each visit lasting for two weeks. In conducting the field work, I was guided by ethnographic research procedures which require the researcher to spend time building trust with the research subjects and using data collection techniques appropriate to the social context at the research site. I will explain how I applied these procedures in the data collection process.

From the exploratory visit that I had conducted in September 2015, I introduced myself to, and exchanged contacts with a number of farmworkers and Zimbabwean professionals in the Blouberg-Molemole area. From my base in Harare, Zimbabwe, I always texted them and checked with them how things were going, and could ask them to meet during my next visits, had drinks together and discussed about socio-economic issues back home and even in the Blouberg-Molemole area. Subsequently, in addition to assisting me to recruit other Zimbabweans for the research, they became primary participants when I was now conducting semi structured interviews which I will discuss in more detail later. Having been informed by the exploratory visit, I had to modify my data collection approach. Before being exposed to the area, I had initially planned to collect data through semi-structured interviews, direct observations and focus group discussions (FGDs). But through the exploratory visit, I deduced that it was not possible to do FGDs and to use semi-structured interviews alone. So I modified the approach so that I could use semi-structured interviews, informal interviews based on a flexible interview guide and direct observations.

I administered the semi-structured interviews (See Annex 1 for the interview guide) to 33 participants who I had built some trust with, and who seemed to have understood the focus of

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my research. The semi-structured questionnaire enabled me to collect indicative data on education and qualifications of participants, their legal status, reasons for migrating and food consumption patterns. This data was not meant to be statistically valid, instead, I deliberately made it illustrative so that I could use it to build my case about the movement of Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the South African labour market. It also helped me to situate my informants and understand the nature of the sample that I engaged with. Through the interviews, I was able to establish factors that have pushed individual respondents to work on the farms, how they find work on the farms, where and how they get food while working on the farms, and how individual farmworkers respond to the food environments on the farms. With the consent of the participants, all the semi-structured interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

Due to limited time I could not spend much time in the field as a way of building trust with most of the farmworkers. I was not a full time student and at the same time I was holding down a full time job in Harare. Acknowledging this limitation, the interview guide which I developed was adjustable – I could use it within different contexts and yet still enabling me to gather enough data to respond to the research questions. I used it instrument to initiate and collect data from informal discussions with farmworkers who were not very familiar with the nature of my research. These I conducted the informal interviews in group settings, not necessarily using the FGD approach, but more informally, where participants could tell and discuss stories (either personal accounts, or stories that had to do with conditions on the farms that they were working). I could then use the guide to make follow-up questions or to ask new questions all together.

I also employed structured observation as a field data collection technique. This ethnographic technique, also known as systematic observation, allows for the gathering of information directly without the mediation of interviewees. Observations focused on key elements of the study, including living and working conditions, food environments on the farms as well as livelihood and food security systems among Zimbabwean migrant farm workers. I used data from the structured observational technique to enrich descriptions about the living and working conditions, and the food systems of Zimbabwean migrant farm workers in the study area.

Throughout the research period, I maintained a field work journal in which I recorded all notes, including direct observations, informal and formal interviews and interesting events. Where

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appropriate, and when the interviewees had consented, responses were recorded using a voice recorder which I then later decoded into the journal. All interviews with farmworkers were conducted in Shona which is the major native language for Zimbabwe. While a significant number of the interviewees are from Matebeleland regions of Zimbabwe, where Ndebele is the dominant language, they are proficient in conversing in Shona.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

In analysing the data, I borrowed key elements of the 'Framework Analysis Approach' which systematizes the analysis of qualitative data and produces highly structured outputs, that enable readers to be clear about the stages by which the results have been obtained (Lacey & Luff, 2007; Gale, et al., 2013). I did not follow all the four stages (Familiarization, Coding, Charting and Mapping and Interpretation) that the 'Framework Analysis Approach' proposes - In my initial steps of data analysis I went through an extensive familiarization process which involved reading and making sense of interview responses, including all my fieldwork notes (Lacey & Luff, 2007). This process enabled me to build an apprehension of key features, and to mark key thematic elements from the interviews.

Thereafter, I organized the data into broad themes which enabled me to have a general descriptive explanation of the subject matter. The process allowed me to create sub-themes which I then used as topics and sub topics in my thesis. In organizing and interpreting the data I followed Attride-Stirling (2001)'s advice – to always refer back to the original research question and address this with arguments grounded on the patterns that emerged from the data. Besides descriptive texts, interpretation and presentation of data in the paper is also aided by illustrative visuals, including tables and graphs.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Measures were put in place to mitigate against potential risks that could result as a result of the research. Zimbabwean farmworkers are a vulnerable socio-economic group, and their movement and interaction with the rest of the South African society is restricted because of the fear of being arrested or deported. Hence, they are always alert, and suspicious of strangers who approach them. Being mindful of their situation was a critical part of the research process, from the data collection to interpretation and publishing of the research findings. Care was taken that the research process was done in a way that would avoid harmful consequences to the research participants. My conduct with subjects of inquiry was guided by ethical principles

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which have been explicitly defined by The British Psychological Society (2010), CIHR, et al. (2014) and other research bodies.

Ethical guidelines which have been agreed and adopted by the Canadian Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (PRE) encourages researchers to conduct exploratory visits and meet with various stakeholders before actual data collection in order to understand the context of the research site (CIHR, et al., 2014). The exploratory visit which I conducted in September 2015 helped me to understand the social context in which I was going to undertake my research and pushed me to come up with a research methodology that was relevant to the context of the farmworkers.

Participation in the research was voluntary. Before every interview session, I took special care to properly inform research participants about the aims of the research and emphasized the principle of informed consent. This ensured that subjects were as fully informed about the objective of the study as possible, and that no individual could be disadvantaged by being excluded from consideration (The Social Research Association, 2003; Howe & Moses, 1999). Providing a detailed explanation of the objectives of the research reduced the suspicion that research participants had on me, and reassured them that the research was purely for academic purposes.

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I made it clear to all potential research participants that individuals had the choice not to be involved in research, and that their right to withdraw at any time during the research would be respected should they decided to do so. I had consent forms which were to be signed by the research participants. However, during the course of the research, some research participants were not comfortable to sign the consent forms. One of them plainly told me that he feared that I would take their personal details to migration officers. In such circumstances, I followed the Canadian Interagency Advisory PRE guidelines which recommends using 'oral consent' as a valid form of consenting. I recorded these forms of consent in my fieldwork journals. Because of the fear of negative consequences, and that I had not built enough rapport with most of the farmworkers, some refused to be interviewed outright. Given their context, I respectfully understood and accepted their refusal.

In recognition of the sensitivity of the research subject, the following steps were taken to protect the confidentiality of the respondents: (a) I agreed with the research participants that all names

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would be anonymised; (b) Questionnaires and note books used as part of this research have been safely stored in a lockable office drawer, and; (3) Notes and other materials which are stored as electronic documents have been password-protected to avoid access by third parties. As highlighted by The Social Research Association (2003), social research is based on the maintenance of high standards amongst the professional research community and methods, and procedures and findings should be open to collegial review to avoid compromising obligations to subjects or society at large. Having described the methodological approach that I used, including data collection methods which were employed and ethical issues which I considered, the following chapter shades a descriptive picture of the political economy of Limpopo, demonstrating why the province is important in understanding mobility patterns of Zimbabwean farmworkers in South Africa.

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CHAPTER 4: A PROFILE OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a general description of the political economy Limpopo province. I will describe the geopolitical features of the province as well as its demographic and agro-economic characteristics. By linking the political economy analysis to migration trends between Zimbabwe and South Africa, the chapter will show why Limpopo province is important in the study of Zimbabwean farmworkers in South Africa.

4.2 Location

Limpopo province derives its name from the second biggest river in South Africa, the Limpopo River, which flows through the province. The province is regarded as South Africa's gateway to Africa – it is South Africa's northernmost province, sharing borders with Botswana to the west, Mozambique to the east and Zimbabwe to the north (**Figure 4**).

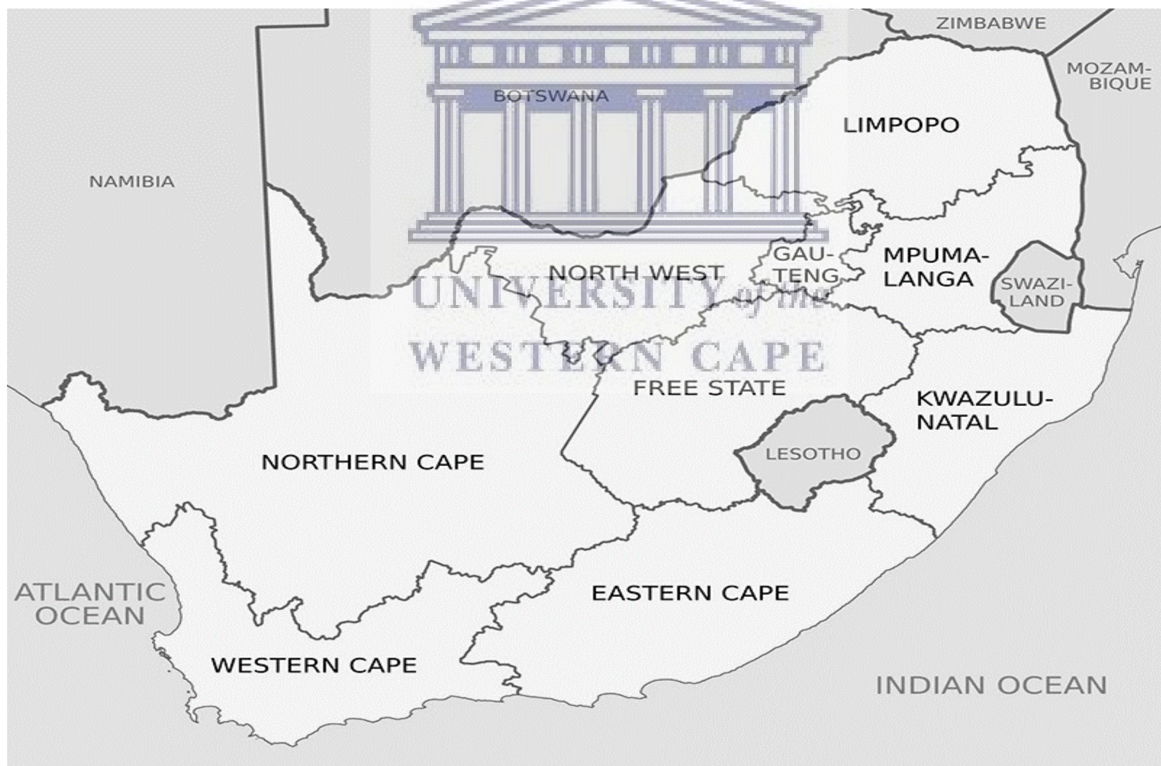

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Figure 4: Geographic location of Limpopo Province
Source[20]

[20] https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/south-africa-fast-facts/geography-facts/south-africa-geography

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The 2011 national census shows that 3% of the people who were counted were born outside South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2014). It is worth noting that this percentage represent proportion of migrants who have been officially counted – volumes of irregular migrants in the province have not been established, but it is estimated that their numbers range from 400 000 and 650 000 (Limpopo DFED, 2004).

The proximity of Limpopo to Zimbabwe makes it one of the regions with the highest concentration of Zimbabwean migrants who either enter on temporary basis (for example Zimbabwean traders who come to buy goods for resale or those who temporarily stay in the region with the intention of moving further south to other regions) or who stay and work in the region on a long-term basis (HRW, 2007). The province has also been a major recipient of irregular Zimbabwean migrants who enter South Africa illegally, and are unable to proceed further south because of fear of being apprehended by the police or by migration officials (Bolt, 2015). As we have seen in Chapter 2, it is estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 Zimbabweans make up 70%-80% of the total workforce living and working on commercial farms in Limpopo Addison (Rutherford & Addison, 2007; Hall, 2013).

4.3 Agricultural production in Limpopo

In this section I will discuss the political economy of agriculture in Limpopo. This discussion will be framed in two parts: a presentation of the major agricultural activities in the province including a description of the dual nature of the agricultural economy (commercial and subsistence), and then a discussion of the influence of post-apartheid agrarian reforms on the configuration of agriculture and labour in Limpopo.

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Two distinct types of agricultural production systems exist: a large scale commercial farming system dominated by white farmers who own up to 70% of the total agricultural land, and the smallholder farming system where poor black South Africans own 30% of the land which is mostly located in the former homeland areas. The commercial farming sector consists of about 5,000 enterprises (Tow, et al., 2011; Statistics South Africa, 2009), and is dominated by horticulture which includes fruit and vegetable farming. Horticulture contributes about 57% of total farming income in the province. The livestock sector accounts and field crops for 25% 11% of gross income, respectively (KPMG, 2012). Intensive commercial animal industries (beef, chicken and pig production as well as game farming) are often located in less favourably endowed areas of soils and rainfall (Tow, et al., 2011). The commercial enterprises are mostly

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large-scale with advanced production technologies. They are linked to markets through tightly integrated value chains and they provide employment to large numbers of farm workers. The ZZ2 tomato farms in Mooketsi (about 140Km from Vivo township) for instance, employ more than 6,000 workers and produce more than 130,000 tonnes of tomatoes for the fresh produce market annually (Tow, et al., 2011, p. 436). The small holder farming system is mainly characterised by subsistence production with little marketable surplus[21]. The smallholder farmers predominantly grow field crop such as maize, sorghum, millet, beans and groundnuts. Sizes of farm plots are small, ranging from 0.5 to 2 ha and are typically located close to villages or in backyards" (Tow, et al., 2011, p. 437).

