Every Gig Counts: Understanding the livelihood strategies of Zimbabwean platform food delivery workers in Makhanda, Eastern Cape.

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By

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Abstract

Zimbabweans are often faced with several obstacles upon their arrival in South Africa. This thesis seeks to understand the lives and livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda using the case of Platform food delivery workers. Drawing from Chambers and Conway (1991) Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and existing literature the study explores the livelihoods of ten Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda using non-random purposeful sampling. Using qualitative methodology, the study examines their demographic backgrounds; pathways to employment in the gig economy; the economic and social livelihood strategies at their disposal, the daily challenges they face; and the livelihood outcomes they acquire as a result of their livelihood strategies. A case study involves an in-depth examination of a single individual, group, organization, or event. It is particularly useful for understanding complex phenomena in their real-world context. The study took on a case study approach which involved an in-depth examination of Zimbabwean Platform food delivery workers in Makhanda. The study found that there are complex connections between the gig economy and migrants' livelihoods. From one perspective in the context of South Africa's constricted labour markets, gig work offers migrant workers quick pathways to employment and self-sufficiency. From another perspective gig work is precarious and technology companies misclassify gig workers as independent contractors, which leaves gig workers in vulnerable positions. Further findings show that migrant gig workers often combine gig work with other livelihood strategies in pursuit of secure and sustainable livelihoods.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to understand the lives and livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda (South Africa), particularly platform food delivery workers. Using the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), the study explores Zimbabwean gig worker's backgrounds, their pathways to employment in Makhanda's gig economy, economic and social livelihood strategies, the challenges they encounter while working in South Africa, the role of the gig economy in their livelihoods and their livelihood outcomes in Makhanda. This chapter aims to give an overview of the context of the study, the thesis objectives, and the methodology used to address the research objectives. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the thesis.

1.2 Context of Research

The gig economy has become a buzzword in global labour markets. It has reshaped and reconfigured the way work is done in contemporary society. The rapid growth in technology and increased internet connectivity in the last decade has fuelled the growth of a new business model based on a form of algorithmic management (Webster and Masikane, 2021:8). This business model has facilitated the emergence of a new worker who is subject to temporary, part-time flexible work.

Gig economy platforms use digital technology to match workers with clients on a per-task basis (Schwellnus, 2019:5; Taylor et al., 2017:25). In low- and middle-income countries, where there are often high unemployment rates, limited opportunities for formal employment and large informal sector (Aguilar et al.,2020). Gig work is often viewed as a possible poverty reduction mechanism that promotes self-employment and fosters economic growth. The business model of the gig economy allows it to absorb a large number of workers who can quickly adapt to new technologies and learn new emerging skills that offer much-needed opportunities to improve their livelihoods (Schwellnus, 2019). In the Global North, policymakers acknowledge the socio-economic opportunities and benefits associated with gig work, especially for immigrants, however, they are often more concerned with how the business model of gig work undermines the standards of work, through commodification, casualisation, and fragmentation of work.

Globally, gig economy platforms are dominated by immigrants (Anwar et al., 2022; van Doorn et al., 2020; Webster and Masikane,2021). Technology companies often take advantage of the existing inequalities by creating a business model that strategically attracts marginalised groups

of people, particularly immigrants, who are willing to take up any form of work to sustain their livelihoods (Baglioni et al., 2022; Maury, 2020). According to Piore (1979:54), migrants have a purely instrumental approach to work as a result they are willing to take on low-paid, stigmatised work. Könönen (2019:778) further highlights that the overrepresentation of migrants in precarious work such as platform food delivery is directly linked to immigration policies that increasingly restrict immigrants' employability. Despite the overrepresentation of migrants in platform work, there is scanty empirical literature on their livelihoods. This thesis aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on the lives and livelihoods of immigrants in the gig economy.

Zimbabweans are the largest group of immigrants in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The geographic proximity between the Zimbabwean and South African borders combined with South Africa's middle-income status, and stable democratic institutions often makes South Africa the primary destination for many Zimbabweans seeking socioeconomic economic opportunities and political freedom (Moyo, 2021). Despite South Africa's comparatively industrialized economy and middle-income status, the unemployment rate is incredibly high. This is often due to the growing skills mismatch. A labour force survey done by Stats SA (2021) revealed that there were 7.8 million jobless people in South Africa in the second quarter, representing 34.4% of the population. This highlights the serious unemployment problem in South Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the unemployment situation.

Zimbabweans are met with compounding challenges in South Africa relating to employment. The restrictive nature of immigration policies and constricted formal labour markets limit their employability (Crush, Chikanda & Tawodzera, 2015; Makina, 2010). Many rely on the informal sector to sustain their livelihoods upon arrival to South Africa. The ostensibly inclusive nature of gig work and the easy onboarding process often attract many migrants looking for quick pathways to employment and self-sufficiency (van Doorn et al., 2020). South Africa has seen an upsurge in digital platform labour from food delivery, domestic cleaning services, and food delivery (Fairwork, 2020; Howson et al., 2020). Gig work is often described as a double-edged sword for immigrants (Bandeira, 2019; Webster& Masikane, 2021). Access to work in the gig economy allows Zimbabwean immigrants access to income that may have not been available to them before the introduction of digital platforms. However, this does not necessarily mean more security for workers or a better quality of life for Zimbabwean gig workers. Zimbabwean gig workers are often placed in a vulnerable position because of their

immigrant status, and the nature of the business model of the gig economy that misclassifies gig workers as independent contractors.

For a better understanding of the lives and livelihoods of Zimbabwean platform food delivery workers in Makhanda, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) by Chambers and Conway (1991) was employed, particularly the urban livelihood approach (Farrington et al., 2002; Scoones, 2009: 178). The framework centres on factors that constrain or enhance people's livelihood opportunities by emphasising on the agency and resourcefulness of households or individuals as they navigate their lives to establish livelihood sustainability (Lavine, 2014; Scoones, 1998; Serrat, 2017). The SLA focuses on five main capitals namely: financial capital, social capital, human capital, physical capital, and natural capital. The SLA is concerned about how individuals utilised the diverse assets/capital at their disposal to maintain their livelihoods. A livelihood is deemed sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain, or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation (Scoones, 1998: 5). The SLA puts emphasises on the agency and ingenuity of households (or individuals) in seeking to establish a level of household viability and allows for micro-sociological studies.

This study highlights that there is a plethora of literature on the business model of the gig economy. However, little is known about the lives and livelihoods of the people behind the key services offered by the gig economy. This research study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on the livelihood experiences of migrants, using the case of Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda. To achieve this, the study explores the demographic backgrounds of Zimbabwean gig workers; their pathways to employment in South Africa; the economic and social strategies they employ in the process of navigating their livelihoods in South Africa, the challenges they encounter while working in the gig economy; the livelihood outcomes they acquire through their livelihood strategies.

1.3 Thesis objectives

The main objective of this research is to understand the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda, Eastern Cape, particularly focusing on platform food delivery workers. The subsidiary objectives include:

- Understanding the demographic backgrounds of Zimbabwean gig workers in South Africa.
- Investigating the pathways to employment in platform food delivery in Makhanda.
- Examining the livelihood strategies of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda.

- Determining the challenges that gig economy workers encounter when constructing their livelihoods in South Africa.
- Understanding the livelihood outcomes for Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda.

1.4 Research methods and methodology

To gain a deep understanding of the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda a qualitative research methodology approach was used. Qualitative research was the most suited method for this study because it is concerned with understanding aspects of social life by identifying and examining people's interpretations of their lived experiences and activities in a natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 3). In doing so, this methodology allows the researcher to gain an understanding of participants' perspectives. The study was placed within a case study framework. According to Crow et al. (2011) using a case study approach allows the researcher to take on in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of complex issues in their real-life settings. Yin (2009:3) postulates that case study research allows the researcher to examine complex situations related to the case and improves the internal validity of the study.

Non-random purposive sampling was used to identify suitable research participants. Non-purposive sampling involves recruiting participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a specific question (Lopez and Whitehead, 2013). A snowballing technique was used to recruit Zimbabwean gig workers to participate in the study. Snowballing occurs when participants connect the researcher to other possible participants, who may be friends, relatives, colleagues, or other relevant contacts (Patton, 2002:237).

Due to the constraints and limited nature of this thesis, only ten Zimbabwean gig workers, particularly those involved in platform food delivery participated in the study. Platform food delivery workers who worked for Mr. Delivery or Uber Eats were recruited, because, at the time of the data collection, these were the only operating food delivery platforms in Makhanda. Interviews took place in Makhanda, opposite the KFC drive-thru at Pepper Grove Mall, between the 14th and 15th of October 2021. All the participants were located at Pepper Grove Mall so five participants were interviewed on the 14th and the other 5 participants were interviewed on the 15th.

The researcher had the opportunity to interview one key informant (Appendix C). According to (Taylor & Blake, 2015:153) key informants are often identified because they hold “special or expert knowledge” on a topic. Using a key informant in this study provided the researcher

with information about certain aspects that participants were unable to provide from their perspectives. Two data collection instruments were used in this study namely: in-depth interviews and focus groups. The in-depth interviews provided detailed information about participants, according to Boyce & Neal (2006), in-depth interviews provide detailed information as compared to other data collection methods such as surveys. Although they are time-consuming, their flexibility makes them a desirable instrument of gathering qualitative data. After the interviews a small group of three participants gathered for a focus group. The focus groups that allowed participants to engage with other participants who shared similar life experiences. Smaller groups allow for more in-depth discussions, while larger groups can generate a wider range of perspectives. Before the focus group, participants were briefed on the purpose and guidelines for the discussion.

An interview schedule was created with a list of questions that covered specific topics. The interview schedule consisted of closed and open-ended questions that explored the participant's demographics, educational background, livelihood strategies, challenges, and livelihood outcomes. During the interviews, effort went into making the interviewees comfortable and relaxed to encourage them to talk freely and not feel pressured when answering questions about specific predetermined topics. This allowed me to gather in-depth information about the topic of interest by asking probing follow-up questions. Interviews were scheduled at the connivance of the participants, time, and pace that they were content with. A focus group was formed that allowed participants to engage with other participants who share similar life experiences and become an active part of the process of analysis. The group dynamics allowed participants to freely express themselves while engaging with other participants with similar livelihood experiences.

Ten in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted and one telephonic interview with the key informant. The in-depth interview format enabled flexibility and adaptability, enabling participants to speak about the issues that mattered to them. Interviews lasted for 45 and 60 minutes and consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. The interviews were recorded; however, some participants chose not to be recorded. For those who were not comfortable with being recorded, notes were taken during the interview sessions. All interviews were conducted in English and later transcribed for analysis. The study used thematic analysis to extract descriptive information concerning the experiences of Zimbabwean platform food delivery workers in Makhanda. The thematic analysis enabled me to construct meaning and understand their perceptions and opinions on working in the gig economy and their life experiences.

Thematic analysis entails identifying, coding, describing, and interpreting the main themes that arise from the evidence collected (Elo & Kyngas, 2007: 107)

The Rhodes Universality ethics and protocol were adhered to ensure the safety, privacy, and dignity of participants. Each participant was given a consent form which contained information regarding the purpose of the study, what participation in the study would entail as well as a confidentiality declaration to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Participants were notified prior to the commencement of interviews that participation is voluntary, they would not receive any compensation or benefits after the completion of the interview. They were notified that if they wished to withdraw or discontinue the interview they could freely do so without consequence. Marvasti, (2004:139) points out that voluntary participation allows participants to come forward freely and willingly as opposed to being forced through “physical or psychological" coercion. Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was solely for academic purposes and that the research did not intend to expose the participants to any emotional or physical harm.