4.4 Trajectories of agrarian reform and impacts on labour

In Chapter 2 we saw how the mineral revolution resulted in massive demand for labour to work on the mines, and how that partly resulted in shortages of local labour to work on the farms. This resulted in a recruitment drive beyond the South African borders. However, the government banned labour recruitment north of 22^0 S latitude in the middle of 1913, following the deaths of migrants from the tropics who succumbed to pneumonia in the mines. According to Randall Packard, "death rates exceeding 100 per 1000 per annum were common during the first decade of Central African recruitment" (1993, p. 271). The ban further strained availability of labour on the farms. Alan Jeeves notes that white farmers "resisted the implementation of any change which seemed likely to reduce, much less prevent, their access to this important source. … When the employment of tropical labour was banned in 1913, the effect was to drive the influx of northern blacks into clandestine channels and toward other employers. Northern Transvaal [now Limpopo Province] farmers… had come to rely on clandestine alien labour … to the extent of thousands of workers per year" (1986, p. 75). He further states that most of the migrants would falsely claim residence south of the 22^0 latitude to access work on the farms. Although the ban on recruitment of labour from north of the 22^0 latitude was eventually lifted around 1932 (Jeeves, 1986), a preference for clandestine engagements between migrants and employers had already been set.

White commercial farmers owned large tracts of land while blacks, through the 1913 Natives' Land Act, could only own land into the reserves (the apartheid-era Bantustans) (Fraser, 2008).

[21] http://www.lda.gov.za/About%20Us/Background/Pages/default.aspx

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During the greater part of the apartheid era, commercial farmers benefited from government input subsidies, taxation benefits and access to cheap labour (Tow, et al., 2011). Liberalization and deregulation policies which were later implemented through the 1980s and into the 1990s changed the face of agriculture. These policies impacted on the sector differently: on one hand, due to the opening of international market opportunities after the end of apartheid, farmers in Limpopo expanded their production by expanding and consolidating their fields and plantations. This translated to demand for more labour, especially during harvesting time (Rutherford, 2008). On the other hand the focus of the post-apartheid administration on altering the racially skewed distribution of land through redistribution, restitution and addressing tenure insecurity among farm dwellers was received with mixed reactions by the farmers (Ramutsindela, 2007; Fraser, 2008). The Restitution of Land Rights Act (22 of 1994) provided a framework for redress to those dispossessed of land through racist policy or legislation, where "claims can be compensated by transfers of land or other means, including cash payments" (Fraser, 2008, p. 24). Maano Ramutsindela shows that in 2004, approximately 70% of white farmland in Limpopo was listed under restitution claims. Some white farmers sought to frustrate the land reform process by selling off their land to a new black elite, leaving or entering into strategic partnerships with the state (as funder), claimant communities (as landowners) and commercial investors (including former white farm owners as partners in management) (Hall, et al., 2013; Ramutsindela, 2007). As one would expect, the uncertainties around the land reform program did not only change the architecture of the agriculture sector, it also had implications on farm labour. By 2014, Hall, et.al. found that:

> …the number of farming units in Limpopo has been dramatically reduced, largely due to multiple farms being bought up and consolidated into a single operation, a trend associated with the conversion of livestock and mixed farms to game farms. … In response both to seasonal variation and long-term exposure to global markets, investors and landowners have been replacing labour with technology and casualizing employment. Minimum wage regulations have raised wage levels, but also spurred reorganization and technology change to minimize the use of labour (Hall, et al., 2013, p. 54).

The reforms discussed above help to situate the socio-economic context of Zimbabwean migrants looking for work on commercial farms in Limpopo. They find themselves in a labour market that has been heavily casualized due to technological and macro-economic developments, and where the farm owners are cautious about their own future such that they prefer not to commit to employ long-term or permanent workers, while the dominance of

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horticultural production in the province requires high volumes seasonal labour. Consequently, “farmers are keen to employ them as their desperation for work typically predisposes them to work harder and often for lower wages than South Africans” (Rutherford, 2008, p. 401).

The exact number of Zimbabwean migrants living and working in South Africa is unknown, anecdotal data show that commercial farms in the Limpopo province provide employment for many undocumented Zimbabweans as compared to other provinces. In 2004 and 2005 Rutherford and Addison found that ‘70-85% farmworkers on commercial farms north of the Soutpansberg are Zimbabwean, with at least 15,000 to 20,000 of them working and living there. On some farms Zimbabwean migrants comprised some 100% of the seasonal workforce’ (2007, p. 622).

At the beginning of this section I have shown how white farmers in Limpopo historically relied on clandestine migrant labour recruitment. This system persists to date. Its geographical position as South African gateway to the rest of Africa, the rich agricultural activities it is endowed with and the predilection of commercial farmers for vulnerable irregular workers ensure that Limpopo province increasingly serves as a conduit for illicit migration. It is this background that makes the province an interesting site to study forms of resistance to labour recruitment reforms by white farmers and to understand the genesis of collusions and irregularities in farm labour recruitment practices.

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4.5 Characterization of Zimbabwean migrants in Limpopo Province

This section provides a general classification of Zimbabwean migrants living and working in the province. This classification is based on secondary literature and findings from my field work. An essential purpose of my research was to understand, in general terms, social classes of Zimbabwean migrants in the Limpopo province. This was necessary to generate relevant insights with regards to push and pull migration factors, to provide a premise for understanding how farmworkers interact with other social classes and to explain how those interactions are important in influencing mobility of migrant farmworkers and their access to food and other livelihood opportunities.

In general, a key characteristic feature of Limpopo province is the heterogeneous nature of the migrant population – it is a province of interaction for cross-border traders who come for shorter periods of time to buy goods in Musina and cross back to Zimbabwe (Bolt, 2015),

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transit migrants who pass through to other provinces further south (Crush, et al., 2012), irregular migrants who seek employment on the farms and elsewhere, professionals working as teachers and other white collar jobs (de Villiers & Weda, 2017), as well as gangs (including human smugglers) who take advantage of the desperation of employment seekers (HRW, 2007).

A study conducted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2017 shows that "[while] the average size of the [informal] economy of the 158 countries over 1991 to 2015 is 31.9% percent … the largest ones are Zimbabwe with 60.6 percent, and Bolivia with 62.3 percent of GDP" (IMF, 2018, p. 2). There are no official figures on the proportion of Zimbabwean cross-border traders within the informal economy sector but a significant number travel to nearby Musina town regularly where they buy goods for resale (Chikanda & Tawodzera, 2017). In addition to the traffic of cross-border traders, Limpopo is infested with gangs (known as *Maguma-guma* in Shona), "who patronize the Beitbridge Border post engaging in criminal activities ranging from petty theft to facilitating the illegal crossing of goods and people through the border post and also through informal channels. Some of the *Maguma-gumas* lie in wait for people who will be trying to border jump by traversing the river banks on both sides of the Limpopo or in the known paths that are used by migrants once they are on the South African side of the border" (Mpondi & Mupakati, 2018, p. 218). The role of these gangs in facilitating entry of Zimbabwean migrants in the South African farm labour market is highlighted in personal stories (in Chapter 5) which I captured during my field work.

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From the field work in Blouberg-Molemole area, I found that a continuum of networks exists among Zimbabwean living and working in Limpopo. These networks are characterised by some forms of clientelism relations: clientelism in the sense that some farmworkers benefit from links that they have established with professionals in the Blouberg-Molemole area, while on the other hand, professionals get access to cheap farm produce through the farmworkers. For example, one female interviewee, Mary, indicated that during weekends when she is off from farm work, she does house cleaning and laundry for a Zimbabwean teacher who lives in Bochum. In turn, she gets her payments in the form of food or cash and she gets free food while doing the chores. Likewise, James, who works at a game farm in the Blouberg-Molemole has established a network of customers outside the farm labour market where he supplies poached game meet and fish in exchange of money to supplement farm wages.

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These reciprocal relations are also apparent among the farmworkers themselves where social networks are constructed on common interests, relations or place of origin bases. For example, my interview with Garikai, confirmed the importance of these relations to the food security and livelihood sustenance of individual Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers. Garikai attends the Apostolic Faith (Johanne Masowe) religious denomination and members of the church meet every Friday. During these gatherings, they help each other with spiritual counselling, and respond to challenges that anyone of their members face, including referrals to work opportunities. When Garikai first came to South Africa in June 2010, he was accommodated by a family belonging to the sect until he got a job. He also borrows money or food from his fellow church members whenever he is in need (personal interview, 18 January 2016).

James, the game meat seller, has become a trusted figure who at times gets cash advances from teachers on the promise that he would provide game meat. Mary, who supplements her farm-work income by doing house cleaning and laundry for a Zimbabwean teacher indicated that she is entrusted by the latter to the extent that at times she gets cash advances when she is in need. Trust among the farmworkers is also apparent through supplementary livelihoods initiatives that farmworkers do together (these are described in Chapter 6) and the assistance that they provide to each other. For example, the high incidence of murder and robbery are forcing farmers to pay workers through the bank rather than taking the risky option of bringing cash. In such instances, a new construct of social relations emerges where farmworkers without bank accounts are required to nominate a colleague, whom they trust and who have a bank account, where their wages would be deposited. I did not fully explore the efficacy of this arrangement but one Zimbabwean farmworker, Tafadzwa, indicated to me that, “the system creates conflicts among farmworkers because in some cases, the person that I nominate may use part of my wage without my consent, or takes his or her time to withdraw it from the bank” (Personal interview 5 July 2016).

The relations among Zimbabweans living and working in the Blouberg-Molemole area are also at sometimes characterized by supremacy, suspicion, chauvinism and submission. These relationships were characterised both by reciprocity and antagonism. On one hand, Zimbabwean professionals, like teachers, often regard farmworkers as an inferior subgroup which is commonly engaged in criminal activities. This is evidenced by their unwillingness to closely interact with farm workers. Whenever we visited the bars for interviews, Collen always advised me to be “very careful because most of them are violent and they are thieves”. On the

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other hand, the professionals provide alternative income generating activities for the Zimbabwean farm workers (housework, laundry, etc.), and take advantage of the farmworkers' existence on the farms to access horticultural products and meat.

Most Zimbabwean farmworkers that I interviewed exhibit self-marginalization tendencies – they experience themselves as an inferior and a disadvantaged sub-population and regard strangers with suspicion and caution. They seemed to have internalised their marginal status, and as I will discuss further in Chapter 5, this has contributed to their geographic vulnerability. Except for those that have already established connections outside the farm labour market, most Zimbabwean farmworkers rarely interact with other Zimbabwean migrants outside the commercial farms, and their own farmworker-groupings are even visible when they visit public places. Although I had fostered some form of trust with the farmworkers through regular field visits, I observed that they were always cautious when responding to questions or interacting in public places. For example, during one of the field trips, I visited a bar at Indermark township in the company of Mathew, one of the farmworkers. After he introduced me to a group of Zimbabwean farmworkers who were playing pool, I placed a challenge on the pool table and tried to initiate some discussions with them. After the game ended, they all dispersed and only the two of us remained at the pool table. Mathew later told me the reason why they left; "... you know, at times law enforcement agents use our own brothers to arrest us. They are forced to accompany the police to places where we frequent…". From this statement, I learnt that the Zimbabwean farmworkers' precarious situations have placed them in positions of conjecture about visitors, even when they are accompanied by their own. I could have minimized this speculation about my presence if I had spent more time of building trust and rapport with them. There is still a suspicion that undercover officials might disguise themselves as researchers in order to get their personal details. I asked Mathew if any farmworker had been apprehended by officials who came on the pretence of being researchers but he could not confirm. Because of their situation, irregular farmworkers tend to tread and interact cautiously in public places, which does not only add to their marginalization, but to their psychological vulnerability as well.

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4.6 Conclusion

The commercial farming sector in Limpopo is an important source of employment and income for illegal Zimbabwean migrants. As we have seen in the chapter, the opening of international market opportunities after the end of apartheid led to the expansion of horticultural production which demand for more labour, especially during picking periods. White farmers in Limpopo were ambivalent to redistribution and restitution reforms which aimed to alter the racially skewed distribution of land and to address farm workers' rights. Uncertainties around the land reform program contributed to the changing architecture of the agriculture sector and farm labour regime. White farmers benefit from the cheap labour which is now easily accessible from irregular Zimbabwean who are desperately looking for work.

The characterisation of Zimbabweans interviewed during my field work revealed the existence of diverse social classes who are not only dependent on each other, but whose relations are characterised by a mixture of trust and suspicion, and whose levels of vulnerability are diverse. Undocumented Zimbabwean farmworkers use social networks as means to facilitate mobility, and to access opportunities to supplement farm wages and enhance their food security. Because they are undocumented, and are working on the farms illegally, the farmworkers are always cautious of their environment – this helps them to avoid being apprehended and deported back to Zimbabwe. A relatively young demographic profile of the sample mirrors the precarious Zimbabwean economy which has failed to create employment, and has forced millions of economically active citizens out of the country (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2010; Luebker, 2008; Visser & Ferrer, 2015; Crush & Tawodzera, 2016; Hall, 2013). The following chapter chronicles mobility patterns of Zimbabweans into, within and out of the farm labour market. In particular, the chapter answers questions like; (a) How do Zimbabwean migrants find work on commercial farms in Limpopo? (b) What is the role of social capital in the movement of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market?

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CHAPTER 5: MOBILITY INTO, WITHIN AND OUT OF THE FARM LABOUR MARKET

5.1 Introduction

The migration patterns of Zimbabweans into South Africa have been a centre of attraction for research in the recent past. This chapter adds to this literature by presenting personal accounts on push and pull factors influence Zimbabweans migrants to join the South African farm labour market. The chapter also captures the various strategies that irregular Zimbabwean migrants use cross the border and to find work on the South African commercial farms. I will also offer a characteristic analysis of mobility patterns within the farm labour market and discus how this is linked to the farmworkers' access to food and other livelihood opportunities.

5.2 Migration factors

As discussed in Chapter 2, causes of migration are defined in terms of push and pull factors. Push factors are conditions that drive people out of their area(s) of origin (such as economic, social, or political problems) while pull factors attract them to the place(s) of destination (IOM, 2016). From my interaction with Zimbabweans in the Blouberg-Molemole area, I identified two broad categories of centrifugal and centripetal forces of migration; namely, socio-economic and political factors. Two kinds of political factors were identified' first, the political crisis in general, which is very closely connected to the economic crisis; and secondly, political persecution, which is much more individually specific. As observed by Makina (2007), the factors are not disconnected, but mutually inclusive in that one factor could have led to another, and led to another.

Based on the discussions that I had with Zimbabweans living and working in the Blouberg-Molemole area, it seems economic challenges associated with political instability have predominantly influenced their migration to South Africa, and more so, pushed individual Zimbabwean migrants into the farm labour market. For example, Taurai's account in **Box 1** below provides a clear demonstration of this.

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Box 1: Taurai was working for a manufacturing company in Harare before migrating to South Africa. The drastic economic down-turn (characterised by a spiralling inflation) that followed the highly contested 2008 presidential elections in Zimbabwe eroded all his savings - his monthly salary at that time could not even cover his transport costs for a week. As a result, he was forced to cross the border and look for farm work in the Limpopo province in the same year (Personal interview, 21 September 2015). By the time of my field work, Taurai was working as a fuel attendant at one of the major service stations in Vivo, along the M521 highway.

While the main reason that pushed Taurai to migrate was his economic situation, he always highlighted how this came as a result of the country's political crisis. Out of the ten Zimbabwean women that I talked to, four indicated to me that they moved to join their husbands who were already working on the farms while the rest told me that they migrated on their own, and emphasized a lack of livelihood opportunities back home as the main cause of their decisions to move. Peter, a known supporter of the MDC, attributed his entrance into the South African farm labour market to the volatility of the political environment which gripped Zimbabwe during the 2008 presidential elections. He fled to South Africa after receiving death threats because he was supporting the opposition.

From these examples, it is clear that factors of migration among Zimbabweans are multi-faceted, mutually inclusive and have increased in intensity and density over the last 20 years. The vestiges of the economic structural adjustment programme, farm invasions of 2000, political violence and spiralling inflation have all affected the country adversely; the country's position as a major exporter of agricultural produce has shifted to being a nation which can no longer adequately feed its citizens and relies on food imports (Mapfumo, et al., 2012); the country continues to experience a downturn in the manufacturing sector – manufacturing companies have either closed or are operating below capacity utilization (Zimwara & Mbohwa, 2015). Between 2011 and 2015, an estimated "458 companies closed shop in the manufacturing sector, rendering 9 988 people jobless" (Kaseke, 2015, p. 22). Due to fiscal deficits, the government has over the past two decades neither created employment opportunities nor provided social services to poor households (Luebker, 2008). The deteriorating socio-economic and political environment resulted in a massive exodus of Zimbabwean citizens crossing the border in pursuit of livelihood opportunities in neighbouring countries like South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique and even abroad (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2009).

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In the course of the field work, I also learnt that the continued socio-political instability that has gripped Zimbabwe since the turn of the 21st century has created a form of generational trauma. The expectation of unemployment after completing school is demotivating young people to the extent that some are leaving school, and cross the border to work on farms in South Africa. For Tobias, a 23-year-old man from Bikita, Masvingo Province, "there is no need to continue with school when my brothers who graduated from university many years ago are selling airtime on the streets". Tobias told me that soon after writing his final 'Ordinary Level' in 2010 (even before the results were out), he joined his friends who had been working on the farms for some time. According to him, "at least they [his friends) would bring groceries whenever they came home for Christmas and New Year holidays" (Personal Interview, 3 July 2016).

While Zimbabwean migrants, even during the apartheid era, have always been a source of labour to the commercial farms that form a major economic activity in the Limpopo region, this role became more pronounced after the year 2000 when Zimbabwe began to experience socio-economic challenges. Many Zimbabweans (both skilled and unskilled) crossed the border into South Africa (either legally or illegally) and ended up working on commercial farms – with some using the farm labour market as a conduit to accessing other opportunities (Addison, 2014; Bolt, 2015).

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Two distinct features have shaped the movement of Zimbabweans into the South African farm labour market. On one hand, Zimbabwean migrants are moving from an economy which has failed to create jobs and employment opportunities for its citizens; an economy characterised by informal economic and livelihood activities, including vending and cross border trading (Luebker, 2008; Mafumbate, et al., 2014; Hammar, et al., 2010). On the other hand, the South Africa farm labour market that they move into has changed. The tightening of labour regulations which are aimed at providing farmworkers in South Africa with some form of protection has made irregular Zimbabwean workers more attractive. Because of their illegality and the desperation to get income, they accept whatever conditions which are set by the farmers.

It is at this point important to highlight how Zimbabwean migrants' food security situation is influenced by their move onto the farms. To them, food security is both a key trigger, and a fundamental objective of migrating (WFP, 2017). Zimbabwean farmworkers are not moved by

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short term food security but they work on the farms as a long-term livelihood aim. Zimbabwean migrants are fleeing from an economy which is failing to provide livelihood opportunities, with the hope of finding greener pastures in South Africa which enhance their own livelihoods and at the same time the food security of households at origin. An example of this situation is presented in **Box 2** below.

> **Box 2:** After divorcing with the father of her 2 sons in 2008, Virginia Muyambo (36), worked as a house maid in Chiredzi, south-eastern Zimbabwe where she was getting a monthly wage of $50. This was not enough to provide for her and her two children's needs. Her lack of formal qualifications (she attended school up to Form 2) coupled with a continued constriction of the local labour market shuttered her dreams of ever finding other employment opportunities in the country besides domestic work. Hence, she decided to move to South Africa. She is now able to send monthly groceries for her children and make some savings for their education. Virginia is just one of number of Zimbabweans whom confirmed that they now have some form of secure source of income in the form of farm work.

While Virginia's case is a peculiar one; in that she is able to sustain herself, and support her family back home, a conclusive interrogation of the impact of remittances from Zimbabwean migrants within the South Africa farm labour market on the livelihoods of migrants' families at origin is still required. This could not be pursued within the scope of this thesis. Rather, the following sections elucidate on techniques and routes that Zimbabwean migrants use to cross the border into South Africa, and present what I learnt about methods of finding work on the farms, including role of family networks and mass recruitment be farmers from refugee camps in Musina.

5.3 Entry routes into South Africa

Through interacting with the farmworkers, I learnt that mechanisms that Zimbabweans use to irregularly cross the border into South Africa are complex and involve a number of players, including immigration officials on both sides of the border, border security agencies as well as individual syndicates that help people to cross the Limpopo river, who have been referred to by Mpondi & Mupakati (2018) and Bolt (2015) as *Maguma-gumas*.

Passport holders go through the normal passport control route where their passports are stamped with a 30-days permit to stay in South Africa. However, most of the passport holders

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who I talked to do not have work permits which allow them to work in South Africa, or to stay on a longer-term basis so they are required to exit the country upon expiry of the 30 days. While Ramathetje and Mtapuri (2014) found that some Zimbabweans come into South Africa with travel documents but become illegal due to overstaying when their travel documents expire, in my case I found that Zimbabweans, especially those that work on farms near the border, have devised a fraudulent way to deal with this. In order to avoid crossing the border every 30 days, or risk being blacklisted by immigration officials because of overstaying, passports from a group of Zimbabweans (say 10) are collected and taken to Beitbridge border post by one person, or given to cross-border bus drivers, who then presents them to immigration officials for stamping upon paying a bribe of R50 for each passport on the South African side, and another R50 per passport on the Zimbabwean side. This means that their passports would be stamped as if they have exited South Africa yet in actual fact they are still working on the farms. During festive seasons, when they go back to Zimbabwe, they just pay exit fines to immigration officials without presenting their passports. On, 28 March 2018, well after my field work, Zimbabwean media houses were awash with the news that a 42-year-old cross-border bus driver had been arrested by South African police after he was found with 16 passports which he had fraudulently facilitated their endorsement on behalf of Zimbabweans illegally staying in the neighbouring country[22]. It shows that this practice is common, and has been going on for some time.

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I learnt that non-passport holders also take advantage of the porosity of the border security system to gain entry into South Africa. They evade passport control and pay bribes, which can be up to R100 per entry, to security officers manning the border. Another important route of entry for undocumented Zimbabweans, which has been widely reported on, is the use of illegal entry points along the Limpopo river (Rutherford, 2008; Bolt, 2015; Crush, et al., 2000; IOM, 2009; Addison, 2014). Meda (2017) also observed some common practice where illegal migrants hide in trucks and buses when crossing the border. In **Box 3** below, I continue with the case of Virginia Muyambo to profile some of the techniques that undocumented Zimbabwean migrants use to cross the border.

[22] https://www.herald.co.zw/bus-driver-caught-with-16-passports/

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Box 3: The Quest for a Livelihood: Perils, curiosities and anxieties of moving into the South African farm labour market

After making up her mind to cross the border into South Africa, Virginia joined her cousin sister (Sarah) who was coming back to South Africa in January 2009 after the 2008 Christmas holiday. Sarah had been working on a farm in Vivo for 2 years.

> *"Sarah assured me that it was going to be very easy to find work since it was January when most farmers would be looking for seasonal workers to plant their fields. None of us had a passport and I was surprised to see that there is an organized syndicate that help people cross the border. We got to the bus terminus at Beitbridge around 12 noon and my cousin told me that we had to wait until it got dark. We ended up being a group of about 10 people at the terminus, and it seemed everyone, except me knew what was happening. At around 7pm, a truck came, and my cousin advised me that these were the guys who would help us to cross the Limpopo River, and each one of us had to pay R50. We were driven to some place along the Limpopo River. I was a bit scared but my cousin assured me that we were safe as she had dealt with the guys before. They helped us to cross the river, and upon crossing, another truck was waiting for us in a bushy area on the South African side - we also paid R50 each. I don't know how the truck guys coordinated, but I think they called each other. We were driven to Musina where we slept at the taxi rank".*

The next morning, Virginia and Sarah boarded the first taxi heading to Dendron, and they dropped at Vivo shopping centre, along the M521 highway, before walking for about 30 minutes to the farm where Sarah was working. A Zimbabwean Supervisor related to Sarah facilitated Virginia's employment at the farm. She was initially offered a one-month contract as a seasonal worker, mainly involved in weeding and spraying potato fields. Her wage averaged R80 per day, and the exact amount depended on whether she met her daily targets. As a seasonal worker, she was not entitled to accommodation so she had to stay with Sarah. When her contract ended, she was told to check with the farm again in 3 months when potatoes would be ready for picking.

> *"I stayed at the farm compound for almost a month without doing anything, and I used all the money that I had worked for to buy food and other basics. I couldn't even send some money back home for my children. I got assistance from one of the Zimbabwean supervisors whom I had develop a friendship with – he negotiated a long-term contract with the farm manager on my behalf. So far, I have moved from department to department – I worked in the field, I have also worked in the pack-shed, now I am working in the stores department".*

According to Virginia, so far, she has achieved far much more than what she could have done if she had remained as a domestic worker in Zimbabwe. Remittances that she sends back are able to support her two children's schooling and their food security needs.

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Compared to the period between 2000 and 2009 when most Zimbabweans entered South Africa illegally because the government was failing to produce passports (hence introduction of ETDs) (Bolt, 2016; HRW, 2006; Addison, 2014), the situation has improved[23] - individuals can now apply for an ordinary passport which is obtainable within 15 to 30 days. However, during the field work I established that a significant number of Zimbabweans, just like Virginia and Sarah, still cross the South African border without proper travel documents and work on the farms illegally. This trend can be explained in three ways; first, on application, an administrative fee of US$50 is paid for an ordinary passport[24]. This amount is not affordable

[23] https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/03/31/passport-office-now-a-shining-example-of-civil-service-efficiency/

[24] http://www.rg.gov.zw/services/passport

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to many Zimbabweans whose sources of income have been eroded by job losses – some never had an opportunity to engage in any form of income generating activity. As a result, they are forced to cross the border illegally and seek employment on the farms. Secondly, Zimbabwean migrants are not asked to produce travel documents when they seek employment on the farms. Some even confirmed to me that they are using different names from those on their official identity documents. To them, having passports do not make any difference because they never use them anyway. Thirdly, unlike other sectors, the agriculture sector in South Africa is still loosely monitored hence the farmers are reluctant to comply with migration and labour legislation (Rutherford & Addison, 2007; Bolt, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2007; Addison, 2014). Farms in the Limpopo province require intensive labour, especially during the picking season, and because of their illegality and that they are desperately looking for work, Zimbabwean migrants become sources of cheap labour.