1.5 Thesis outline

The next chapter (Chapter Two) unpacks the theoretical framework and a review of the literature pertaining to the study. Chapter two also sets the context for the case study of Zimbabwean platform food delivery workers in Makhanda, as it highlights the broad themes relevant to the research objectives. These themes include a comprehensive discussion on the gig economy and migrant workers; racialized labour regimes of exploitation in the gig economy; Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa; the gig economy; Zimbabwean gig workers in South Africa; Food delivery platforms in South Africa; and the gig economy in Makhanda in the Eastern Cape. Chapter three of this study consists of the data analysis section which focuses on the case study of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda. This chapter also addresses specific themes about their lives and livelihoods which arise from the fieldwork. Chapter four concludes the thesis by showing how the case study addresses the main and subsidiary objectives of the thesis, with reference to the theoretical framework for the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALISING THE CASE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Globalisation and constricted formal labour markets have fuelled the growth of temporary, part-time, flexible labour among immigrants all over the world. South Africa's middle-income status and comparatively industrialised economy attracts a significant number of migrants, including Zimbabweans, seeking better socio-economic opportunities that are fundamental to achieving long and healthy lives (Moyo, 2021). Nevertheless, South Africa's high unemployment and limited employment opportunities in the formal sector, especially for immigrants, has indirectly forced a large group of migrants into the informal sector. Digital platforms (Uber, Mr. Delivery, etc.) have created a quick pathway to employment and self-sufficiency for migrants (van Doorn et al., 2020).

The business model of the gig economy misclassifies gig workers as independent contractors for employment law purposes (The Low Income Tax Reform Group, 2022). Being classified as independent contractors (self-employed) has allowed immigrants to seamlessly integrate into labour markets. The gig economy is often described as a double-edged sword for immigrants, as it creates much-needed employment for immigrants, it also offers migrants little to no worker protection, growth, and career development, leaving migrants on the fringes of the labour market (Bandeira, 2019). This creates significant economic, social, and personal challenges that hinder household livelihoods (Bajwa, 2016) often compelling Zimbabwean gig economy workers to take up multiple livelihood strategies at their disposal to survive.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section (2.2) provides a comprehensive outline of the Sustainable Livelihoods approach (SLA), highlighting the link between livelihood diversification, migration, and gig work. Thereafter section (2.3) will discuss existing empirical literature on the gig economy and migrant workers, highlighting racialised labour regimes of exploitation in the gig economy, and section (2.4) will discuss Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. Section (2.5) will go on to discuss the gig economy and Zimbabwean gig workers in South Africa The final section (2.6) will narrow down the discussion, to the gig economy in Makhanda.

2.2 The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

The SLA is best suited for this study because it provides an analytical guideline for understanding the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda, Eastern Cape. The livelihoods approach allows for micro-sociological studies, and it has a strong emphasis on the agency and ingenuity of households (or individuals) in seeking to establish some level of household viability or sustainability.

The SLA was originally developed by Chambers and Conway (1991) and was later extended by Scoones (1998), Carney (1998), and Ellis (2000). Combined with ideas from the World Commission on Environment and Development, Chambers and Conway (1991) created a definition that encompassed multiple factors that are involved in understanding the diverse nature and complexities of livelihoods. According to Chambers and Conway (1991) a livelihood "comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. Chambers and Conway (1991) further explained that a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from shocks and stresses and maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, whilst not undermining the natural resource base. The important feature of the livelihood definition is that it directs its attention to the links between assets and the options vulnerable people possess in practice to pursue alternative activities for survival. This shows that simply focusing on single assets does not yield an accurate picture of livelihood strategies. Households depend on a combination of assets, thus a sufficient analysis requires a consideration of the social relations, institutions, and organisations, as well as the trends and shocks (i.e., drought, migration) that modify access to these assets (Ellis, 2000).

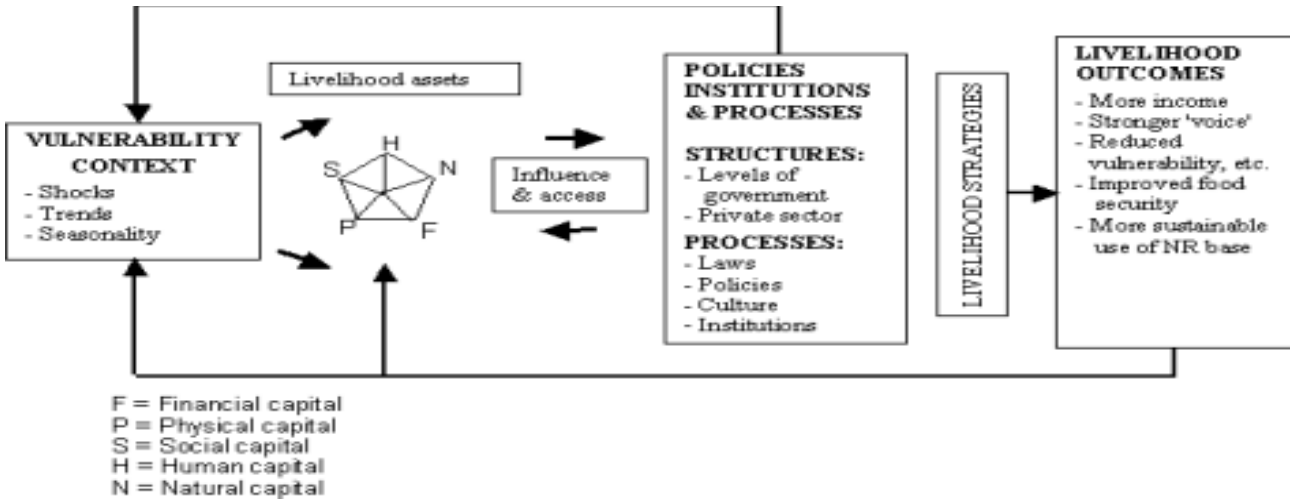
The SLA serves a variety of purposes and interests. According to Hebinck and Bourdillon (2002:2), the framework acts as a guide for analytical scholarly research for social scientists by providing a holistic interpretation of the dynamics of development and the different rhythms of change. Beyond its analytical dimensions, the SLA provides intervention strategies for policymakers to address issues of chronic poverty. It has been adopted by developmental organisations such as the Department for International Development (DFID), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) among others. Whether as an analytical tool or intervention strategy, the SLA focuses on livelihood strategies that are at people's disposal for instance migration, employment, income diversification, farming, and selling goods (de Sherbinin et al., 2008; Scoones, 1998; Scoones, 2009).

The SLA consists of six main components namely: assets/ capabilities, livelihood strategies, influencing structures and processes, vulnerability context, livelihood outcomes, and well-being (Farrington et al., 2002: 2; Scoones 1998: 4). Figure 2.1 below illustrates the generic SLF; Figure 2.2 illustrates the SLA in urban spaces.

Figure 2. 1 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Source: Scoones (1998: 4).

Figure 2 .2 Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Urban Spaces)



Source: Farrington et al. (2002:2)

An urban livelihood approach puts emphasis on analysing the livelihood assets, the vulnerability context, institutions, and policies that constrain or enable access to livelihood

strategies that lead to livelihood outcomes of individuals (households) in urban settings (Farrington et al., 2002). According to Meikle et al. (2001), rural and urban settings have the same assets, however, the level of emphasis on each asset is different for both contexts. For instance, rural settings prioritise natural capital while urban settings prioritise financial capital since they are more commodified and monetised spaces (Farrington et al., 2002). Given the monetised economy of Makhanda, it falls under the urban context, thus this study will focus on components highlighted in the above figure 2.2.

Capital /assets form the basis of the SLA. Livelihood capital refers to the resource base of different households (DFID, 1999). According to Scoones (1998:7), 'the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies is dependent on the basic material and social, tangible, and intangible assets that people have in their possession'. The SLF identifies five crucial forms of capital/assets that vulnerable people rely on to survive, namely: financial, physical, human, social, and natural capital (Ashley and Carney, 1999; Farrington et al., 2002; Krantz, 2001; Scoones, 1998).

Financial capital represents the financial resources that individuals or households have access to (or possess) in the process of achieving their livelihood objectives. These financial resources include remittances, investments, savings, income, credit, or cash. The availability and accessibility of financial assets are important in promoting livelihood activities and sustaining the livelihood, practically among migrants (Meikle et al, 2001).

Physical capital refers to basic infrastructure, such as water, shelter, access to the internet, power, transport, equipment, and technology that enable productivity. Access to electricity and housing are examples of physical capital needed in urban areas to facilitate livelihoods for migrants (Farrington et al.,2002:2). Housing in particular plays an important role in the productive and reproductive process. While some well-established migrants can afford to buy or build their own houses, others rent accommodation or stay temporarily with those who are already established.

Human capital embodies skills, knowledge, ability to work, and good health which exist amongst members of a household that enables people to pursue different livelihood strategies. Migrants with better skills or qualifications can broaden their livelihood activities, which adds to their existing diverse livelihood strategies (Reed et al., 2005).

Social capital refers to the social relationships to which individuals (or households) are exposed, these may include professional networks, informal networks, social relationships, affiliations, associations, and kinship relationships. Social capital captures the idea that social bonds and social norms are an important part of the basis of people's livelihood (de Haan, 2000). Social capital allows migrants to assist others (new arrivals) with information about livelihood opportunities or provide some initial capital for others to engage in some livelihood activities. Farrington et al. (2002) highlighted that social and cultural institutions can influence access to livelihood activities.

Natural capital involves natural resources such as land, water, forests, wildlife, and all associated natural elements that are useful for household sustenance and income generation (Farrington et al., 2002). In urban areas, some migrants depend on small-scale farming in their backyards.

The vulnerability context refers to the insecurity of the well-being of individuals or communities in the face of changing environments in the form of shocks, trends, and seasonal cycles (Carney, 1998; Meikle et al.,2001; Moser, 1996). Vulnerability is often caused by factors such as shocks, trends, and seasonality in both rural and urban contexts. The extent of vulnerability often relates to the level of external threats that individuals face and their resilience in resisting and recovering from these threats (Farrington et al.,2002).

Policies, institutions, and processes (PIPs) are key in determining access to the various types of capital assets that people use in pursuing their livelihood strategies. PIPs either act as channels to make assets available to them or as barriers to their access (Farrington et al.,2002:9). They include a wide range of social, political, economic, and environmental factors that determine people's choices and so help to shape livelihoods (Farrington et al.,2002:9).

Livelihood strategies are the activities that individuals or households undertake to build their livelihoods (Farrington et al.,2002:9). They include a range of activities that build the asset base and access to goods and services for consumption. They are designed to respond to shocks in the short term, and adaptive strategies are designed to improve circumstances in the long term (Farrington et al.,2002:9). The SLA highlights that household-based livelihood portfolios involve a shifting combination of two or more livelihood strategies. Livelihood strategies often change people's vulnerability context.

Livelihood outcomes are the results of people's livelihood strategies. According to Farrington et al. (2002:9), livelihood outcomes feed back into the vulnerability context and asset bases.

Successful strategies allow people to build asset bases that shield them against shocks and stresses, compared to poor livelihood outcomes which diminish asset bases, thereby increasing vulnerability. In this study, livelihood outcomes embody both the monetary and non-monetary goods that Zimbabweans gain in the process of navigating their livelihoods in South Africa.