Using illegal entry points along the Limpopo is however risky. There have been reports of migrants drowning in the river[25], or 'being attacked by *Maguma-guma* who patrol along the Limpopo River (Rutherford, 2011, p. 217), and they have to deal with South African "soldiers who …often staging ambushes on the dirt roads that run between the farms, to trap would-be migrants" (Bolt, 2015, p. 68).

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While most Zimbabwean farm workers were reluctant to discuss the strategies that they use to cross the border - presumably because they did not trust me to the extent of divulging that 'personal and sensitive' information – I learned from my informal interactions with them that many were still using illegal entry routes to get to the farms. In Kok, et al. (2006)'s assertion, the risks that they take are indicative of their determination to find work: though migrating illegally is a wager which they might lose, they know they will definitely lose if they do not migrate.

5.4 Moving into the South African farm labour market

A key question in this section is; how do Zimbabwean migrants end up being on the commercial farms? Previous studies have emphasized the role of labour brokers in the recruitment of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants (Hågensen & Nicola, 2009; Perberdy, 2010; Women on Farms Project & Centre for Rural Legal Studies, 2009). In this research, I found that the labour

[25] https://www.newsday.co.zw/2017/01/2-zim-border-jumpers-drown-limpopo-river/

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brokerage system is no longer very visible, particularly in the recruitment of Zimbabwean farmworkers. I found two major entry routes into the South African farm labour market, namely direct recruitment by farmers and entry through already established social networks. In the sections below, I present findings on how Zimbabwean migrants have benefited from direct recruitment by the farmers or farm managers, and demonstrate how social networks have been facilitating entry of migrants into the farm labour market.

(a) Direct recruitment by farmers

At peak of the influx of Zimbabwean migrants into South Africa, the DHA opened a Refugee Reception Office (RRO) at the showgrounds in Musina town, and Zimbabweans previously in hiding flooded the venue to apply for asylum (Betts, 2013). "No shelter was provided for those seeking the permits and the majority waited in the bare yard of the showground for days, or longer, to get their permit" (Bloch & Chimienti, 2012, p. 39). In his own assessment, Alexander Betts, the Leopold Muller Professor of Forced Migration and International Affairs at the University of Oxford, observed that the showground "[had become] a de facto refugee camp" (2013, p. 65). Farmers around Musina recruited cheap labour from the camp before it was closed in February 2009. Of the 56 farmworkers and ex-farmworkers that I spoke to, I learnt that 31 of them started off their careers in the farm labour market through direct recruitment by the farmers or farm managers: this involved being picked from asylum shelters in Musina or walking from farm to farm looking for seasonal work. Earlier research by Derman and Kaarhus (2013) has also confirmed how the informal shelters for Zimbabwean asylum seekers became important hunting grounds for commercial farmers between 2008 and 2009. The picking of Zimbabweans from asylum shelters was never formalized. "It was an ad hoc arrangement similar to arrangements under the special employment zone when South African officials would set up a mobile station on the bank of the Limpopo to process Zimbabweans heading to borderline farms, and commercial farmers would send trucks to recruit workers" (Bolt, 2015, p. 101).

(b) Role of Social Capital and Social Networks in farm labour recruitment

Undocumented Zimbabweans have utilized different forms of social capital which exist on commercial farms in the Blouberg-Molemole area to enter the South African farm labour market. Beresnevièiûtë (2003)'s definition of social capital as "horizontal interrelations of social agents (both individuals and groups) based on trust, communication, and activities that comprise the grounds for material or symbolic exchanges" (2003, p. 104)and Dolfsma and

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Dannreuther (2003)'s distinction between bonding and bridging social capital, where "the first is horizontal, among equals within a community, and the second is vertical between communities" (p. 407), helped me to understand farm labour recruitment processes in the Blouberg-Molemole area. It was important for me to investigate, from my ethnographic research, how "relationships of trust and reciprocity that inhere in social networks" (Light & Dana, 2013, p. 603) as pre-requisites of social capital manifest themselves in the recruitment of farm labour.

My research found a co-existence of bonding and bridging social capital in facilitating entry of Zimbabwean migrants into the South Africa farm labour market. Bonding social capital, in the form of family members or friends already working on the farms, is instrumental in facilitating entry into the farm labour market (Bolt, 2015). The spatially extended social networks help undocumented farmworkers to cross spaces where they are vulnerable. New entrants into farm labour market use already existing relations to enter, settle and acclimatize with life on the farms. This form of social capital is demonstrated by Virginia's case in **Box 3**; being linked through family ties, Sarah (Virginia's cousin), who had been working on the farms assisted Virginia to manoeuvre through illegal entry points along the Limpopo river and to find employment on the farms. I learnt from Farai Muusha that at times farmers ask Zimbabweans with long-term employment contracts to look for other Zimbabweans that they trust. Farai works at a farm that specializes in poultry, dairy and beef production along the N1 road, between Vivo and Dendron townships in Molemole and he has developed personal relations with the farmer to the extent that the latter assisted him to get a work permit, and he is the only one among other 29 Zimbabwean workers at the farm who gets 3 weeks paid leave during Christmas break. Farai works in the farm shop. Each time that the farm needs seasonal workers, Farai is tasked with the responsibility of identifying 'trustworthy and hardworking' Zimbabweans. About 2 months before I started my field work, the farmer wanted to hire a tractor driver, and Farai had to call his brother-in-law back in Zimbabwe to come and take over the position (Personal interview, 23 September 2015). From my engagement with the farmworkers during both formal and informal discussions, I learnt that Zimbabwean farmworkers use social events - church gatherings, soccer tournaments, meetings over beer – as platforms to inter-farm interactions, enabling them to discuss and refer each other to new or better employment opportunities.

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In their work in Limpopo, Bolt (2015) and (Addison, 2014) found paternalistic and clientelist relations among Zimbabwean farmworkers in Limpopo. As a result of these paternalistic and clientelist social relations, some form of bridging social capital also exists, where relations are characterised by “vertical ties often operating through formal hierarchical structures, and … [and] likely to be associated with reciprocity and thin trust”[26]. I found that, as in the earlier studies by Addison (2014) and Bolt (2015) Zimbabwean supervisors and ‘*mapermanent*’ (documented Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers who possess open or permanent contracts) played an important role in controlling the farm labour market. Zimbabwean migrants who have relatives or friends with positions of authority (usually supervisors) are easily recommended to the farmer or farm manager for employment. The concept of bridging social capital also transcends beyond the farmworkers community, to interactions between Zimbabwean farmworkers and their employers. Farai’s account demonstrates some good farmer-to-workers relations which at times facilitate the entrance of other Zimbabwean migrants into the South African farm labour market. From Kerr et.al (2017)’s research in the Western Cape, these relations are based on the good work ethics that some Zimbabweans possess (p. 51). Farai is tasked with the responsibility of recruiting Zimbabweans on behalf of the farmer, while at the same time he gets benefits which are not accessible to other farmworkers. Mobility into the farm labour market was thus shaped by the interaction between bonding and bridging social capital – for instance, Farai get recruitment tasks because his employer trusts him (bridging social capital) and in turn he invites Zimbabweans that he has relations with (bonding social capital).

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While social capital is seen as “critical for poverty alleviation and sustainable human and economic development” (Dolfsma & Dannreuther, 2003, p. 406), it is equally important in facilitating the mobility of migrants into South Africa’s farm labour market. Social relations which exist on commercial farms in the Blouberg-Molemole area, have enabled Zimbabwean migrants to easily penetrate the farm labour market. Most Zimbabwean farmworkers (41) that I interviewed indicated that they found jobs within the first 2 weeks of getting into South Africa. A critical component of the discussion however, which is presented below, is to identify patterns of movement of Zimbabwean migrants working on commercial farms in the Blouberg-Molemole area. This paves way for an analysis of the importance of social capital in influencing mobility patterns of Zimbabwean migrants within and out of the farm labour market.

[26] https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/explanation-types-social-capital/

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5.5 Patterns of movement of Zimbabwean migrants in the farm labour market: *passing-through and settling-in*

I identified two categories of Zimbabwean migrants occupying the farm labour market within the Blouberg-Molemole area. The first category, which I will call the *'passing-through'*, consists of migrants who are working on the farms but who have no intention of staying there. These are mostly qualified professionals who possess legal documents or individuals with active 'social networks' outside the farm labour market. They use the farm labour market as a conduit to accessing other opportunities, and to negotiate their way out of it. For instance, one of the 6 Zimbabwean teachers (Peter) that I interviewed has some experience of the farm labour market. Peter spent a month working on a farm in Musina when he first came to South Africa in 2009. He was employed as a qualified teacher in Zimbabwe but he left the country during the period of economic crisis in early 2009. His intention was to get to Johannesburg where he would join a relative who was already working there. However, when he crossed the border, he encountered the *Maguma-guma*, and was robbed of the few dollars that he had. He knew no one in Musina, and as a result he could not proceed to his final destination. He had to work on a farm near the border for two weeks to raise bus fare to proceed to Johannesburg (Personal interview, 22 September 2015). In another case, Able, a qualified welder who fled the economic melt-down in Zimbabwe in 2009, worked on a farm in Musina for a year until he had saved enough money to buy a welding machine. He then relocated to Bochum and started a small 'informal' welding business (personal interview, 28 January 2016).

The second category, which I will call the *'settling-in'* group consists of migrants who left Zimbabwe with the full intention of working on the farms, and undocumented migrants whose personal circumstances force them to stay within the farm labour market. This category also includes what Bolt (2015) referred to as '*mapermanent*' (documented Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers who possess open or permanent contracts). For most undocumented Zimbabwean migrants, commercial farms provide employment opportunities while also offering some form of refuge from law enforcement agents (Mawadza, 2008; Bolt, 2015). Ultimately, it becomes a labour market of choice. These tend to stay, or move within the farm labour market instead of looking for alternative employment opportunities elsewhere.

Key sub-questions emerge from the characterisation above, which help to unpack the specific objective of determining the role of social capital in the movement of undocumented

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Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market - What factors influence the *'passing-through'* group to move? How does social capital facilitate their movement? What motivates the *settling-in* group to stay on the farms? What shapes their movement within the farm labour market? The following section attempts to answer these questions by presenting what I learnt from the fieldwork about mobility patterns of Zimbabwean migrants within and out of the farm labour market.

5.6 Moving within and out of the farm labour market

The question of why undocumented Zimbabwean migrants work on the farms has been well documented (Crush & Tevera, 2010; Bolt, 2016; Bolt, 2015; Hall, 2013; de Jager & Musuva, 2015). However, most of the studies view 'commercial farms' as a homogenous entity, and assume that Zimbabwean migrants become sedentary as soon as they get into the farm labour market. This section demonstrates a complex pattern of mobility which is partly influenced by social capital, and partly by the availability of alternative livelihood opportunities outside the farm labour market.

Social capital shapes life on the farms, including individuals' access to opportunities that enhance their livelihoods, and influence patterns of movement within and out of the farm labour market. New entrants into the farms who have family members in positions of authority, or who enter into relations with farm supervisors or managers get preferential treatment in terms of housing, better paying positions and long-term contracts (Rutherford, 2011; Rutherford & Addison, 2007). They have opportunities to set up alternative income generating ventures such as small plaza shops on the farm compound or keeping chickens or grow vegetables which help them to diversify their livelihoods. Given the privileged position that they occupy, these have the likelihood of ending up establishing 'permanence' on the farms (Bolt, 2015), and remain within the *'settling-in'* group. Out of the 51 Zimbabwean farmworkers that I interviewed, 31 have worked on the farms for more than 5 years, and none among them hinted at moving out of the farm labour market.

I gathered that among Zimbabwean farmworkers within the *'settling-in'* group, there are tendencies of continuous movement within the farm labour market - when one farm falls short of providing attractive working conditions and livelihood needs they move on to 'perceived' greener pastures within the same labour market. In some cases, 'cyclical movements' within the farm labour market have become a characteristic feature**.** Because of the high volumes of

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horticulture production most farms in the Blouberg-Molemole provide seasonal employment. Zimbabwean migrants utilize familial and other social networks to convey information about the availability of seasonal work. Hence movements within farms are facilitated through horizontal links, a form of bonding social capital, that have been established among Zimbabweans working on different farms and because of the nature short-term nature of contracts that many farmworkers have, they are not bound to one employer for long periods. Cyclical movements were also observed by Bolt (2015) during his field study at the Grootplaas farm in the Limpopo region, and by Kerr et.al (2017) in the Western Cape Province. Zimbabwean farmworkers use existing networks, or explore new ones, to identify farms that have favourable wages, or to completely manoeuvre their way out of the farm labour market.

In Chapter 3, I reported my experience overhearing a conversation in a taxi omnibus from Musina to Vivo, where one farmworker indicated that he was looking for someone who could assist him to get a job at ZZ2 Farm because he heard that the farm 'pays well', and the other conversant responding that "that's where I work, come during tomato picking time around June, there will be lots of work". This suggested to me that most farmworkers invest in establishing horizontal connections with other farmworkers, and these forms of social capital are established through the medium of shared language. Studies of migration have revealed that the linguistic resources of immigrant communities provide the social power that facilitates migrants' access to economic opportunities and social integration (Nawyn, et al., 2012). Thus language and lack of familial ties limit most of the farmworkers from establishing networks outside the farms. The decision to stay on the farms is also explained in terms of either Rutherford (2011)'s argument that they have claimed some form of 'belonging' to the farms (p. 207), or Bolt (2015)'s observation that some are now '*mapermanent*' who in relative terms, receive better treatment than the new entrants and therefore reluctant to leave the farms. During my fieldwork, I only met 2 permanent Zimbabwean employees – the supervisor who also doubles as a farm guard and one who told me that he benefited from the ZDP facility. Among the 51 farmworkers that I talked to, most (38) indicated that they would continue to work on the farms and support their families back home; only seven said that they were looking for other opportunities outside the farm labour market, while a few (6) suggested that they would go back to Zimbabwe when the economic situation improves. To me, the keenness 'to go back to Zimbabwe when the economic situation improves' is an indication that they don't enjoy working on the commercial farms but what only keeps them there is some form of livelihoods provisioning associated with farm work.

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I observed some propensity and desire to move out of the farms among new, and relatively new entrants (those with less than 5 years) into the farm labour market. Some had visions to move to other provinces in South Africa, while others were actively looking for alternative employment. According to Tafadzwa (30) told me that, "[he] cannot sustain his family from the meagre wages that [he] gets from farm work" (Personal interview, 3 July 2016). This is obviously very different from Virginia's account who said that she is able to remit food and money to pay for her to two children's school fees from the farm work wages. I will discuss more about these differences in Chapter 6 which focuses on livelihood options that migrant farmworkers employ. However, based on evidence that the agriculture sector is one of the least rewarding sectors in South Africa (Bolt, 2016; Hall & Cousins, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2007; Kerr, et al., 2017; Wisborg, et al., 2013), Tafadzwa's worry about his family's wellbeing is justified. On the other hand, he has only been working on the farms for less than a year, and he has not created networks and linkages to facilitate his movement out of the farm labour market. For those that managed to move out the farm labour market, they did so through family members who are already working in other sectors, and via bonding relations forged with local South Africans (such as South African friends or girlfriends).

In my discussions with the 5 Zimbabwean migrants who have managed to move out of the farms, and who comprise part of the '*passing-through*' group, I learnt that the primary reason for doing so is to pursue opportunities that offer more lucrative returns than farm wages. They have used the farm labour market as a stepping stone, and pre-established as well as opportunistic social networks outside the farms helped to facilitate their ultimate exit. **Box 4** below presents a personal story of Emily (27) which demonstrates how bridging social capital, in the form of vertical networks, are important in facilitating the movement of Zimbabweans out of the farm labour market.

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Box 4: Negotiating movement into and out of the farm labour market – the efficacy of social networks and family ties

Emily Moyo (27) comes from Kwekwe, Midlands Province of Zimbabwe, and she finished her Ordinary Levels in 2005. Shed did not do well in her studies so she could not proceed to 'A level'. While she was still looking for something to do, her mother's friend, Mrs Shoko, offered to take her to South Africa where she was already working at a farm near Bochum. Emily did not have a passport – the driver of the bus that she travelled on facilitated her entry into South Africa after she paid him R50. With Mrs Shoko's assistance, Emily got a seasonal job on a farm near Indermark, a few kilometres from Vivo, where she was responsible for weeding and maintaining tomato fields.

> *"It was my first time to work at a farm. We had daily targets, and there was not even a single day that I met my target during the first month of working at the farm. The daily wage after meeting one's target was R80 and the wages were payable every month end. I only got R800 during the first month of working on the farm".*

According to Emily, working conditions at the farm were very harsh – they worked long hours (from 7am to 5pm), and at times she was forced to forego her lunches in order to meet the daily targets. After two months of working on the farm Emily was lured into a relationship with a Nigerian guy who was operating a retail shop in Bochum, and she eventually moved in with him, living her farm work. Emily got pregnant but the Nigerian guy dumped her and fled to Johannesburg – she doesn't even know his where-about up to now. She was left with nothing to eat so she decided to move back to stay with Mrs Shoko on the farm compound where she discovered that the relations were now a bit sour – *"she would see me as a burden and a parasite in her house"*, Emily said.

"I called my mother back in Zimbabwe who gave me my uncle's (Simba) contact details". Simba, moved to South Africa in the early 1990s and is now a South African resident. He assisted Emily with bus fare to travel to Johannesburg where he stayed with Emily until she delivered.

"My uncle is an active member of the ANC so he linked me with some people in the party. They helped me to get a South African identity card and passport" (Emily fraudulently changed her name to Shantel Dube). Using Simba's ANC connections, Emily was allocated a house in Soweto under the RDP programme – *"it's now my house, but I am still Zimbabwean. Because I am very fluent in Zulu, nobody would know that I am from Zimbabwe. I still have a Zimbabwean national identity card which I use when I am in Zimbabwe".*

With the assistance of her uncle, Emily set for matric exams and passed. At the time of my filed work, she was completing her second year of study for a Banking and Finance Degree at one of the major universities in South Africa.

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Emily's case does not only demonstrate how undocumented Zimbabweans use social relations to access off-farm opportunities, but it also provides insights on how 'the hiding of identities' transcends beyond the farms - to fraudulently acquiring South African documents that enable them to access benefits available for South African nationals. To show how rampant the strategy of fraudulently acquiring identity documents by Zimbabwean migrants had been; in September 2009, the South Africa government offered "Zimbabweans already in the country on or before March 31, 2009 the chance to turn in any fraudulent South African identity documents without penalty and then apply for the appropriate study, work, or business permits" (US Department of State, 2011, p. 17).

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From my discussion about social classes of Zimbabwean migrants in the Blouberg-Molemole area, and characterization of mobility patterns within the farm labour market, the following lessons can be drawn with regards to the *settling–in* and *passing-through* groups First, perceptions of 'belonging' (Rutherford, 2008), lack of external social networks and limited literacy levels keep the *settling-in* group within the confines of the farm labour market boundaries. Hence for them, opportunities to move are availed through horizontal social relations within and across farms. New entrants with relatives who occupy senior positions have high chances of accessing opportunities which motivate them to stay on the farms. Mistreatment of new entrants by senior workers reflect unfavourable working conditions which force the former to seek opportunities on other farms or out of the agriculture sector, which in most cases is difficult if they don't have relations outside the sector. For the skilled migrants, their professional qualifications help them to step out even when they have not established relations outside the farm labour market.

Often, integration of migrant farmworkers into the receiving societies is found to be a common feature defining their migration patterns (Jentsch, 2007; MacÉinrí, 2007), and I found it to be positively correlated with the formation and function of social networks. The concept of social integration has various meanings in sociology literature, but put simply, it "indicates principles by which individuals (actors, agents, or subjects) are bound to each other in the social space and it refers to relations among the actors, i.e. how the actors (agents) accept social rules" (Beresnevièiûtë, 2003, p. 97). I use this concept to explain how 'social integration' into the South African society is enabling undocumented Zimbabweans to access off-farm livelihood opportunities. I interviewed Charles (38) who runs a small vehicle repair business in Bochum. After working for 2 years in the production section at a farm in Molemole, Charles was assigned to the delivery department where he would accompany a South African driver on fresh produce deliveries to supermarkets within the Limpopo province. He became friends with the driver to the extent that on weekends he would be invited to the latter's home in Inveraan village, just a few kilometres outside Bochum. After some time, he started dating a South African girl in the village and eventually got married to her. Charles was linked to his wife's cousin who was operating a vehicle repair garage in Bochum. "I left the farm and started working with him as an assistant mechanic. I had never repaired a vehicle before. He taught me all the basics and as time went by, I was now able to do minor vehicle servicing on my own" (Personal interview, 20 January 2016). Charles is now regarded as part of his South African wife's family, and from the skills that he acquired, he has established his own vehicle

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repair business. He charges between R200 – R300 for minor vehicle services, and on average he gets between R2, 000 – R3, 000 per week, far much more than the R2, 500 that he used to get while working at the farm. He employs two assistants who are both from Zimbabwe. While language can be a barrier for migrant farmworkers' social integration, from Charles's submission, I learnt that undocumented Zimbabweans prioritise learning local languages as a way of avoiding detection by immigration officials whenever they appear in public places. This takes me to the next section where I will discuss about conditions that lead to the geographic vulnerability of undocumented Zimbabwean farmworkers.

5.7 Geographic vulnerability and social exclusion of Zimbabwean farmworkers

The purpose of this section is to explain in more detail the vulnerability of Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers as they traverse their way into, and within the South African farm labour market. The analysis is presented within the context of geographic vulnerability and social exclusion, two conditions which are closely linked to mobility of the farmworkers. The definition of vulnerability differs with the discipline in which it is being used. For the purpose of this thesis, I draw from a compilation of definitions by Paul (2013) which summarise the definition of vulnerability as "the susceptibility to circumstances that makes [people] unable to sustain a livelihood" (p. 8). The geographic vulnerability of Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers is better understood by using the social capital framework to situate farmworkers within their unique set of temporal and spatial connections (Manvell, 2006), and by employing social exclusion conceptual framework, which is used to "describe a state of extreme disadvantage experienced by particular groups in a society" (Mathieson, et al., 2008, p. 73). I will use these two to draw linkages between the vulnerability of Zimbabwean migrants and their constrained mobility within the South African farm labour market.

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Besides the risk of being apprehended by the police, migration officers or solders who man the border, undocumented Zimbabwean migrants also encounter varying levels of vulnerability as they traverse the farm labour market. All the farmworkers that I talked to highlighted that the South African farm labour market has in one way or another, contributed to the improvement of their livelihoods. However, confirming Addison (2014)'s and Bolt (2015)'s work, I learnt of varying levels of vulnerability among the different social classes of Zimbabweans who work on the commercial farms. For instance, the quest for better working conditions and favourable contracts force women to get into sexual relationships with married men, exposing the

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farmworkers to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, and resulting in some men abandoning their families back home (Bolt, 2015).

The vulnerability of farmworkers can also be viewed within the lens of the social exclusion conceptual framework. The term social exclusion is widely used in sociology literature to mean being excluded from sharing same opportunities as the majority. "This may be due to social isolation …, or through discrimination based on nationality, language, race or religion" (Richmond, 2002). Richmond further asserts that the denial of a category of persons of their fundamental human rights is a form of social exclusion. The social exclusion of Zimbabwean farmworkers is tied to the remoteness of farms from public facilities and the legal status of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants which limit their mobility beyond the farm labour market. Long distances between some farms and public places like shopping malls and grocery shops keep farmworkers confined to the farm compounds. In my interview with Charles, he told me that some farmworkers spend more than a month without getting out of the farm because there is no transport to take them to the nearest grocery shops where they can buy food. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, such instances result in farmworkers being excluded from information about alternative livelihood opportunities outside the farm labour market. Mobility of undocumented farmworkers outside the commercial farms is also limited due to their legal status. There have been recorded cases of farm raids and rounding up of undocumented farmworkers by migration officials in the Limpopo province (Bolt, 2015; Crush, et al., 2000; IOM, 2009; Addison, 2014). The fear of being apprehended, and reports of xenophobic attacks which have been targeted at foreign nationals, undocumented Zimbabwean farmworkers are always cautious of their environment and limit appearance in public places.

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As has already been presented in the literature review, casualisation of the farm labour market exposes Zimbabwean farmworkers to other forms of vulnerability. Casualization reduces migrant farmworkers' powers to negotiate for better working conditions, and provides opportunities for employers not to adhere to labour laws (Women on Farms Project & Centre for Rural Legal Studies, 2009). Because of their desperation to find a source of livelihood, Zimbabwean farmworkers are more likely to accept living and working conditions which exclude them from enjoying legally provided farm labour benefits than their South African counterparts.

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5.8 Conclusion

The chapter has shown the intertwined socio-economic and political challenges that Zimbabwe currently faces, and how these challenges continue to trigger the mobility of its citizens into the South African farm labour market. Bonding social capital (in the form of horizontal social connections established among farmworkers) and bridging social capital (in the form of vertical connections that exist among Zimbabweans within and outside the farm labour market) influence mobility into, within and out of the farm labour market. While the factors that push Zimbabwean migrants into the South African farm labour market are varied, the political crises and economic downturn which started to be clearly visible at the turn of the 21st century have been the major migration factors. Migrants create and maintain social ties that perpetuate migration even when there are physical and legislative barriers (Kurekova, 2011; Haug, 2008). Most potential migrants become aware of illegal entry routes, or availability of employment opportunities through Zimbabweans who are already working on the farms. As they cross the border, undocumented Zimbabweans get into a South Africa farm labour market which is defined by commercial agriculture which exploits cheap labour. The fear of being apprehended or being targets of xenophobic attacks constraints their mobility and makes them more exploitable. The implications of constrained mobility are that undocumented migrants have limited access information about alternative livelihood opportunities outside the farm labour market. Pre-existing or new social networks therefore serve as critical sources of information and help to buffer the cost and risks associated with moving (Haug, 2008); they also become important bridges that link undocumented farmworkers to sources of food and alternative livelihood opportunities. In Chapter 3, I discussed how Zimbabwean professionals (especially teachers) regard James as their man – because he sells them poached game meat and fish. I also discussed how some of the professional interface with farmworkers by engaging them to assist with household chores. These are importance livelihood opportunities for the farmworkers. In the following chapter, I will present in detail on-farm and off-farm alternative livelihood strategies that undocumented Zimbabwean farmworkers employ and which I learnt about during my field work.