Although the SLA works as a comprehensive tool for the analysis it has been critiqued for lacking the conceptualisation of social structure and power relations such as class, gender, nationality, and ethnicity (Moser et al. 2001). These are key factors in understanding people's choices and preferences. To have a comprehensive analysis of the livelihoods this study considers the different social structures that shape the choices and preferences of Zimbabwean gig workers in South Africa. Furthermore, the SLA has been criticised for not considering how households' livelihoods have developed or changed over time. According to Lavine (2014), the SLA is broadly historic, taking the current situation as given rather than identifying events or forces that led to the existing social institutions. In this context, it becomes important to examine the different livelihood strategies of specific households over time (Murray, 2017).

Livelihood analysis tends to focus on a particular moment in time overlooking the development, historical emergence, and reconfiguration of livelihoods (Entwisle, 2007; Henry et al., 2004; Mahdi et al., 2009; Pedersen & Petersen, 2010). This study also unpacks the historical aspects of the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda, Eastern Cape.

2.2.1 Linkage between livelihood diversification, migration, and the gig economy

Livelihood diversification has become a crucial part of sustaining livelihoods in contemporary society, especially for immigrant workers (households) who are often prone to insecure, uncertain, and unstable work. Livelihood diversification refers to tangible or non-tangible activities employed by households (individuals) to find ways to raise income outside of their main livelihood strategy (Hussein and Nelson, 1998). Diversification can be part of a strategy where people combine multiple activities that contribute to the accumulation of wealth at different points in the household's life cycle (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones,2002; Scoones, 1998). Households diversify to reduce risks associated with trends, shocks, and seasonality. A household's ability to diversify is dependent on household characteristics, and social and economic variables. Wealthier households often diversify for voluntary and proactive reasons, seeking to invest or accumulate existing assets/capital (Ellis, 2001). Vulnerabilities such as shocks, trends, and seasonality often compel individuals (households) to diversify their livelihoods. In this study, the main strategy that complements livelihood diversification is

migration. Migration is a key component in vulnerable households, where people are often faced with adversity (Scoones, 1998; Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002: 6). The decision to migrate is often built on the desire to access a combination of physical, financial, and social human capital and natural capital (Scoons,1998) and overcome market constraints related to difficulty in obtaining credit and insurance in their country of origin. In the context of Africa, South Africa is considered a primary destination for many migrants due to its comparatively industrialised economy, middle-income status, and stable democratic institutions (Moyo, 2021). According to the census of 2011, three-quarters of South Africa's immigrants are from African countries and 68% originate from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Accounting for 24 percent of all migrants, Zimbabweans are the largest group of migrants in South Africa (UN, 2020). Although the exact number is unknown and subject to debate, about 1.5 to 2 million Zimbabweans live in South Africa (Stats SA,2011). The majority of Zimbabweans moved to South Africa as a survival strategy, given the deepening social, economic, and political challenges facing Zimbabwe. South Africa's high unemployment and constricted formal labour markets result in a sharp decline in employability for many migrants. Especially if they lack critical skills or qualifications. As a result, migrants are commonly found in informal or non-standard types of employment that are characterised by income insecurity and widespread exploitation.

Structures such as technological advancements, changes in market conditions, industrial transformations, and changes in the organisation have changed the world of work. This has fuelled the development of the gig economy. The gig economy acts as a safety net for migrants looking for pathways to employment and self-sufficiency. Other times migrants do not engage in gig work out of choice but owing to a lack of better jobs and social services (Webster and Masikani 2021; Kavase and Mbali, 2022). Additionally, the highly unregulated and flexible nature of gig work results in inadequate salaries, lack of representation, job insecurities, poor working conditions, and casualisation. (Hedberg,2021; Scully,2016; Taran,2021). This study aims to look at the complex connections between the gig economy and migrants' livelihoods that result in favourable livelihood outcomes.

There is a significant amount of literature within the SLA on Livelihood diversification and migration. A major literature gap exists on the linkages between livelihood diversification strategies of migrant gig workers, even though literature has shown that migrants constitute a majority of workers providing key gig services globally (Graham and Woodcock,2020; Lata et

al., 2022; van Doorn et al., 2020). This study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on understanding how gig workers navigate their livelihoods in South Africa.

2.3 The gig economy

The world of work is constantly changing, with globalisation on the rise and an upsurge in global access to internet connectivity. Over the years the intensification of globalisation has brought about structural changes in the way work is conducted and utilised (Webster& Masikane, 2021). Greater connectivity among people, organizations, and countries, enabled by advances in technology, has made it relatively easy to move goods, capital, and people within and across borders at an accelerating pace (Kalleberg, 2009). These events have been followed by an emergence of new work patterns that are increasingly flexible, decentralised, and driven by self-fulfilment and increasing entrepreneurial spirit attracting millions of immigrants looking for employment and better standards of living (Kalleberg, 2003).

The gig economy also known as the on-demand economy, or the digital economy is one of the most significant developments in the world of work. It refers to the usage of online platforms to connect independent contractors digitally with clients to perform on-demand tasks on a casual, temporary, and short-term basis (Ahmed et al. 2021; Duggan et al. 2021).

The gig economy is not a new phenomenon, it dates back to the nineteenth century when people used to simultaneously take up multiple jobs and work on them independently to earn their livelihood (Graham and Woodcock, 2020). The industrial revolution brought about labour movements that shifted the nature of jobs from agricultural to more industrialised work. This led to workers moving to cities to look for work in factories. The increased number of workers in factories led to the emergence of unions. These unions were met with resistance and were deemed illegal at that time. However, over time trade unions gained strength by fashioning a new model of employment and creating an employer–employee relationship (Graham and Woodcock,2020; Thomas and Baddipudi, 2022; Standing, 2011). This model of employment was characterised by standardised working conditions which included fixed reasonable working hours, unionisation, stability, and other forms of social protection (Thomas and Baddipudi, 2022; Standing, 2011). Essentially people worked under predefined working conditions for a fixed number of hours and delivered the output in the prescribed format.

Contemporary trends and technological advancements have led to changes in the pre-existing structures that govern work. There have been tremendous advancements in computers, information, and communication technologies (ICT), and electronic devices allowing cloud

computing to open up new ways of organising work and how people work. These technological changes have enabled access to a workforce over the internet by using app-based models as an alternative solution to employ workers under rigid contracts and terms and conditions (Lata et al. 2022; Rani and Furrer 2021). A decade ago, less than 15 percent of humanity was connected to the internet, today over 40 percent of the world's population is connected to the internet (Anwar and Graham, 2020). It is estimated that between the years 2000 and 2020, Africa experienced a 53% increase in the number of internet users, with an estimated 600 million Africans now online (Internet World Stats, 2021). This has allowed people to work with anyone, regardless of their time and the creation of online platforms has reduced the cost of doing business (Friedman, 2014). These developments have made it possible for people all over the world to participate in a growing global digital marketplace through digital platforms (Anwar and Graham 2022, 2021, 2020; Graham et al., 2017). Given the increase in digital labour, technological advancements, and internet connectivity the standardised model of employment has undergone a lot of metamorphoses.

Several authors argue that the re-emergence of the gig economy was a result of the cost-cutting pressures following the Global Financial Crisis (Devinatz, 2019; Friedman, 2014; Whiteside, 2021; Woodcock and Graham,2019). The downsizing of people in formal labour markets escalated the demand for informal precarious work as people were looking for ways to generate income and supplement their diminishing savings. The demand for employment was met by platform companies facilitating a gradual shift from a standardised workforce to a new workforce that is subject to a new business model based on authoritarian algorithmic management (Thomas and Baddipudi, 2022). The growth of the gig economy received a further boost during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 (Fairwork,2020).

Platform companies provide digital platforms via apps, that supply a variety of key services such as food delivery, ride-hailing, domestic work, and care work, that are provided by a diverse workforce (Woodcock, 2021). According to Kavese and Mbali (2022), the gig economy can benefit workers, businesses, and consumers by making work more adaptable to the needs of the moment and the demands for flexible lifestyles.

The gig economy relies on a form of digital Taylorism that fragments working standards and breaks down jobs into on-demand tasks and workers compete with one another to earn paid-per-piece incomes (Healy et al.,2017; de Stefano, 2016). Friedman (2014) argues that a growing number of workers are no longer employed in long-term jobs but, are hired for gigs under 'flexible' arrangements as 'independent contractors' or 'consultants,' working only to

complete a particular task or for a defined time and with no connection to the employer. It is estimated that the number of global gig workers is expected to rise from 43 million in 2018 to 78 million in 2023 (Velocity Global, 2021). The United States has the highest global market for gig workers, but India, Indonesia, Australia, and Brazil are rapidly growing their labour force base (Velocity Global, 2021).

The shift from a standardised to a non-standardised workforce has allowed platform companies to artificially distance themselves from workers, by branding themselves as technology companies or databases, rather than employers (Todolí-Signes, 2017). Platform companies emphasise that they are intermediaries that match client demand with a supply of workers to complete tasks. In doing so they classify gig workers as independent contractors (Woodcock and Graham, 2020). "Misclassifying" workers as independent contractor's platform companies shift the maximum risk from themselves to gig workers, who take on contracts and provide their own resources to complete the contracts (Anwar and Graham, 2021; Gandini, 2019; Lata et al., 2022). This allows them to bypass labour relations such as health and safety requirements, and unemployment insurance benefits. Polkowska (2019; 2020) points out that platform-based gig work such as food delivery allows workers to integrate into the labour market, while simultaneously increasing the vulnerability due to the precarious nature of gig work.

Lobel (2017) argues that gig companies rely on the idealised notion of flexibility and the spirit of entrepreneurship, masking their exploitative intentions. Additionally, Standing, (2011) argues that misclassifying workers as independent contractors leads to fragmentation of the labour process and exploitation as major tech companies save major costs and can maximise profits at the expense of the workers. The reduction in operational costs allows consumers to have access to goods and services at a reduced price. According to Lata et al., (2022), the risks associated with the classification of gig workers as independent conductors are not only economic but also affects them psychologically and physically (Tran and Sokas, 2017). Gregory and Sadowski (2021) highlight that the business model of the gig economy views workers as machines within the supply chain with algorithms managing and directing each machine to its demanded task. Additionally, De Stefano (2016) argues that as long as gig work is not regularised recognised, gig workers will continuously be viewed as extensions of platform apps, therefore retaining their vulnerable position.

Gig workers are confined in a cycle of working and waiting for work which hinders their ability to plan and organise for the long term (Gregory and Sadowski, 2021). The gig economy gives

workers the illusion of freedom and flexibility in the sense that they are free to choose to work long hours in their own time, yet they are subject to the company's algorithm which directs them where to go and how much to charge. They are often penalised or discontinued if they fail to satisfy the demands of platform apps leaving them with no income (Gregory and Sadowski, 2021; Sun et al., 2021).

Digital platforms have the capacity to accommodate a large number of buyers and sellers. Meaning they can scale up their workforce quickly making gig workers disposable (Woodcock and Graham,2020). Additionally, van Doorn (2017:904) argues that the structural degradation of platform labour is a fundamental strategy for valorising the tension between its indispensability and expandability. This allows companies to keep hiring rates high and labour prices low, thus optimizing the exploitation of precarious workers looking to supplement their wages to make ends meet. Gandini (2019) argues that the gig work landscape aims to atomise workers to make any person along the employee supply chain dispensable and interchangeable, leaving as little disruption as possible.