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CHAPTER 6: LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY SITUATION OF ZIMBABWEAN FARMWORKERS

6.1 Introduction

Previous research has focused much on defining food geographies in urban economies, and to some extent rural areas (Crush, 2012; Kroll, 2016; Crush & Tawodzera, 2016; Makina, 2007). Very few attempts have been made to explain how food environments on commercial farms are structured, and yet access to food and nutrition is an essential element that defines the living and working conditions of farmworkers. A discussion on food environments on commercial farms is therefore important because it helps one to understand livelihood strategies that migrant farmworkers employ (including how they access food, and how they respond to the existing food environments) and whether there is a trade-off between long term livelihood security and short term food insecurity

6.2 Food Environments on the farms

The concept of food environment describes the pathways of accessing food within the constraints of the environments where people live, work and purchase the food (Kroll, 2016). Spending time in the Blouberg- Molemole area enabled me to observe and learn from the farmworkers how the local food environment is structured. In this section, I will discuss about three main components of the food environment, namely (i) on-farm production (e.g. backyard gardens and food from the farm accessible to farmworkers); (ii) Retail food environment (farm shops, compound spaza shops, off-farm grocery shops) and (iii) food accessible through social networks.

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(i) On-farm production

One form of on-farm production is the establishment of backyard gardens and the keeping of small livestock like chickens which farmworkers use as sources of food and means to generate supplementary income. These initiatives benefit both the owners and their counterparts. For instance, in a research with Latino immigrants in the USA, Minkoff-Zern (2012) found that the immigrants were able to grow vegetables of their choice hence providing fresh foods and enabling families to eat particular foods that are part of their diet at home. Instead of walking long distances to grocery stores, farmworkers buy vegetable, and at times live chickens from their peers who grow and keep them on the farm compounds respectively. These initiatives enhance farmworkers' sovereignty over the food that sustains them (2018). However, given

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the increased casualization of the farm labour market, and the fact that most Zimbabwean farmworkers are employed seasonally or on temporary basis, this form of on-farm production becomes a privilege to those with long term contracts whose certainty to remain on the farms is guaranteed. Dependency on farm residues is a second form of on-farm production which of during my interaction with farmworkers and Zimbabwean professionals in the Blouberg-Molemole area. This is common on farms that specialise in horticultural products, citruses and cereal crops. Farmworkers bridge their food deficits by collecting residues from the farm, and in some instances, collecting surpluses for sale to communities outside the farms. During my informal discussions with Zimbabwean professionals, I heard of stories where they could buy potatoes, cabbages and broken eggs directly from farmworkers at very cheap prices. Nkosana (29), who works in a pack-shed at a farm that specialises in potato production in Vivo, told me that his employer allows workers to take residues from grading the produce, and according to him, this enables him and his colleagues to always "have enough food though it might not be of diverse varieties" (Personal Interview, 16 January 2016). I also heard of similar stories from Zimbabwean farmworkers who work on citrus plantations and farms specializing in horticulture production in the Blouberg-Molemole area.

(ii) Retail food environment

During my observation, I came across three farm shops which are owned and operated by the farmers. The shops mostly stock products that are associated with their areas of agricultural specialisation. For example, one farm that I visited specialises in potato and cabbages production and the farm shop only had cabbage heads and potato pockets in stock which came from the farms; another farm that specialises in dairy and poultry production had poultry and dairy products while the third had a relatively wide variety of products – one corner of the shop had piles potato pockets (which are produced at the farm) and the other had shelves with sugar, cooking oil, salt, bathing soap, drinks among other groceries. These shops are easily accessible to the farmworkers who live and work on the farms, as much as they are to community members some of whom come and buy products from repackaging and reselling. I found two situations which could compromise the farm shops' contribution to food access among farmworkers: first, it looked to me like the shops are designed to serve a 'bulk-buying' community. The products were largely packaged in huge packs (e.g. potatoes, eggs, chicken cuts, fresh milk), and in instances where small packages were available, they were more expensive than buying in bulk, and even more expensive than buying from the major grocery shops. I found this rather unwelcoming for farmworkers whose situation does not warrant them buying goods in bulk.

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Moreover, the smaller packages put a major strain to their meagre wages. There is still a continuation of the situation that the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) reported in 2005. On I June 2005, the SAHRC made a submission to the Land & Environmental Affairs Select Committee of the Parliament, alleging that "many farmworkers do not have access to sufficient food … [because of] inflated food prices at some farm shops" (2005). Findings from the three farm shops that I visited were not consistent with this argument. Secondly, I found that because of the thin product range of products that the farm shops stock they fail to cater for food and nutrition needs of farmworkers. Farm shops are owned and operated by the farm owners and workers can purchase food on credit. The credit rates may be higher than other rural retailers by as much as 30%[27]. In some cases, rations from the farmers present an important source of supplementary food. During my ethnographic study, I gathered from eight farmworkers that workers receive food rations, and the equivalent value of the rations would be deducted from their wages. This corroborates with the Human Rights Watch's research findings were "food rations were found to form a substantial part of the payment of agricultural workers across South Africa" (HRW, 2001, p. 55). Within the scope of this research, I did not make an inquiry of how these food rations meet requirements of the Sectoral Determination on farm workers' wages, which stipulates that; "the total remuneration is the total of the money received by the employee and the payment in kind, which may not be more than 10% each of the wage for food and accommodation" (Department of Labour, 2006), but in their research in the North West Province, Lemke and van Rensburg (2014) found that these deductions can be up to 40% (p. 847).

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Proactive farmworkers operate mini Spaza shops in the farm compounds which stock basic commodities. Besides providing additional income to the operators, these shops are conveniently situated to serve farmworkers whose access to major grocery stores is restricted by their legality and the long distances from the farms. I also found that in some cases, farmworkers get basics for credit which they would pay back after receiving their credit. In Khosana's words, "depending on how much the shop owner trusts you, you can get goods for credit, and then pay later upon receiving your wage"[28]. These on-farm plaza shops were also found to be an important source of livelihood on four farms in the Limpopo region (Makwembe, Malamula, Timongo and Mbhongholo) where Wisborg, et al. (2013) held

[27] https://blogs.oxfam.org/en/blogs/women-farm-workers-dying-food
[28] Personal Interview with Nkosana, 16 January 2016

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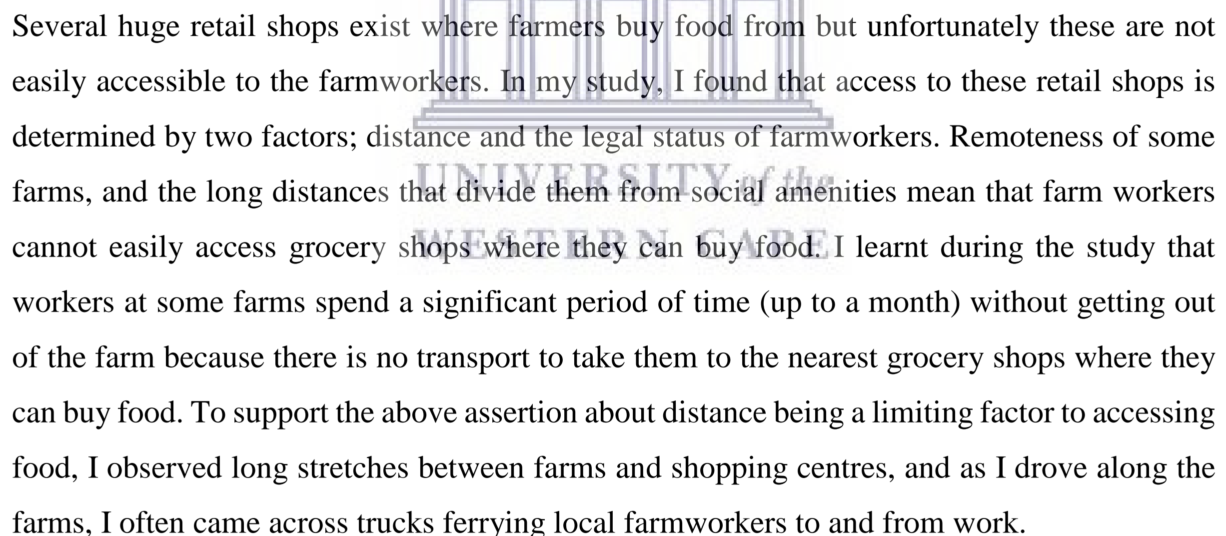
interviews with farmworkers. Just like the backyard gardens and small livestock production, the privilege to set up and operate a spaza shop is linked to one's permanence of the farm; the likelihood to set up spaza shops was higher for farmworkers with long-term contracts compared to temporary and seasonal workers. I however established that some farmworkers do not make use of physical structures (spaza shops), but go from door-to-door selling their wares like second hand clothes. The system of getting groceries or rations on credit and paying back when one gets his or her farm wage is an interesting one. Provision of food rations by the farmer is based on their control of the farmworkers' wages and hence they become certain that they will deduct the equivalent amount at the time of paying the workers, or even at a credit rate when farmworkers get groceries from the farm shops. The credit system being used by on-farm spaza shops operators is a replication of food rations and farm stores. However, slightly different from the configuration of 'farmer-workers' relationships, the decision to give credit is mainly based on trust – you get groceries for credit depending on how much the shop owner trusts you. It is mainly hinged on the nature and strength of social networks that exist on the farms as a form of social capital.



Several huge retail shops exist where farmers buy food from but unfortunately these are not easily accessible to the farmworkers. In my study, I found that access to these retail shops is determined by two factors; distance and the legal status of farmworkers. Remoteness of some farms, and the long distances that divide them from social amenities mean that farm workers cannot easily access grocery shops where they can buy food. I learnt during the study that workers at some farms spend a significant period of time (up to a month) without getting out of the farm because there is no transport to take them to the nearest grocery shops where they can buy food. To support the above assertion about distance being a limiting factor to accessing food, I observed long stretches between farms and shopping centres, and as I drove along the farms, I often came across trucks ferrying local farmworkers to and from work.

Legality of individual Zimbabweans within the South African farm labour market is positively correlated to access to food outside the farms, and is linked to the concept of geographic vulnerability which I discussed in the previous chapter. According to Bolt (2015), "fear of police on the roads keeps [undocumented farmworkers] confined to the labour compounds" (p. 106). Thus farmworkers who cannot get out of the farm compounds because of their legal status are less food secure than those who legally work on the farms unless they have functional social networks outside the farm labour market which can facilitate their mobility or access to food.

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While street vending and informal food stalls are not a common phenomenon on the commercial farms as in urban areas and informal settlement, I observed that Zimbabwean farmworkers depend on these to some extent. Local vendors sell foodstuffs, such as potato chips, burgers and roast meat in public places where Zimbabwean farmworkers frequent – I saw this during my routine visit to Vivo shopping centre and when I attended the soccer tournament at Indermark. In my observation, I discovered that vending and informal food stalls form a critical point of interaction between Zimbabwean farmworkers and local South Africans within the food system. These also become potential points of conception of social networks between undocumented Zimbabweans and South African nationals.

(iii) Food accessible through social networks

I found that the role of social networks transcends beyond finding work and facilitating mobility within the farm labour market to sharing and preparing food in farm compounds. A common feature among the Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers at the farm level is that they share accommodation on the farm compounds – with number of inhabitants sharing a room ranging from 4 to 6 people, mostly among relatives, people coming from the same area or individual who have made friends at the farms. In some instances, farm workers stay with their families. In most cases, farmworkers who share accommodation prepare and eat food together. Food access and food availability influence stability of the groups sharing and cooking together. I was told that members of a food-sharing group would contribute weekly or monthly amounts that each member pays, and they agree on foodstuffs to buy. In other cases, colleagues do not have a systematic way of buying and preparing food - they buy food when it is finished and then each member would contribute equally with the amounts oscillating, and depending on what has to be bought. These group formation and systems demonstrate the importance of social capital, and reinforces is conceptualization as a formation of networks of shared norms, values and understandings[29]. Where understandings and trust lack, the groups are bound to disintegrate. For instance, during the research, became aware that times disputes arise when a member does not want to contribute towards buying food, and in such cases the member is expelled from the group. In addition to these groups, church membership appeared to be a critical element of social capital that contributes to defining the food environment on the farms; particularly how it helps farmworkers to access food and other livelihood opportunities. The

[29] https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3560

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following are just two examples to demonstrate how the role of church membership was presented to me. Garikai's Apostolic Faith (Johanne Masowe) colleagues borrows him money or food whenever he is in need. In the other case, Mathew who goes to the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) said that, I am never worried about food because I always go to my church mates' rooms when I don't have food, and they also come to me if they need anything" (Personal interview, 18 January 2016).