Standing (2010) argues that the business model of the gig economy creates a distinct new social class in the labour market that lacks forms of security associated with the traditional working class, yet their class conflict is the same as the traditional working class. Various authors have highlighted that the dynamics of the gig economy facilitate the degradation of labour (Holtum et al., 2022; Gandini, 2019; Stewart and Stanford, 2017; van Doorn et al., 2020). Van Doorn et al. (2020) argue that the degradation of labour in the gig economy is exacerbated through selective formalisation practices that formalise some aspects of gig work while perpetuating the precarity associated with informal labour markets. Platforms offer customers and workers tools for documenting working hours, service experiences, and processing payments among other things. They also strategically refrain from enforcing norms and requirements for standardised employment, by creating non-negotiable commercial contracts and user agreements that independent contractors must consent to if they want to retain access to the platform (Lata et al., 2022; van Doorn et al., 2020). Contracts tend to be opaque and are rarely understood by a large portion of the workforce.

Gig work can mutually advantage and disadvantage workers with some workers becoming more precarious due to limited workplace protections and others accessing further income that would have otherwise been unavailable to them. Hoang et al. (2020) argue that both optimistic and pessimistic views of gig work exist, thus the gig economy should not be examined as a

homogenous industry. The gig economy looks set to grow in the years to come, making it critical to ensure it works for all involved.

There is a plethora of literature on the business model of the gig economy, literature has paid little attention to the livelihood experiences of workers in the gig economy and the livelihood strategies employed by gig workers to better cope with the precarious nature of gig work. This study aims to contribute to the growing literature on the livelihoods of gig workers.

2.3.1 Racialised labour regimes of exploitation in the gig economy

Historically labour markets have always been selective, prioritising males and citizens, while marginalised people are forced to take up precarious labour arrangements to sustain their livelihoods (Könönen, 2019; van Doorn, 2017). According to Maury (2020), digitally mediated platform work is deeply rooted in racialised and colonial logic that is characterised by underpaid, precarious work reliant on residency or citizenship status. Racialised labour regimes are shaped by local and regional patterns of racism, xenophobia, dispossession, migration, and other socio-historical contexts of power and domination (Baglioni et al., 2022). Racialised regimes of labour contribute to the challenges that migrants face in the process of restructuring their livelihoods.

Contemporary corporations, directly and indirectly, benefit from the racialising labour because they gain higher profit margins at the expense of precarious racialised workers who are structurally vulnerable to highly exploitative employment (Baglioni et al., 2022). Technology companies often take advantage of the existing inequalities by creating a business model that strategically attracts marginalised groups of people, particularly migrants, who are willing to do the work at a cheap price (Baglioni et al., 2022; Maury, 2020).

Trends in literature have shown that globally, migrants make up a large portion of the workforce on digital platforms (Alderman, 2019; Anwar et al., 2022; Bandeira, 2019; Dzieza, 2021; van Doorn et al., 2020; Webster & Masikane,2021). The International Labour Organization (ILO) found that migrant workers make up 70% of the platform-mediated delivery sectors in Argentina and Chile (ILO, 2021). The Victorian Government (2020) found that migrant workers were 1.5 times more likely to engage in gig work. According to Thomas and Baddipudi (2022), the demand for digital platform labour often comes from nations in the global north, while supply comes from low-income countries. This is represented by Baglioni et al., (2022) who demonstrate the varying demographics of Amazon's digital delivery

workforces. A study conducted in Australia showed also that transport and food delivery drivers were overwhelmingly younger and temporary residents.

Platform economies strategically frame themselves as autonomous, flexible, and democratic to ensnare migrant workers, whose labour is constrained by state mechanisms and structural limitations (van Doorn, 2017). Gig platforms specifically rely on the precarity of migrants' citizenship status, lack of local language skills, and worker rights to force workers into behaving in ways that benefit the platform. Globally many digital platforms rely on migrant workers to generate a revolving labour pool (Van Doorn et al. 2020).

A study done by Altenreid (2021) on the experiences of migrant delivery workers in Berlin, working for Deliveroo found that many migrants were aware of the precarity of platform delivery, however, the easy onboarding process drew them to gig work. Other participants in the study cited that platform work was the only work they could find as migrants. Additionally, a study done by McDonald et al. (2019) further highlighted that in Australia temporary residents are three times more likely to engage with platform-based gig work. According to McDonald et al. (2019), the main demographic of gig workers is young males whose home language is not English. Webster and Maskani (2021) revealed that food courier riders tend to be young, 59% of their sample consisted of individuals under the age of 30. They further argue that being young can be linked to being single. The significance of being single is that workers can work for long hours without any family responsibilities. This meant they could take on more tasks (gigs).

Literature has shown that migrant and locals gig workers have different working experiences in the sense that migrants experience higher levels of income insecurity, less flexibility, and worse personal safety (Abkhezr et al., 2022; Holtum et al., 2022; Van Doorn et al., 2020). Additionally, they might face long delays waiting for the assessment of their qualifications or documentation, language barriers, systemic discrimination, and lack of access to relevant career resources and support (Abkhezr et al., 2022).

Schor et al. (2019) argue that dependency status on gig work is a key determinant of outcomes. Ravenelle (2019) and Schor and Vallas (2021) present how some workers range from dependent to supplemental earners. A study done by Holtum et al. (2022) indicated that migrant gig workers experience gig work differently depending on how reliant they are on the income from their platform jobs. supplemental earners enjoy a measure of distance from necessity, they can refuse low-paying tasks, positioning themselves more advantageously in the labour market

(Schor et al., 2019). This allows them to earn higher wages, exercise more autonomy over their conditions of work, and be more satisfied than those who are dependent (Schor et al.2019). The study further revealed that a majority of platform workers use their earnings to supplement other sources, including full-time jobs. Holtum et al. (2022) argue that this is not the case for all delivery workers especially marginalised earners who often rely on gig work as their primary source of income and supplement it with other jobs (Holtum et al.,2022). A study by Lin et al. (2020) reported that their respondents predominantly have delivery work as their sole job and on average work 54.7 hours per week. Holtum et al. (2022) revealed that migrant divers enjoyed the flexibility Uber offered for different reasons, such as adapting to adverse life conditions and being able to do other jobs on the side. The study also found that migrant drivers were more likely to support their whole family.

With the increase in the feminisation of labour markets women are making a presence in gig work, however, studies have shown that women constitute a small portion of workers in this industry. A study done by Webster and Masikani (2021) revealed that across three cities in Africa, only 2% of the participants were women, similarly a study by Holtum et al., 2022 revealed that their sample size comprised of 15 % of women. These studies indicate that there is a gendered division of labour within the gig economy. Women in these studies cited low levels of personal safety concerns, low levels of trust in organisations, and family responsibilities. The women participants in Webster and Masikani (2021) were not only concerned with safety, but they also indicated that their male colleagues suppressed their freedom of expression.

Könönen, (2019) highlights that the distinct thing about migrant workers is their valuation of employment opportunities. In migration, literature migrants are placed in a dual frame of reference that informs reasons why migrants take on low-paid and precarious forms of work (Könönen, 2019). Könönen, (2019) argues that migrants have purely instrumental intentions when it comes to job opportunities, they are willing to take up lower wages as compared to locals because they are focused on investing the income accumulated in Western countries back in their home community through remittances. Lata et al. (2022:10) critiques this and argue that this conceptualisation fails to address the structural and racialised logics that prevents migrants from accessing formalised, standard forms of employment and can essentialise the immigrant experience. Migrant employment within precarious and low-paid forms of work should not be separated from immigration policies and broader histories of racialized and gendered labour (Maury, 2020). There is a vast amount of literature on the links between

residency status and vulnerability in the labour market (Könönen, 2019; Lata et al., 2022), however, the area of digital platform economies and migrant labour is under-researched, and this study aims to contribute to this literature.

2.4 Zimbabwean's migrants in South Africa.

There is significant literature on Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa (Bloch and Dona, 2019; Crush and Tevera, 2010; Crush and Tawodzaera, 2014; Makina, 2012; Mawadza,2008; Mutambanengwe, 2012). Zimbabwean migration dates back to the nineteenth century. When South Africa gained democracy in 1994, it opened up its borders to the rest of the continent. Simultaneously Zimbabwe entered a long period of economic decline precipitated by the adoption of an Economic Structural Adjustment Plan (ESAP) (Crush, 2000; Crush and Tevera, 2010). The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) and Operation Murambatsvina further, exacerbated the economic decline of Zimbabwe, forcing many Zimbabweans to migrate to other countries. An estimated three million plus Zimbabweans left since 2000 (Crush et al., 2015:366). More recently, the violence associated with the ruling party – Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), and the uncertainties following the 2018 elections contributed to the exodus of Zimbabweans into South Africa (Crush et al., 2015; Jager & Musuva, 2016; Nyoni, 2018: 412).

South Africa classifies Zimbabwean migrants as economic migrants (Tevera and Zinyama, 2002). However, literature has shown that the vast majority of Zimbabweans migrate to South Africa for varying reasons (Crush et al., 2012; Maphosa, 2010;2011). Reasons for migrating are often mutually inclusive in response to the deterioration of the various forms of social safety nets and the worsening economic possibilities in Zimbabwe (Makina, 2017). For example, a study done by Amit (2009) showed that only 29% of asylum seekers in South Africa cited economic reasons alone as their motivation for migrating, while 42% listed economic reasons alongside various forms of persecution and/or civil conflict.

Keeping track of the number of Zimbabweans in South Africa has been hard, because many Zimbabweans cross into South Africa on temporary visas, but remain in the country, while tens of thousands of others cross the border illegally due to strict visa requirements. Over the years there have been some significant shifts in the characteristics of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa (Crush et al., 2015). During the earlier periods, Zimbabwean migrants were young males often following family members who had preceded them, while they were more likely acting as a network for other family members and friends to follow them into the country. Although

male migration still dominates in terms of the gender profile of migrants there is a diverse community of Zimbabweans migrating to South Africa, comprising of women, men, students, and families migrating together documented, undocumented labour migrants, informal traders, skilled professionals, refugees, and business people (Crush et al., 2015).

The economic hub of South Africa, Johannesburg (Gauteng), has by far the largest concentration of both internal and international migrants in search of improved livelihoods (Bloch 2008; Bloch 2010; Crush and Tevera 2002; Hungwe 2012). According to Grant and Thompson (2015:182), Johannesburg is the most popular destination for many Zimbabwean migrants. In Johannesburg, they are often drawn to inner-city areas such as Hillbrow, Berea, and Yeoville. Trends over the years have shown that Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces host the most Zimbabweans, mainly because they are closer to the Zimbabwean border, but other cities such as Cape Town and Durban also have a large population of Zimbabweans (Crush et al., 2017). Sachikonye et al. (2018) highlights that in the mid-2000s Zimbabweans working on farms in Limpopo had diverse educational backgrounds and were paid below the minimum wage. They often viewed working on the farms as a steppingstone to bigger cities such like Johannesburg. Migrants are constantly looking for different pathways to employment. Trends in literature have shown that Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa often have high levels of education, ranging from post-secondary diplomas to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Research done by Webster and Masikane (2021) in Johannesburg revealed that most platform workers were well-educated. Of the total sample, 73% of participants said they had matric or above, and 27% held a tertiary education qualification.

They are often employed in a wide variety of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled jobs. The ability to migrate allows them to send remittances back to Zimbabwe. According to Crush et al., (2017) sending remittances back home is a key reason for many Zimbabweans working in South Africa, thus it is central to the lives of Zimbabweans in South Africa.