In view of the description of the food environments presented above, I found evidence for a possible existence of 'food deserts' on farms in the Blouberg-Molemole area. Food deserts are defined as geographic locations where affordable and nutritious foods are not easily accessible because of lack of nutritious food providers such as grocery stores and farmers markets (Kroll, 2016; Battersby, 2012; Jiao, et al., 2012). While the concept of food deserts has mainly been used to describe food geographies in urban and informal settlements (Battersby & Crush, 2014; Kroll, 2016; Ceaser & Crush, 2016) my research reveals that it is worth exploring the paradoxical existence of food deserts on food-producing commercial farms South Africa. A direct link exists between food environments and food security. Food environments and the pathways that people use to traverse these, constrain and signal what they buy and eat, hence influencing their food security (Herforth & Ahmed, 2015; Kroll, 2016). From undocumented farmworkers' perspective, their geographic vulnerability, which is characterised by constrained mobility and social exclusion, restricts access to diverse food sources. As a result, their food security situation is compromised, especially for short-term workers who are not '*mapermanent*' and do not have a strong established foothold on particular farms.

6.3 Perception of food security among Zimbabwean farmworkers

A key component of my study was to understand how the issue of food security is perceived among Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers in the Blouberg-Molemole area. An analysis of these perceptions is important because migration, as Choithani (2017) put it, is directly linked "to household food security" (p. 192). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s definition of food security as, the "physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets [people's] dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"[30] helped to unpack this subject in detail.

[30] http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4671e/y4671e06.htm

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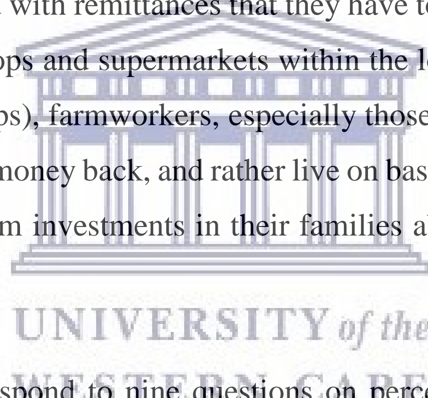
In my study, I found that migrants maintain some strong attachments with their families back home, and hence to them, food security is viewed within the context of 'the family' (them and family members) not individuals. They work on the farm to support families back home – and the conditions of employment are not much of a factor as long as they get their wages. Throughout my fieldwork in the Blouberg-Molemole area, "wages are not enough" was a common phrase among Zimbabwean farmworkers that I interacted with. On the 3rd of February 2016, The South African Minister of Labour, Ms. Mildred Oliphant gazetted R128.26 (an increase from 2015/16 daily rate of R120.32) as the daily minimum rate for a farmworker who works 9 hours effective 1st March 2016.[31] Among all the Zimbabwean farmworkers that I interacted with during the fieldwork, none had knowledge of the minimum wage that they are entitled to. But the majority indicated that they were able to remit some money and food to families back home, a point which seem to corroborate with Crush and Tawodzera (2016)'s work that revealed that Zimbabwean migrants experience high levels of food insecurity in South Africa due to the pressures associated with remittances that they have to send back home. While food might be available in farm shops and supermarkets within the localities of the farms (or even in the mini on-farm spaza shops), farmworkers, especially those who left families back home, would prioritise remitting the money back, and rather live on basic and lean foodstuffs. In other words, they prioritise long term investments in their families above immediate food security needs.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I asked 33 farmworkers to respond to nine questions on perceptions about food security. I adopted these questions from the FAO Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFLAS) Indicator guide. They are used to measure uncertainty or anxiety over food, perceived food sufficiency, perceived food quantity, perceived food quality, reported reductions of food intake, reported consequences of reduced food intake and feelings of shame for resorting to socially unacceptable means to obtain food resources (Coates, Swindale, & Bilinsky, 2007, p. 1). Data gathered through this tool was not meant to be statistically representative, rather, it allowed me to understand the farmworkers that I interacted with during my fieldwork's views about food security vis-à-vis internationally recognized food security standards. By simply grouping and adding the responses, I came up with the table below.

[31] http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/media-desk/media-statements/2016/the-minister-of-labour-ms-mildred-oliphant-announces-minimum-wage-increases-for-the-farming-and-the-forestry-sectors

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Table 4: Food security perceptions among Zimbabwean farmworkers

Food security questions	Frequency (*n = 33)*	
	Yes	**No**
Over the past 7 days, did you ever worry that you or your colleagues/family would not have enough food?	25	8
In the past 7 days, were you or any household member/colleague not able to eat the kinds of foods you preferred because of a lack of resources?	33	0
In the past 7 days, did you or any household member have to eat a limited variety of foods due to a lack of resources?	29	4
In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague have to eat some foods that you really did not want to eat because of a lack of resources to obtain other types of food?	30	3
In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague have to eat a smaller meal than you felt you needed because there was not enough food?	15	18
In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague have to eat fewer meals in a day because there was not enough food?	32	1
In the past 7 days, was there ever no food to eat of any kind because of lack of resources to get food?	32	1
In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague go to sleep at night hungry because there was not enough food?	5	28
In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague go a whole day and night without eating anything because there was not enough food?	0	33

If we use the HFLAS indicator guide, the table above would mean a very high prevalence of food insecurity among the Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers in the Blouberg-Molemole area. These findings agree with Crush and Tawodzera (2016)'s work which revealed that Zimbabwean migrants in general experience high levels of food insecurity in South Africa. As a result of the pressure to remit most of their earnings back home, they respond by minimizing the frequency of food intake and the varieties of food that the take. I also learnt that changing food prices against stagnant farm wages have resulted in shifts in food availability and food access among the farmworkers. For instance, Fortune Mutasa (33) remembers how she used to have tea and bread every morning when she started working on the farms. But now, according

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to her, "…we only cook once in the evening – or spare some food during the night which we warm and eat the following morning" (Personal interview, 5 May 2017). Kruger et.al. (2008) referred to such responses to a perceived food shortage or when the means of food provisioning are disrupted as food-coping strategies (2008). Another Zimbabwean farm worker, Jealous Mhuka (32), recounted a day when he, and his colleagues, only had dried beans and mealie meal in their shared room. They had to boil the beans in the middle of the night, and although they were all hungry, the team did not have alternative options except to wait until the beans got ready after midnight. As Table 4 shows, no one from my sample indicated that they had gone for a whole day and night without eating anything because of lack of food. This reinforces the existence of a functional community food environment where farmworkers get food through social networks and from on-farm food sources even when they don't have enough financial resources to buy from retail shops.

I found that measuring of food security in terms of the variety and frequency of food intake is not congruent to the way that farmworkers perceive their own food security situation. For them, the fact that they have moved out of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe make them food secure. How frequent they eat, or the variety of food that they eat, is not much of a concern. Most farmworkers that I talked to highlighted that they cannot afford diverse food varieties, and the frequency of their food intake is restricted due to the little wages that they receive. However, for most of them, if not all, moving into the South African farm labour market has improved their livelihoods and food security status. While Crush and Tawodzera (2016) shows that Zimbabwean migrants experience high levels of food insecurity in South Africa, for the farmworkers, perceptions of food security are couched comparatively to their areas of origin and not necessarily how they see themselves within the South African context. The perception of improved food security can also be explained by alternative livelihood opportunities which are available to the farmworkers. These livelihood alternatives are explained in detail in the next section.

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6.4 Livelihood alternatives employed by Zimbabwean migrant farm workers

Livelihood diversification has been found to positively contribute to household income portfolios and to cushion households from food insufficiency (Echebiri, et al., 2017; Duressa & Lemma, 2016). Similarly, alternative livelihood strategies that Zimbabwean farmworkers in the Blouberg-Molemole area employ form an important shield against perceived acute food shortages. I found that Zimbabwean farmworkers do not solely depend on farm wages, but

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rather employ a combination of safe and risky alternative livelihood strategies. In some cases, the alternative livelihood options provide farmworkers with much more incomes than what they get as wages from the farmer but the only disadvantage is that income from these is neither consistent nor reliable.

Table 5 below presents examples of alternative means of livelihoods that I learnt of during my fieldwork, and which I have categorised into; (i) production; (ii) trade and barter; (iii) services; (iv) reciprocity; and (iv) illegal.

Table 5: Alternative Livelihood options being employed by Zimbabwean farmworkers

Categories	**Examples of initiatives being implemented**
Production	Keeping small livestock – especially chickens; Household nutrition gardens on the farm compounds
Trade and barter	Operating small on-farm Spaza shops; Buying and selling - second hand clothes, drugs, etc
Services	Transactional sex; Hair plaiting; Repairing electric gadgets – phones, radios, etc; Shoe repairing; Taking photos; off farm jobs
Reciprocity	Internal lending and serving schemes (ISALS)
Illegal	Poaching/stealing; Robberies

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The livelihood alternatives presented in the table above gives an indication of how Zimbabwean farmworkers interact with each other, that is, how the forms of social capital are operationalized to the benefit of individual farmworkers. Furthermore, boundaries demarcating the farmworkers from other Zimbabweans and from local South Africans can be imagined. Most of these alternative livelihood options are being implemented within the confines of the farms, farm compounds or among farmworkers. For instance, setting up of small backyard gardens and keeping small livestock are meant to serve other farmworkers, while talented individuals (farmworkers) provide services like hair plaiting, shoe repairing and fixing electric gadgets within the imagined boundaries of the farms. Other farmworkers buy and sell second hand clothes while others sell drugs like marijuana to colleagues in the farm compounds. Using existing social networks on the farm compounds, some Zimbabwean farmworkers have initiated internal saving and lending schemes (ISALs) - loosely referred as '*marounds*'. Self-

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organized groups of 5 to 8 members agree on an amount (say R100) which each member contributes to a pool every month. The money is borrowed to group members on rotational basis, and can be a major source of additional income. ISALs have been seen to play a critical role in enhancing the food security of vulnerable communities. For example, a study conducted by Chuma, et al. (2013) and Mushuku and Mayisa (2014) have shown that these schemes allow for assets accumulation and make food provision available for families.

Apart from the internal interactions with each other within the imagined boundaries of the farmworkers' community, the livelihood alternatives presented in the table above also help to understand areas of intersection between the farmworkers and other Zimbabweans, or between Zimbabwean farmworkers and local South Africans. Some of the livelihood alternatives that they employ transcend farm boundaries. Assisting with household chores, or in the case of James who sells poached game meet and fish to Zimbabwean professionals in the Blouberg–Molemole area demonstrates how livelihood alternatives are not only confined to the farms – rather farmworkers also benefit from bridging forms of social capital that they have establish with other Zimbabweans outside the farm labour market.

6.5 Conclusion

Food environments and food systems that exist on commercial farms are intricately linked, and how farmworkers traverse their way is an important determinant of their livelihoods and food security situation. Further, the food security of the migrants is directly linked to their geographic vulnerability, particularly insofar as their dependency and vulnerability make it difficult for them to travel around within the local food system to access diverse food sources. Their mobility makes it hard for them to put down roots as producers or as local entrepreneurs. Because of constrained mobility and the remoteness of farms from public service facilities (including grocery shops), 'food deserts' exist on the farms: undocumented Zimbabwean farmworker cannot easily access affordable and nutritious foods. However, the applicability of the concept of 'food deserts' in explaining the food geographies on commercial farms warrants further investigation as it has traditionally been used in urban and informal settlements settings (Battersby & Crush, 2014; Kroll, 2016; Ceaser & Crush, 2016).

Although scholars have shown a high prevalence of food insecurity among undocumented Zimbabweans in South Africa associated with compromised access to and availability of food as well as lean dietary uptake (e.g. Crush & Tawodzera, 2016). Zimbabwean farmworkers feel

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that moving into the South African farm labour market has improved their livelihoods and food security situation. Having migrated from an economy which could not provide livelihood and income generating opportunities, most vulnerable undocumented Zimbabweans perceive commercial farms as important sources of livelihood.

Social networks within and out of the farm labour market provide important anchors for farmworkers to access opportunities to improve their food security and livelihood situation. Vertical and horizontal networks enable them to find alternative food sources and livelihood strategies such as opportunities to set up back yard gardens or finding off-farm work. These become important to complement food and livelihoods that they acquire through farm wages. In the following concluding chapter, I will now put together arguments in this thesis and point out areas that I think need further investigation.

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CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commercial farms in Limpopo province continue to serve as important sources of employment and income for most undocumented Zimbabweans who cross the border into South Africa. Because of its proximity to Zimbabwe, and being an entry province into South Africa, Limpopo province has the highest concentration of Zimbabwean migrants working as farm labourers. While the factors that push Zimbabwean migrants into the South African are varied, the political crises and economic downturn have been the major migration factors. Intensive commercial agricultural activities, and in particular, the dominance of horticultural production in Limpopo therefore provide opportunities for irregular Zimbabwean migrants to easily enter into the South African farm labour market. Farmers in Limpopo have responded to labour and agrarian reforms being implemented by the post-apartheid government (including market liberalization, withdrawal of farmer subsidies and extending workers' rights to the agriculture sector) by adopting initiatives that reduce production costs and that limit their exposure to legislation through labour casualization. Their status as illicit workers, and their desperation to find work which give them some income, expose Zimbabwean migrants to exploitation as they become attractive sources of cheap labour. While paternalistic relations which characterise the farm labour market give farmers the advantage of controlling farmworkers' living and working conditions, the farms provide some form of refuge (from immigration officials) for the illegal migrants whose mobility is constrained because of the fear of being apprehended and deported back to Zimbabwe.