Sending remittances is also an indicator that Zimbabwean migrants do not intend to leave Zimbabwe permanently, as they simply cannot make a living to support themselves and their families in Zimbabwe (Mathekga, 2022). The return to Zimbabwe is not considered a viable option because of the dire economic situation. After the November 2017 coup in Zimbabwe, most Zimbabweans in South Africa have been skeptical about returning to Zimbabwe, because they believe that the people who supported Mugabe have taken over power and continue to rule the same way as Mugabe (Mpondi and Mupakati, 2018: 216).

Migration has a significant role in the livelihood outcomes of many Zimbabweans. Migration brings about various effects for individuals and families in South Africa and those back in Zimbabwe. For example, when people migrate new livelihood strategies need to be formulated by those left behind in Zimbabwe, by receiving remittances from individuals in South Africa, families can reduce vulnerabilities resulting from the absence of the individual.

Due to their migrant status migrants often face trouble when accessing financial institutions such as bank accounts or loans. A study done by Makina (2008) revealed that 59% of the respondents did not have access to banking services (bank accounts). To open a bank account in South Africa one has to be legally in the country with a verifiable residential address and source of livelihood (Makina, 2008). A total of 41% of the respondents save through informal savings clubs. This is expected as the majority have no access to formal financial services.

The temporary status of migrants leaves many of them in vulnerable positions, socially and economically. Migrant workers are subjected to limited periods of employment and are often forced to take jobs in informal sectors regardless of their skills and qualifications (Rosewarene,2010). This means that they are stuck working on temporary contracts, such as the gig economy. Results from ACMS (2017) revealed that temporary migrants are more likely to occupy low-wage, precarious jobs than South Africans. This can be linked to the high presence of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa's informal sectors.

Over the years South Africa has adopted various strategies to manage the growing influx of Zimbabwean migrants. The “Zimbabwean documentation project” was first implemented in 2010, regularizing approximately 255,000 Zimbabweans (Segattie, 2011:56). There have been different variations of this documentation since 2010. The introduction of various special permits over the years has allowed Zimbabweans to legally work, attend school, or even start their own businesses in South Africa legally. However, Polzer (2012) argued that the regularisation of Zimbabweans in South Africa was contradictory in the sense that the process increased the number of undocumented migrants instead of reducing the number. Jager and Musuva, (2016) postulate that the short application period, along with administrative hurdles, prevented many potentially eligible Zimbabweans from obtaining the permits, and those with special humanitarian needs who had not been able to work in the past were excluded.

The Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP) expired on 31 December 2021. On the 29th of November 2021, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) minister Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi announced that permits would no longer be extended, and a 12-month grace period would be

granted. The minister advised that permit holders are to apply for visas in accordance with their reasons for staying in South Africa and ensure they meet the applicable requirements. He further stated that ZEP holders whose applications were unsuccessful would be required to leave South Africa or risk being deported. According to the DHA, approximately 180,000 Zimbabwean nationals are in possession of a ZEP. The government's decision to discontinue the ZEP was met with retaliation from various organisations and Zimbabweans. Many Zimbabweans feared that the application process would be insufficient and bureaucratic, which could see over 200000 Zimbabweans forced to return home (News24, 2021). This directly impacts the social and economic livelihood strategies of many Zimbabweans.

The intuitions and immigration policies in South Africa directly impact how Zimbabwean migrants navigate their livelihood in South Africa. Thus, tracing some of these policies allows for a better understanding of whether the response from the DHA, (ZDP and ZSP) is producing desired outcomes.

2.5 Pathways to employment in South Africans gig economy for Zimbabweans

South Africa faces a high rate of unemployment. A labour force survey done by Statistics South Africa (2021 second quarter) revealed that 7.8 million people in South Africa were unemployed in the second quarter, representing 34.4% of the population. The unemployment rate was further exacerbated by lockdown measures implemented by the government to curb the COVID-19 pandemic (Kavese and Mbali 2022). The main problem in South Africa is structural unemployment, meaning that unemployment is involuntary, because there is a mismatch between the skills that people can offer, and the skills in demand (Arends et al.,2016; Pasara and Dunga, 2022). These labour market constraints often force vulnerable people to take up work in the informal sector, such as the gig economy.

For migrants who face widespread unemployment and informality gig work is often seen as an employment opportunity and survival strategy. According to the ILO (2021) in most countries, app-based delivery platforms are an important source of work opportunities for migrants. A study by Anwar and Graham (2021) revealed that eight out of six international migrants working in South Africa cited that platform-based work is their main source of household income. Literature on the gig economy in South Africa is scanty, however, it is a growing interest among scholars (Anwar et al., 2022; Webster and Masikane, 2021). These studies show the predominance of migrants involved in South Africa's growing gig economy.

A study done by Webster and Masikane, (2021) revealed a striking high percentage (94%) of cross-border migrants were involved in digital platform labour in Johannesburg, coming from Uganda, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Johannesburg has been the magnet for migrant workers since the nineteenth century, but in post-apartheid South Africa, there has been a dramatic increase in cross-border migrants from neighbouring countries (Webster & Masikane, 2021). This is consistent with global trends where there is an overrepresentation of international migrants in industrialised countries partaking in digital platform labour. The demand for labour mostly comes from advanced nations and supply comes from low-income countries (Van Doorn et al.,2020; Baddipudi, 2022).

In South Africa, gig workers are classified as independent workers (Fairwork, 2021). Consequently, gig workers are considered to be part of the informal sector. The informal sector in South Africa contributes a significant total share of employment with over 2.5 million people making up to 20 % of total employment. It contributes to about 5.1% of the country's GDP (Masuku and Nzewi, 2021; StatsSA, 2019, Rogan and Skinner, 2017:19). Zimbabweans constitute a large portion of migrants in South Africa. Zimbabweans who are unable to find work in the formal economy in South Africa, are often drawn to informal or casual employment (Crush and Tawodzera,2016: 14). Data from the 2017 Quarterly Labour Force Survey revealed that 47% of migrants in South Africa are employed in precarious and unregulated environments, and of these, nearly 39% are employed in the informal economy. A study conducted in 2017, revealed that between 20 to 30 percent of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa were involved in the informal economy. These statistics highlight the importance of informal sector employment for Zimbabweans in South Africa (Crush et al., 2017: 1, Crush and Tawodzera, 2015). Recent data from the quarterly labour force survey revealed an increase in the number of people that were employed in the informal sector in 2022 (StatsSA,2022). Overall, it appears that the South African informal sector is a conducive environment for many Zimbabweans. It enables them to integrate into the labour market to sustain their livelihoods (Abkhezr et al., 2022; Magnano et al., 2021). As the number of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa's gig economy expands it becomes crucial to examine how digital platforms become key and contentious sites for migrant workers to sustain their livelihoods and how they incorporate gig work with their daily lives and their migration trajectories.

As independent contractors gig workers are faced with compelling challenges related to the business model of the gig economy. Various authors often refer to the gig economy as a double-

edged sword for migrant workers (Anwar et al., 2022; Bandeira, 2019; Webster and Masikane, 2021). Gig work offers migrants pathways to self-sufficiency and financial independence. However, it also results in irregular salaries, insecure work, a loss of skills, and limited career development (Abkhezr et al., 2022; Bajwa et al., 2018; De Stefano, 2016; Prassl, 2018). Zimbabwean gig workers may find themselves in the situation of having moved from precarious work situations in their home countries to being employed in precarious work in the app-based gig economy in South Africa (Webster and Masikani, 2021).

As migrants, Zimbabweans are often excluded from state-sponsored schemes or benefits, especially if they are not in possession of the required documentation (Webster and Masikani, 2021). This was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, the South African government announced various measures of social protection such as the Temporary Employee Relief Scheme (TERS) and the COVID-19 temporary employee/ employer relief scheme. (Colfs and USAID, 2020). To qualify for these individuals had to be formally resisted as businesses or they had to be recognised as employees. Since neither of those conditions applied to platform workers, they had no access to government assistance. A study done by Howard et al. (2022) revealed that accessing assistance payment schemes proved to be difficult for many gig workers, particularly migrants, due to a lack of documentation, slow government implementation, or they extended only to national citizens or permanent residents. This further entrenches the marginalisation of precarious migrant workers that are unable to access the benefits that come with residency or citizenship status, furthering their need to interact with precarious labour for income (Könönen, 2019). These factors often contribute to the challenges that Zimbabwean migrants encounter during the process of navigating their livelihoods in South Africa.

Gig companies market their work as a flexible work arrangement that offers workers high levels of autonomy and independence. Webster and Masikane (2021) argue that the gig economy gives workers the illusion of freedom and flexibility in the sense that they are free to choose to work long hours in their own time, yet they are subject to the company's algorithm which directs them where to go and how much to charge. If they fail to satisfy, they can be discontinued and receive no income at all. Abkhezr et al. (2022) highlight that despite this for many migrants who have previous qualifications and work experiences, app-based gig work engagements pose a range of integration and career development risks. These include but are not limited to, unstable income, insecure work, underemployment, decreased well-being, social

isolation, skills depreciation, and loss, and finally, highly disrupted career development (Bajwa et al., 2018; De Stefano, 2016; Prassl, 2018; Victorian Government, 2020).

The immense competition in larger cities such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban, often compels many Zimbabweans to move to smaller cities and towns, including Makhanda (Crush & Tawodzera, 2016: 11). The cost of living in smaller towns is relatively low, so when Zimbabwean migrants choose to settle in smaller towns, they are afforded a better standard of living. However, they may fall short of demand from customers due to low population, insufficient infrastructure, and connectivity compared to larger cities.

The individualistic nature of gig work often leaves many migrant workers isolated. This is because platform apps do not reveal the number of workers in the area. According to Kusk and Nouwens (2022), migrants often mobilise on platforms on social media platforms which have been found to play an important role in reducing social isolation among gig workers. However, the formation of these groups can act as a foundation for "tribalism" between different migrant groups (Shanahan and Smith., 2021). Webster and Masikane (2021) revealed that online solidarity and the formation of WhatsApp groups helped migrant gig economy workers as they navigated their livelihoods in South Africa. Some groups included everyone while other groups were restricted to nationality or the area in which the driver worked. The study further showed that these groups function as support groups for many migrants. The participants from South Africa indicated that they joined these groups for various reasons such as for informal savings or information about work or working conditions.

Zimbabwean gig economy workers, like other foreign nationals, are often subjected to hostility, outright violence, and harassment by South Africans. These sentiments are connected to locals' fears that immigrants are crowding labour markets and draining already limited economic resources and social benefits (Nyamnjoh, 2006; Polzer, 2010). This leads to increased antagonism towards foreigners in South Africa causing xenophobic violence. Ride-hailing drivers in a study done by Anwar et al. (2022) cited that they had been subjected to all kinds of harassment such as getting stopped by police for documents to prove they can drive on Uber. This would result in hefty fines if they were unable to provide documents on hand or are subject to regular violence just because they are foreigners.

Additionally, Crush et al. (2017) also point out that a significant number of Zimbabwean entrepreneurs have been a victim, or know someone who has been a victim, of crimes such as robbery, looting, police misconduct, and xenophobic attacks. This reveals that xenophobia,

anti-immigration discourse, and sentiments are a reality for many immigrants residing in South Africa (Crush et al., 2017). On the pretext of not belonging migrants are subject to physical, emotional, and sometimes economic abuse.

2.6 Food Delivery platforms in South Africa

Platform businesses in South Africa such as Mr. Delivery Food, Uber Eats, and Checkers Sixty60, are expanding and experiencing rapid growth. In particular, the digital platform food delivery sector has seen considerable growth which increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. These platforms have become an important part of South Africa's economy (Kavese and Mbali,2022). Traditionally customers would have to place a phone call or visit the in-store to ask for delivery. In contemporary society food delivery platforms allow customers to order food from a plethora of restaurants on mobile applications, which is then delivered to the customer's stated address by platform workers who receive orders via digital platform applications. They offer convenience, and people in urban areas are more likely to opt for convenience, due to affordability. Research by Business Insider SA suggests that food delivery services in South Africa are growing at a rate that is slightly better than the international standard (Memeburn, 2019). A study conducted by Anwar et al. (2022) revealed that South Africa's level of food courier growth is higher than most African countries.

Delivery has been in operation since 1992 and was fully acquired by Takealot (an e-commerce company) in 2014 (Henama and Sifolo, 2017). In 2015 the company shifted from a phone call-based ordering process to an app-based ordering process and launched the Mr. D Food app in 2016. Currently, the app hosts over 8000 restaurants, in over 2500 areas in all nine provinces across South Africa with more than 4500 drivers doing deliveries (Malinga 2020; Naspers, 2020). Mr. Delivery has an estimated 2 million downloads and 700,000 active monthly users (Curry, 2022).

Uber Eats started operating in South Africa in 2016. Uber Eats is a subsidiary business of Uber (Henama and Sifolo, 2017). There are two reasons for the rapid entry of Uber into Africa. First, relaxed regulations in Africa significantly lowered Uber's barriers to entry, thereby enabling its rapid expansion and job creation. Secondly, Uber made shrewd and agile business model adjustments to adapt to Africa's unique operating environment (Webster and Masikani, 2021). During the pandemic in 2020 Uber reported that ride-hailing significantly decreased, but food couriering increased globally. Uber Eats has 2.1 million downloads, but in 2020 they did not make public its sales data (Lappeman et al., 2021). Uber's earnings release indicates that

globally during the COVID-19 pandemic, ride-hailing significantly decreased, but food couriering dramatically increased. However, although there were more Uber Eats customers than Uber ride-hailing customers, taxi drivers are still the dominant contributor to the company. Uber Eats' global revenue was US$600 million in 2017 and increased to US$1.2 billion by the second quarter of 2020. There were 13.5 million online food delivery customers in 2020. This represented a 27.5% increase in growth from 2019. By the end of 2022 revenue in the online Food Delivery market is projected to reach US$1.57bn in 2022 (Statista, 2022).

Overall, the combination of customer demand, algorithmic management systems, market expansion, and labour intermediaries in the food delivery industry have formed a governing model that enhances migrant workers' social and economic integration into South Africa. It has thus become crucial to examine migrant experiences to generate a better understanding of how gig work offers opportunities and challenges to migrants from different backgrounds and skill levels.

2.7 The gig economy in the Eastern Cape, Makhanda

There has been a considerable increase in platform work in South Africa and Makhanda is no exception. Makhanda, formally known as Grahamstown is a small town in the Eastern Cape

Province of South Africa. Encompassing a scope of around 91,400 people, with an estimated annual growth rate of 0.1% between 2020 and 2025 (Makana municipality final integrated development plan, 2022).

Makhanda is the major urban centre of the Makana local municipality, it hosts the annual national arts festival, has a legal industry connected to the high court, and is dominated by educational institutions which have a large footprint (Hoefnagels et al.,2022). According to Altenried (2020), digital platforms do not only intervene in labour relations but are also part of a multifaceted transformation of urban life, social reproduction, and even the architecture of cities themselves. The expansion of platform businesses in Makhanda, like ride-hailing, transport services, food delivery services, and other online business services has led to a significant increase in urbanisation and population growth in recent years and it is evident that Makhanda has become a hotspot for digitally mediated platform work.

The Eastern Cape has the highest unemployment rate in South Africa, according to Statistics South Africa (2021) unemployment levels increased to 34,9% in the third quarter of 2022. It is evident that there is a large growing pool of unemployed people in Makhanda. The situation was further exacerbated by lockdown measures that were implemented to curb the spread of

COVID-19 in 2020. Within the broader local municipality, the unemployment rates in Makhanda increased from 25% in 2010 to 38,3% in 2020, and a total of 15200 people were unemployed in Makana (Makana municipality final integrated development plan, 2022). With the rise of the gig economy, delivery platforms in, Makhanda now serve as key sites for managing the increasing unemployment.

Gig workers are classified as independent contractors they fall under the informal sector. It is hard to measure and manage employees in the informal sector because it is highly unregulated and cannot always be tracked. The Makana municipality's final integrated development plan 2021-2022 showed that in 2020, 6540 people (26.40% of total employment) were employed in the informal sector. In the Eastern Cape there was a slight growth in the number of independent contractors before covid 19, however, after the pandemic, there was a decrease in the number of independent contractors. Although not all independent contractors are gig workers, data on the number of independent contractors can provide insights (Kavese and Mbali,2022), considering the absence of empirical data on the gig economy, particularly in Makhanda. Overall, it is evident that the platform food delivery is growing in Makhanda and appears to be a conducive work arrangement for migrants, in pursuit of better socio-economic conditions. The increased unemployment rate and number of people joining informal work, particularly gig work it has become paramount to understand the role that platform gig work plays in the livelihoods of the people in small towns like Makhanda, specifically migrants who are generally overrepresented in platform labour. This research study aims to look at how platform gig work shapes the livelihood opportunities of migrant's small cities like Makhanda.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted various components of the SLA. It highlighted how the SLA is an appropriate analytical framework for understanding the lives and livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda. The chapter also offered a literature review that comprehensively discussed the gig economy and how it reinforces racialised labour regimes of exploitation; Zimbabweans in South Africa; Zimbabweans pathways to employment in the South African gig economy; the gig economy in South Africa it then narrowed down to the gig economy in Makhanda. From this chapter, it can be established that there have been major changes to the way in which work is performed in contemporary society. With the increase of Zimbabwean migrants entering South Africa in pursuit for better living standards. The gig economy, particularly platform gig work offers quick pathways to employment and self-sufficiency. From a different perspective literature also showed that the nature of gig work

caused significant financial precarity among vulnerable people, particularly migrants. This often compelled them to engage in a patchwork of income generating activities to survive such as working on more than one platform and other types of employment, largely in the informal sector.

CHAPTER 3: THE CASE OF ZIMBABWEAN GIG WORKERS IN MAKHANDA

3.1 Introduction

In many low to middle-income countries, like South Africa, with high unemployment most people rely on informal work such as gig work to sustain their livelihoods. There has been rapid growth in the number of platform gig workers in South Africa as more people realise the benefits of working independently (Kavese and Mbali, 2022). In this light platform work is also expanding in small towns such as Makhanda in the Eastern Cape.

This chapter focuses on the lives and livelihood strategies of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda. The chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section discusses the demographic profiles of the participants in this study. The second section discusses the pathways to employment in platform food delivery in Makhanda. The third section looks at the different livelihood strategies that Zimbabwean gig workers undertake both economic and social. The fourth section looks at challenges that Zimbabwean gig workers encounter in the process of navigating their livelihoods in Makhanda. The fifth section looks at the livelihood outcomes of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda.

3.2 Demographic profiles of Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda

Participants in this study had varying demographic profiles. The table below (Table 3.1) provides an overview of the demographic profiles of the ten Zimbabwean gig economy workers who participated in this study. Pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy of participants. The profiles of the ten participants in this study are not necessarily representative of all the Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda.

All the participants in this study were black Zimbabwean nationals. Although this study does not seek to provide a gendered analysis, both male and female delivery workers were incorporated into the sample to capture diversity in livelihood experiences along gendered lines. The sample consisted of nine men and one woman. The overrepresentation of men is a consistent trend in literature where only one in ten workers on gig-based platforms are women (Webster and Masikani,2021). Participant's ages ranged from the early twenties to late thirties. The oldest participant was 38 years old, while the youngest was 22 years old.

Four participants indicated that they were single, and the other six stated that they were married. Literature has shown that Zimbabweans in South Africa have high levels of education and skills

(Sachikonye et al., 2018; Webster and Masikane, 2021). This was evident in the participants in this study as the majority of the participants were educated. The high levels of educated gig workers may be a reflection of barriers to entry in other fields for migrants with qualifications acquired from other countries. Moreover, platform work appears to offer a means of viable employment. Six participants cited that they had O levels (the equivalent of matric in South Africa) or above, and one held a tertiary education qualification. The remaining three indicated that they did not complete their education due to financial constraints. The ongoing political and economic challenges in Zimbabwe often result in bleaker opportunities for many Zimbabweans. As a result, they are forced to drop out of school to find semi-skilled or unskilled work either in Zimbabwe or in neighbouring countries like South Africa and Botswana to sustain their livelihoods (Crush et al., 2015). Billy explains why he dropped out of school in Zimbabwe and searched for work at a young age.

> When I was growing up life was tough ... If you wanted to survive you had to get out… so that you can make something out of your life. (14 October 2021)

Participants cited that the unaffordability of school fees and the general lack of trust in the government to ensure employment for graduates in Zimbabwe contributed to their reasons for dropping out of school or generally not furthering their education.

Participants were classified using Ravenelle's (2019) classification of workers based on their level of investment or dependency on the income from the job. They were categorised as either supplemental, meaning they had additional sources of income, or full income referring to participants who solely relied on this income for all their expenses. Eight participants were invested at a supplemental level and the remaining two were invested at the full income capacity. All the participants in this study indicated that their gig jobs were an essential part of their livelihoods. It seemed like most of them took up gig work involuntarily because they were unable to find work elsewhere or they were unsatisfied with their previous forms of employment. Those who were employed engaged in various activities before joining the platform food delivery – including working in shops and other types of casual or informal work, with several mentioning providing fixed food delivery services for restaurants prior to the introduction of platform food delivery services (Steers, Ginos, Debonairs pizza or Rat and Parrot) in Makhanda.

The participants in this study showed that in most cases doing platform work was not a voluntary choice, but rather an alternative source of employment as they were unable to find

work or did not have the qualifications to join other labour markets. Jazz who was invested at a full income capacity indicated that he stayed in Makhanda with his son, the money he made from deliveries was sufficient to sustain himself and his son he cited that he did not send money back home and described food delivery as his full-time job. Dave who was also invested at a full income capacity said he was only responsible for himself; however, he would occasionally send his mother and sister money in Zimbabwe, but he was not obligated to. All the participants cited that they had dependents in South Africa or Zimbabwe who relied on their income. Sending remittances back home created new livelihood strategies for family members in Zimbabwe.

Once registered, gig workers tended to engage in other forms of paid work alongside platform work eight participants indicated that they had an additional job or business or that they worked for another platform. Yet there were indications that the platform often provided the bulk of workers' income. Participants were asked which primary platform they worked for, taking note of the fact that Platform food delivery workers often work across. Seven participants indicated that their primary platform was Mr. Delivery while the other three indicated that they delivered for Uber Eats. Mr. Delivery seemed to be the most popular choice.