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Drawing from the concept of social capital and the network theory of migration, I have shown how horizontal and vertical networks facilitate the mobility of irregular Zimbabwean migrants into, within and out of the farm labour market. Potential migrants use pre-existing social networks to get information about strategies of crossing the border and where to find work while new entrants also rely on social networks to manoeuvre within the farm labour market. This study has also shown a high degree of mutuality within and among social classes of Zimbabwean migrants in the Blouberg-Molemole area. Social groups which are created on the farms do not only serve the purpose of facilitating information sharing, but they are also forms of social capital for which individual members depend on for their food security and livelihood needs. This interdependence is not only limited to the boundaries of the farm labour market. In Chapter 5, I have shown that relations established between Zimbabwean farmworkers and other Zimbabwean social classes in the Blouberg-Molemole area have facilitated the flow of benefits

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in both directions - in the form of income, part-time jobs and links to move out for the farmworkers, and access to farm produce for the other social classes.

Aside from social class, migrant workers are also differentiated by the trajectory of their movements. Two categories of Zimbabwean migrants occupy the farm labour market. First is the *'passing-through'* group which consists of migrants working on the farms but who have no intention of staying there. For instance, qualified Zimbabwean professionals who possess legal documents, or individuals with active 'social networks' outside the farm labour market, use the farm labour market as a conduit to accessing other opportunities. For some undocumented Zimbabwean migrants, pre-established as well as opportunistic social networks have helped to facilitate their exit out of the farm labour market. The second category, the *'settling-in'* group consists of undocumented migrants whose personal circumstances force them to stay within the farm labour market. For this group, commercial farms provide them with employment opportunities while also offering some form of refuge from law enforcement agents.

Three main components define the food environment that determined the nutritional security of farmworkers: on-farm production, the retail food environment and food accessible through social networks. How individual farmworkers interact with these elements determine their motivation to stay within or move out of the farm labour market. On-farm production, which include setting up backyard gardens, operating spaza shops or keeping small livestock (chickens) serves as an important source of income and nutrition. However, access to on-farm food is a privilege generally confined to those with long term contracts and whose certainty to remain on the farms is guaranteed. Due to the increased casualization of the farm labour market, many Zimbabwean migrants only have short-term contracts or are only engaged during the picking season. These short-term workers depend on farm wages and other means for their food and income needs. Within the vestigial paternalistic system on the farms, farmers give food rations and groceries on credit. This is based on the fact that they have control of farmworkers' wages hence they are assured that they would deduct their dues at the time of paying the workers. This paternalistic system is being replicated among the farmworkers though with some modifications. Privileged Zimbabwean migrants who operate spaza shops on the compounds also give credits to other farmworkers. However, decisions to give credit are mainly based the nature and strength of social networks that exist on the farms. To qualify for credit, one has to gain the trust of the shop operator.

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While establishing backyard gardens, operating spaza shops or keeping small livestock are a form of on-farm production for the privileged, they form a retail food environment for the less privileged, which also consists of farm shops owned and operated by the farmer as well as community grocery outlets. The retail food environment is critically important because it is a source of healthy food and nutrition for the farm workers. However, as shown in this thesis, farm shops and compound spaza shops stock limited varieties of food items. In the case of farms shops, the prices are at times inflated. Off-farm grocery shops are the only alternative sources of food. The geographic vulnerability which is linked to their legal status and remoteness of farms from public service constrains undocumented Zimbabwean farmworkers from accessing food sources. Given the constrains within the on-farm production and retail food environments, horizontal and vertical networks among Zimbabwean groups in the Blouberg-Molemole area therefore serve as important catalysts and sources of food and other livelihood opportunities. From the research, I found that by restricting themselves to the compounds because of the fear of being apprehended irregular Zimbabwean farmworkers are subjected to high levels of food insecurity than those who legally work on the farms, and can easily access alternative sources of food. Together, these factors indicate the paradoxical existence of some form of 'food deserts' on food producing farms. Due to time limitations, I could not explore further the extent to which 'food deserts' manifest on the farms. Further research is needed that can further explore this situation and that can widen the understanding of food geographies on the commercial farms in Limpopo.

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In this thesis, I have argued that a remittance-based analysis of the role of international labour migrancy on food security is inadequate because it does not address the food security situation of the remitting family members. From my study, I found that Zimbabwean farmworkers' perceptions of food security are based on comparison of food security conditions that they experienced in Zimbabwe and the situation on the South African farms. Moving to South Africa for them has provided opportunities to earn income and make long term investments in their families back home above and beyond immediate individual food security needs. Addison's study on farms north of the Zoutpansberg mountains yielded different results. He found that some Zimbabwean male farmworkers spend most of their money with girlfriends on the farms and elsewhere without making meaningful developments back home. The issue of remittances from farm work therefore calls for more research. Most researches on the role of remittances in Zimbabwe have focused on the macro development level, e.g. Gracious Ncube and Georgina Gomez's work on remittances in rural Zimbabwe (2015), France Maphosa's study of the

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impact of on rural livelihoods in southern Zimbabwe (2007), and Divane Nzima et al.'s analysis of the multiplier effect of migrant remittances on non-recipient households in Tsholotsho (2017). Daniel Tevera and Abel Chikanda (2009)'s work on migrant remittances and household survival in Zimbabwe was generalized and did not show in specific terms, contribution of remittances from migrants working in South Africa's agriculture sector. The claim by the farmworkers that they are making long-term investments in their areas of origin can only be validated through further ethnographic investigation which was not possible within the scope of this research.

During the fieldwork, I collected some anecdotal evidence about gender relations on the farms. For instance, one male farmworker told me that he will never allow his wife to come and work on the farms because "women on the farms are every men's wives" and another told me that his wife helped him to find a more paying job. However, providing a more detailed gendered analysis of my results was not possible because of the following two reasons; (i) I interacted with a limited number of women and by the time I finished my fieldwork I had not built much trust with them; and (ii) I failed to get access into the farm compounds - it was only during the last leg of my field visit that I met an official from the DAFF who could facilitate my entry onto the farms. Hence it was not going to be possible to provide a rich and subtle discussion of gender dynamics in the farm labour market.

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The study was limited by time and financial resources. I conducted the research while I was also holding a full-time job in Harare, and I could only spend two weeks during each fieldwork visit. As a result, I missed the opportunity to learn about the day-to-day interactions of farmworkers that could have happened during my absence. This was compounded by my failure to get access onto the farms. A research approach where one spends some time interacting and observing the farmworkers within their workplaces and compounds of residence would unpack gender elements that within the farm labour market and help to explain linkages between gender, mobility and access to food. It also enables one to be fully immersed within the socio-cultural context of the farmworkers, thereby providing an opportunity for rich interpretation of the daily struggles of Zimbabwean farmworkers. A long-term ethnographic study would give more insights into the relations among farmworkers.

Arguments in this thesis are based on my interactions with Zimbabwean farmworkers and Zimbabwean professionals who live and work in the Blouberg-Molemole area. I did not

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interview commercial farmers and South African farmworkers. Hence, the research enabled me to partially understand the nature of working relationships. An expanded research approach, which involves interviewing both migrant and local farmworkers as well as the farms would provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the farm labour regime.

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Annex 1: Interview Guide – Zimbabwean Farmworkers

Movement of Zimbabwean immigrants into, within and out of the farm labour market in Limpopo Province of South Africa

Interview Questionnaire

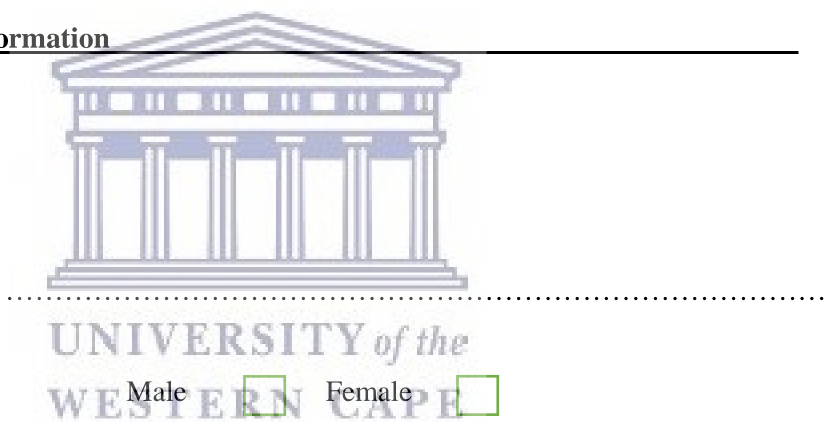
Interview Guide for Zimbabwean Farm workers

(A) General Information

Questionnaire Code: ZIM ☐

Date: ……………………..

(B) Respondent Personal Information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(i) Age (yrs):

☐

(ii) Place of origin: ……………………………………………………………………………

(iii) Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

(iv) Marital status: Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐

(vi) Education and qualifications

No formal Education ☐ Up to grade 7 ☐

Some secondary education (Did not complete Form 4) ☐

Completed Form 4 ☐

Advanced Level (A Level) ☐

Professional qualification (Specify)………………………………………..

(vii) Legal status in South Africa:

Work Permit ☐ Passport – no work permit ☐ Undocumented ☐

Other documentation (Specify) ……………………………………………………………………

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(C) Reasons for coming to South Africa and how Zimbabweans find work on the farms

(1) *Why did you leave Zimbabwe?*
……
(2) *Can you describe the process of finding work on the farms, from the moment that one crosses the border into South Africa? Why did you decide to work on the farms? How long have you been working on the farms?*
……
(3) *What are the most important things that you learned about living and working on farms in South Africa? What are the things you know now, that you did not know earlier?*
……
(4) *What are the most important benefits and advantages you have gained by working on the farms?*
……
(5) *What are the most important challenges and difficulties you experience while working on the farms?*
……
(6) *Explain how one moves from one farm to another? What are the causes?*
……
(7) *What is the average monthly wage that you get from the famer? How are the wages paid? What else do you get from the farmers (any in-kind contribution?)*
……

(D) Alternative Livelihood and Food Security options

(1) *Besides depending on farm wages, explain how else are farm workers able to meet their food security and the livelihood needs of their families? On average how much would one get from these alternative livelihood options?*
……
(2) *Where do you see yourself in the next 3 to 5 years?*
……

End of questionnaire – thank you for your participation

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Annex 2: Interview Guidee – Ex-Farmworkers

Movement of Zimbabwean immigrants into, within and out of the farm labour market in Limpopo Province of South Africa

Interview Questionnaire

This guide will be administered to Zimbabweans who used to work on the farms

(C) General Information

Questionnaire Code: EX ☐

Date: ……………………..

(D) Respondent Personal Information

(i) Name (Optional) ……………………………………………………………………..

(ii) Age (yrs): ☐

(iii) Place of origin: …………………………………………………………………………

(iv) Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

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(v) Marital status: Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐

(vi) Education and qualifications

No formal Education ☐ Up to grade 7 ☐

Some secondary education (Did not complete Form 4) ☐

Completed Form 4 ☐

Advanced Level (A Level) ☐

Professional qualification (Specify) ………………………………………..

(vii) Legal status in South Africa:

Work Permit ☐ Passport – no work permit ☐

Other documentation (Specify) ……………………………………………………………………

(C) Reasons for coming to South Africa and how Zimbabweans find work on the farms

(8) Why did you leave Zimbabwe?

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………

(9) Can you describe the process of finding work on the farms, from the moment that one crosses the border into South Africa? Why did you decide to work on the farms? How long have you been working on the farms?

………

(10) What are the most important things that you learned about living and working on farms in South Africa? What are the things you know now, that you did not know earlier?

………

(11) What are the most important benefits and advantages you gained by working on the farms?

………

(12) What are the most important challenges and difficulties you experienced while working on the farms?

………

(13) What is the average monthly wage that you were getting from the famer? How were the wages paid? What else were you getting from the farmers (any in-kind contribution?)

………

(D) Alternative Livelihood and Food Security options

(1) Besides depending on farm wages, explain how else are farm workers able to meet their food security and the livelihood needs of their families? On average how much would one get from these alternative livelihood options?

………

(2) Can you describe how you moved from farm work to where you are?

………

(3) Can you explain the major important differences between working on the farms and what you are doing now?

………

(4) Where do you see yourself in the next 3 to 5 years?

………

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End of questionnaire – thank you for your participation

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Annex 3: Food Security and Dietary Diversity Questionnaire

The purpose of this tool is to collect top-level qualitative data on the food security situation of Zimbabwean migrant farmworkers in the Blouberg and Molemole local municipalities. This will help to explain the food environments on commercial farms in the study area.

Section 1:

1.1 Preliminary questions

1. How many people stay with you? Do you eat with the people that you stay with?

2. How is food prepared and/or shared? – This applies to farmworkers sharing rooms/accommodation?

3. Where do you have your meals?

4. Where do you get your food from? How often do you get the food there?

1.2 Food security questions

1. Over the past 7 days, did you ever worry that you or your colleagues/family would not have enough food? Why?

2. In the past 7 days, were you or any household member/colleague not able to eat the kinds of foods you preferred because of a lack of resources?

3. In the past 7 days, did you or any household member have to eat a limited variety of foods due to a lack of resources?

4. In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague have to eat some foods that you really did not want to eat because of a lack of resources to obtain other types of food?

5. In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague have to eat a smaller meal than you felt you needed because there was not enough food?

6. In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague have to eat fewer meals in a day because there was not enough food?

7. In the past 7 days, was there ever no food to eat of any kind because of lack of resources to get food?

8. In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague go to sleep at night hungry because there was not enough food?

9. In the past 7 days, did you or any household member/colleague go a whole day and night without eating anything because there was not enough food?

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