Table 3. 1 The demographic profiles of participants

Pseudonyms	Age	Marital status	Education	Investment Level	Primary Delivery company	Household members
Zack	30	Single	Advanced level	Full income	Mr. Delivery	One child in Zimbabwe
John	22	Single	Ordinary level	Supplementary	Mr. Delivery	Lives with 5 family members
Dave	25	Single	Ordinary level	Full income	Mr. Delivery	Extended family member
Albert	32	Married	Upper six	Supplementary	UberEats	Extended family members in Zimbabwe
Jazz	30	Single	Upper six	Supplementary	UberEats	one child in Makhanda
Mellon	35	Married	Ordinary level	Supplementary	UberEats	wife and 2 children in Zimbabwe
Parker	35	Married	Ordinary level	Supplementary	Mr. Delivery	1 wife, 2 children in Makhanda

Banksy	38	Married	Ordinary level	Supplementary	Mr. Delivery	1 wife 2 children in Makhanda
Kate	29	Married	Tertiary level	Supplementary	Mr. Delivery	1 Husband, 2 children in Makhanda
Billy	32	Married	Form 3	Supplementary	Mr. Delivery	1 wife, 2 children in Zimbabwe

Literature has shown that digitally mediated platform work is deeply rooted in racialised and colonial logic that is characterised by underpaid, precarious work reliant on residency or citizenship status Maury (2020). The demographic profiles of participants in this study matched the demographic profiles of gig workers in literature as per Maury (2020) in the sense that participants in the study were foreign nationals, predominantly black males, who come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. This indicates that gig work reinforces migrant, gender, and racial stereotypes.

3.3 Pathways to employment in platform food delivery in Makhanda

Zimbabwean migration to South Africa is highly motivated by unemployment, economic hardship, political conflict, and the difficulty of making ends meet. Literature has shown that upon arrival migrants often struggle to find employment in South Africa's constricted labour markets (Stats SA,2011). As a result, many migrants are absorbed into the informal sector. Platform Food delivery has become one of the fastest-growing sectors in Makhanda (reference). The easy onboarding process of gig work has created a pathway that assists migrant workers to easily integrate into labour markets. Consequently, it enables migrant gig workers to obtain access to employment that enhances their choices and potential possibilities of livelihood sustainably in Makhanda. Based on the interviews the main push factors for migration to South Africa were the perceived lack of viable employment opportunities in Zimbabwe and seeking an improved standard of living.

One of the participants, Billy decided to go to Botswana out of desperation to find work to help his family back in Zimbabwe. A few months later he was deported back to Zimbabwe for not having proper documentation. Upon his arrival in Zimbabwe, he struggled to find a job and decided to stay home herding cattle while searching for employment. He subsequently secured employment at a company that offered cleaning services to banks in Zimbabwe. After a few years of working in this particular job, his brother who worked as a manager at Debonairs Pizza in Makhanda told him about the food delivery industry in Makhanda and invited him to come to South Africa. Billy indicated that money was not a problem at the time because he had

personal savings from his previous job. He used his personal savings to get a passport and a bus ticket to South Africa. He traveled straight from Zimbabwe to Makhanda in 2019. He first started working as a delivery driver for Debonairs Pizza in Makhanda before working for Mr. Delivery (a subsidiary of Takealot). Six participants in the study had similar experiences to Billy, prior to leaving Zimbabwe, six participants indicated that they had been involved in some form of informal work that enabled them to afford to purchase Zimbabwean passports, apply for permits, and buy bus tickets. The remaining three participants in the study had different experiences, because they were unemployed, they either had to either borrow money from friends and relatives or come to South Africa via invitation from friends and family.

The geographic proximity between the South African and Zimbabwean borders often draws a large number of Zimbabweans to South Africa seeking employment and refuge of which some enter South Africa illegally. Interestingly all the participants in this study indicated that they had gained legal access to South Africa upon arrival, although their current immigration status was not determined as it was not part of the study objective. Three participants indicated that before moving to Makhanda they had lived in other towns or provinces. The remaining seven participants cited that they came straight from Zimbabwe to Makhanda. One of the participants Banksy who came from Johannesburg to Makhanda cited:

> I came to Makhanda because it is safe unlike the big cities like Johannesburg or Cape Town. I was also very strategic here… I knew that not many people were doing this delivery business. But these days there are many of us waiting for orders for delivery. (Banksy, 14 October 2021).

From the above assertion, the increased number of platform food delivery workers and competition among workers is a clear indicator of the upsurge in platform food delivery in Makhanda. In 2021 Mr. Delivery and Uber Eats were the two dominating food delivery platforms. Mr. Delivery started operating in January 2020 and Uber Eats started recruiting in July and by mid-July 2021 they started operating. During the data collection phase, the Takealot (Mr. Delivery is a subsidiary of Takealot) office in Makhanda gave an estimate of the workers who were registered at their branch. They claimed that there is a fifty-fifty percentage between locals and immigrants doing food deliveries for Mr. Delivery. They indicated that although they have immigrants from diverse countries, most of the immigrant workers who registered were from Zimbabwe. This shows that there is a substantial number of Zimbabweans taking part in the gig economy of Makhanda. In as much as these are only estimates it is evident

that Zimbabweans play a key role in the gig economy, particularly in the platform food delivery industry in Makhanda.

The gig economy is often framed as an economic safety net for many during times of hardship and downturn. The low entry barriers and easy onboarding process attract vulnerable people, like Zimbabwean migrants who are looking for a quick pathway to employment in constricted labour markets. Kate a participant expressed that when she moved to South Africa in 2020, she struggled to find a job in Makhanda, even with her qualification in psychology from the University of Zimbabwe. She indicated that the recruitment process for Mr. Delivery was relatively straightforward compared to other jobs that required intensive applications and interviews. The online recruitment process on delivery platforms requires little to no formal screening or training and workers can start working as soon as their documents have been processed on the platform apps. Nearly every participant cited that the straightforward recruitment process attracted them to platform food delivery. Flexibility was the central selling point to entering the gig economy among all the participants. Kate, a wife, and mother of two indicated that she valued the flexibility that gig work afforded her, because it gave her the opportunity to balance her responsibilities as a mother and wife, and she had control over her working hours.

Jazz another participant indicated that he previously worked for a construction company in South Africa. He left the company because the hours he was working were not justifiable to the amount of money he was getting paid, and sometimes he would not even get paid. When he started working for Mr. Delivery, he could work out his own work schedule and end the week with a good amount of money to cover his responsibilities here in South Africa and send remittances back home to Zimbabwe. He expressed that he was happy that he no longer has to report to someone, only the platform app, and he is guaranteed pay as long as he puts in the required number of hours. Despite not being able to predict the algorithm, the participants showed great appreciation for the autonomy that gig work provided. All the participants showed that they valued having control of when and where they worked. Zack one of the participants cited:

> Working this Job is 50/50 there is good and there is bad…Sometimes you make more sometimes you make less. (14 October 2021).

The above statement by Zack illustrates the double-edged sword described by Bandeira (2019). In as much as the gig economy affords many immigrants legitimate and quick employment

upon arrival in the host country, they are also met with compounding challenges related to the business model of gig work (as discussed in section 3.5). The SLA contends that livelihood strategies and outcomes are not just dependent on access to capital assets or constrained by the vulnerability context (Serrat, 2017:24). They are also transformed by the environment of structures and processes such as the increase in technology and internet usage that have fuelled the growth of gig economy (Serrat, 2017:24). However, it is important to note that this does not solve essential livelihood issues, such as citizenship, social insurance, and sociocultural inequalities.

3.4 Livelihood strategies of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda

Livelihood strategies are the activities and decisions taken by a household or community to realise their livelihood outcomes (DFID, 2002). SLA literature often speaks about household-based livelihood portfolios involving a shifting combination of two or more livelihood strategies. Livelihood strategies often result in livelihood outcomes which are discussed in Section 3.6.

In this study, it is evident that the precarity of gig work combined with flexibility often compels Zimbabwean gig workers to take on multiple livelihood strategies to sustain their livelihoods. This is consistent with Anwar et al. (2022) argument that Informal workers are known to depend on multiple sources of income for their livelihoods. This section is divided into two sub-subsections that discuss the economic and social strategies that Zimbabwean gig workers undertake in the process of navigating their lives and livelihoods in Makhanda, South Africa.

3.4.1 Economic strategies

3.4.1.1 Saving societies

Saving societies are informal societies where members contribute fixed sums of money to a central fund on a weekly, fortnightly, or monthly basis. Funds in the society must offer each member of the group equal and fair benefits. Six participants indicated that they were part of a savings society. Saving or investment societies seem to play an integral role in generating income for Zimbabwean gig workers. These societies allow individuals an agreed-upon monthly amount which later results in monthly pay-outs, or they could keep investing their savings and get a lump sum at the end of the year. Saving societies also play an important role in building social capital. Billy cited:

> I am part of a group where we do marounds so I can get more money, you see with this job get paid every week but with marounds I also get some money at the end of the month…So in our group we do 50 rands every week so by the end of the month I get about 500 rands. (14 October 2021)

Saving groups equip members with financial support for various functions ranging from school fees, paying rent, grocery shopping, and money for sending remittances. Participants in this study indicated that their savings groups consisted of Zimbabweans exclusively. There was a variation in member's occupation and there was no joining fee. Participants indicated that they felt a sense of brotherhood in their saving societies. This shows that saving groups not only provide financial capital they also enhance social capital. Banksy expressed:

> I like being in this groups it keeps me in touch with fellow Zimbabweans, feeling like home, sometimes we even talk about other things besides the money, but that's what's important. (14 October 2021)

Marounds is a Shona word used to refer to saving groups and it directly translates as rounds, which means rotating in a circular motion (the savings rotate among members). Banksy's statement shows that saving groups are not only financially beneficial, but they also aid in facilitating social connectedness among Zimbabwean gig workers. Five participants indicated that they were part of the Marounds savings group, and the other five indicated that they were part of other saving groups in their communities.

Participant's responses showed that being part of saving societies reduced their vulnerability to unexpected financial socks or burdens. All the participants indicated that the Covid-19 pandemic impacted them badly, however, being part of a saving society saved them from the economic shocks induced by lockdown restrictions. The participants indicated that even though they were unable to work during the pandemic the money they gained from their saving societies contributed a great deal to their livelihoods.

The participants in this study who were part of savings groups expressed that their primary goal for being part of these societies was to save due to the fluctuations in income they experienced while on food delivery platforms. The literature has shown that such fluctuations can make it difficult for workers to save as pay varies drastically in the gig economy and is by no means fixed. This, further highlights that the precarity of gig work makes it difficult for gig workers to qualify for loans. Joining saving groups acts as an intermediary to accumulating and generating income to sustain their livelihoods. Participants indicated that saving groups allow

them to save and invest their money, especially for those who could not access financial services such as savings accounts, banks, and credit. Parker expressed:

> As a foreigner it is very hard to even open a savings bank account, we can't even get credits, through marounds we are able to save money. Sometimes we also just borrow from each other. (14 October 2021).

From the above response, it can be asserted that the combination of financial and social capital plays a vital role in sustaining the livelihoods of the participants in this study. Furthermore, the migrant status of Zimbabwean gig workers restricts them from applying for loans or financial aid because they do not have the necessary documentation to get loans from banks. All the participants in this study indicated that they were here temporarily meaning they use work permits. Banks only offer loans to permanent residents and South African citizens. The findings in this study resonate with many other studies, that show that migrants often struggle to obtain access to financial services (Makina, 2010; Webster and Masikani, 2021).

3.4.1.2 Multi-Apping strategies

As described in the literature, multi-apping has become a popular strategy among gig workers globally and Makhanda is not an exception. When asked which platform participants worked for six participants indicated that they use both platforms, while the other only worked for one platform full-time. Participants who engaged in multi-apping pointed out that in as much as they interchanged platforms, they had a primary platform that they worked for (see table 3.1). All the participants in this study were unfamiliar with the term multi-apping, however, they said that they have been doing this since platforms were introduced to make a substantial income from food deliveries. Parker cited there is no way he would be able to make a decent amount of money only working for one app, so he delivered for both Mr. Delivery and Uber Eats. Parker cited:

> I log into both apps at the same time and start taking orders, its easy because sometimes I just walk to the restaurant take the orders and then jump on my bike to deliver, plus Makhanda is small so the distance is not bad. (14 October 2021)

From participants' responses, it was evident that working across multiple platforms is a standard practice as a result they are compelled to learn the nuances of different apps. As they explained how they navigated working on multiple apps, two different strategies used by participants emerged. Some participants indicated that they were logged on to both platforms

at the same time, while others scheduled their working times, they logged in to both platforms at different times depending on peak hours. Billy expressed:

> Deliveries start at 9am so I start with take a lot of deliveries in the morning then around 12, I move to the food delivery apps, because those are peak lunch times from 6 its peak dinner times. (14 October 2021).

Nearly every participant in the study indicated that they were strategic when navigating platforms and switching between platforms was a strategy to maximise earnings from platforms. By working on multiple platform apps, they were able to benefit from both uber eats and Mr. Delivery.

> I work on Mr. Delivery full time, uber eats here and there, because there are more restaurants unlike uber eats distance does not matter. (14 October 2021)

Mr. Delivery was the popular primary platform among participants. Jazz cited that Mr. Delivery was his primary platform, because the distance is not calculated in pay unlike Uber Eats considering that Makhanda is a small town and places are close to each other they would not make much. Participants cited that working on multiple apps was intense, leaving them overworked, sleep deprived, and exhausted. The competitive nature of platform gig work compels gig workers to complete as many tasks as possible and as quickly as possible no matter how unreasonable. This contradicts the 'flexible nature' of gig work because gig workers are constantly taking on gigs to meet ends meet. Participants in this study reported that they often had to work during weekends and holidays to make a substantial amount of money to sustain their livelihood.

Participants also indicated that sometimes they made mistakes when interchanging apps. They cited that a common mistake was delivering the wrong order, which resulted in poor reviews on apps. Poor ratings do not affect their income; however, it reduces their credibility and lessens their chances of being tipped by consumers. The algorithmic nature of gig work allows platforms to filter work away from gig workers with low ratings gradually making work less viable for those affected.

3.4.1.3 Income diversification strategies

Income diversification is a strategy used by households to multiply or generate their income to cover all types of shocks and stresses (Scoones, 1998). Literature has shown that in the global north gig migrant workers usually take up more than one form of employment or

simultaneously work for two gig platforms, especially if there is high number of delivery workers in the area, they experience high levels of uncertainty (Anwar et al., 2022). A study done by Huws et al. (2016) showed that platform workers typically worked on multiple platforms because of the precarious nature of gig jobs. A similar pattern emerged among participants in this study as some participants indicated that they were active on both Mr. Delivery and Uber eats. Participants in this study indicated that diversifying their income was almost involuntary in combining gig work with other income streams was necessary for maintaining their livelihoods. Livelihood diversification helped them cope with shocks (e.g., COVID-19) that threaten their livelihoods. Albert expressed:

> Makhanda is small, at first there were not so many delivery boys, and I could do up to 30 deliveries, but now esssh, it's almost as if everyone is working at Mr. D now, so I have to come up with other ways to support my family in Zim. (14 October 2021)

The reason cited for income diversification by participates in this study was the uncertainty and increasingly stressful fluctuation in earnings. They indicated that diversifying their income was almost involuntary in Makhanda. Makhanda is a small town and food delivery is highly popular among students and learners. There are periods of time when they are not in town, and during those periods demand is very low as a result their income sources unstable, making them vulnerable to economic risks. Thus, it is not surprising to find that most of the participants in this study depend on multiple incomes. Participants who cited other paid work alongside their platform work described taking "side hustles" when the chance arose for example doing delivering directly from restaurants who did not use platform delivery apps and offering cab services. In the focus group Zack stated:

> Sometimes it gets very quiet and there are no deliveries so when I'm not doing deliveries, I use my car as a cab to people around the town or I work part time at the rat and parrot…I make deliveries for them. (15 October 2021)

> Jazz cited:

> I also use my car as a cab when I'm not doing deliveries, because in as much as I work for uber eats I need to make sure the money is enough to pay for fuel and data as well. (15 October 2021)

The above sentiments show that diversifying their income plays a significant role when other options are failing to provide for the livelihood (Scoones, 1998). According to Reardon et al. (1992) income diversification is associated with higher incomes and food consumption, and

more stable income and consumption. Participants in this study showed that through income diversification they were able to minimize household income vulnerability and to ensure a minimum level of income to maintain their livelihoods. Nearly every participant in this study indicated that they could not base their livelihoods on their delivering jobs. Mainly because of the uncertainty that came with their platform food delivery jobs.

Most of the participants indicated that the with their food delivery salary they used for maintaining their vehicles (which was quite expensive), paying for fuel, data needed to navigate the digital platform apps and household expenses. Diversifying their income gave them more money to send back home to Zimbabwe and to spend on leisure. On the other hand, Banksy indicted that for him doing platform food delivery was a "side hustle". Banksy stated:

> In as much as I work for Mr. Delivery, I also have my own laundry matt here in Makhanda and also in Port Elizabeth, so I do deliveries whenever I want to because I know that I am getting a salary from my other businesses. (14 October 2021)

Literature has shown that some people take up platform-based work because of its flexibility, others take it up, because they cannot find jobs in the constricted labour markets. The participants in this study showed that while some gig workers use the platform food delivery as their primary source of income others use it as a secondary source of income.

3.4.1.4 Income from household members

Household income refers to the combined gross income of all the members in the household. When asked about household income nearly every participant indicated that they were the key provider in their household income, however, multiple types of income are combined and produced in their households. Majority of the participants signalled that their platform earnings were insufficient, with some indicating that they could not meet their basic needs and financial responsibilities through platform work, nor were they able to save. Those that were married indicated that being married gave them access to double income. Billy expressed that:

> When my wife stated working at the saloon things stated getting a little bit better even though it wasn't much, cause now she was able to buy some few things in the house.
>
> (14 October 2021)

Mellon also expressed.

> My wife she's a maid and I'm delivering for uber eats, so our money is not much but it makes a difference that she works cause now I send money back home and we still have enough here at home to survive. (Brian, 14 October 2021)

Reflecting on the responses it is evident that income from other household members reduces household vulnerability and improves income security. Given the precarious nature of gig work additional income from household members plays a key role their sustaining livelihoods.

3.4.2 Social Strategies

3.4.2.1 Networking

Networking involves the process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts. When asked about how they got to know about working in the gig economy, the majority of the participants indicated that it was through networking. Participants indicated that networking was an integral part of their livelihoods. Parker stated:

> This job I head from a friend of mine, infect all my other jobs I just got them because I know people around. (14 October 2021).

Billy added:

> If it wasn't for my brother who told me about Mr. Delivery, I would have come to Makhanda I would have still been working as a cleaner in Harare, I was surprised that I could be my own boss. (14 October 2022)

This statement indicates that social networks are an important part of the lives of the participants in this study. They allow people to share opportunities that are vital for sustaining livelihoods. Participants indicated that investment groups such as marounds also helped them build networks with other Zimbabweans doing different kinds of jobs. Participants felt that the relationships they cultivated widened their networks, increasing their likelihood of referrals.

Zack expressed:

> I met this guy we were doing marounds in the same group, he works in construction, so in December when it gets quiet, and all the students are gone he advised me to go there, and I will work in construction. (14 0ctober 2022)

The above assertion from participant shows working in the gig economy alone does not guarantee the sustainability of their livelihoods, social capital combined with human capital is

necessary and results in financial benefits. The participants in this study showed that networking convertible into economic capital which is the most important form of capital.

3.4.2.2 Resilience

Resilience refers to people's ability to cope with all aspects of demographic change, including migration (Adger et al, 2002). On the other hand, social resilience is the ability to cope with and adapt to environmental and social change mediated through appropriate institutions (Adger et al. 2002). The concept of resilience can thus be applied to Zimbabwean gig workers. Some participants in this study expressed that upon their arrival to South Africa, they experienced discrimination and were faced with xenophobic/ Acrophobic violence. Dave expressed that:

> My journey to South Africa was very smooth, but the problem came when I was looking for a job, my bosses did not pay me because of papers and also, they used to make degrading remakes to us and said we can't complain because this is not our country sometimes there was no pay, but me I just ignore them. (14 October 2021).

Billy added:

> The police are very strict and rude they will ask you about permits and passport those police they are not working for…. Police have their "ministry "and they are not working for home affairs. (14 October 2021).

Participants acknowledged that they are afraid to live in and work in South Africa, however they revealed that they do not have a choice, as they are here in search of better lives which

makes them strong and able to cope with volatile situations. Regardless of the discrimination they can withstand adversity and bounce back and make an income sustain their livelihoods despite life's downturns. Individuals that are resilient can create a range of coping skills that are adapted to the situation at hand. Sometimes they are forced to adopt theses coping skills because they are dependent on being in other country to survive. Albert cited:

> I have no choice but to deal with the things that are happening here in South Africa because I cannot go back to Zimbabwe there is no life there, and I need to feed my family. (14 October 2021)

Coping skills allow them to effectively manage stressful situations, thereby transforming them into less stressful ones or enabling them to come to terms with aspects of life that are uncontrollable (Adger et al. 2002). It can be argued that resilience has become a social strategy that is being employed by many Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. This is reflected in the

responses of participants in this study that showed that they are able to overcome social ills like exploitation, discrimination, and xenophobia, to enhance their lives and livelihoods in Makhanda.

3.4.2.3 Access to social media

Participants indicated that they were part of various WhatsApp groups and Facebook pages, which posted vacancies and kept them posted on current affairs in Zimbabwe and in South Africa. Social media is often used as a form of solidarity. Participants cited that being part of WhatsApp groups and Facebook pages provided them with a platform to share information about work and their experiences.

However, in as much as social media might be helpful, it can also be detrimental. In the focus groups participants expressed their frustrations when the fake news about the renewal of the ZEP was released. Banksy expressed:

> Our WhatsApp group sometimes people post fake news on there, I remember someone posted that the government was renewing the ZEP, but it was fake fake, (14 October 2021).
>
> Zack added:
>
> I was almost relaxed thinking my papers will be sorted; this is a bad thing to do…we sometimes trust our fellow people on WhatsApp. (14 0ctober 2021)

The participants in this study put a lot of trust in the information that they get from social media. In November 2021 there was a misleading article circulating on social media stating that South Africa was going to extend the ZEP for five more years. The DHA put out a statement stating that there was no decision made on the ZEP and that communication would be made through regular communication protocols. From the above assertions, it is visible that in as much as social media is helpful it can also have a detrimental effect on the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers.

3.5 The challenges encountered by Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda.

The literature review has shown that migrants face a multitude of challenges due to their migrant status. Labour without traditional employment protections contributes to conditions in which workers are easily exploited, terminated, and replaced. As a result, these challenges have a massive impact on how they mobilise their livelihoods. The SLA maintains that a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or

enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, without undermining the natural resource base (Ellis, 2005). This section aims to discuss the challenges Zimbabwean gig economy workers experience in the process of maintaining and restructuring their livelihoods in Makhanda and how they overcome some of these challenges.

3.5.1 Inadequate income

The standard pay per delivery on Mr. Delivery is R25, however, on weekends pay increased to R35 per delivery. Those that used Uber eats as their primary indicated that the app provided them with incentives for logging into the platforms and good customer ratings. This is a tactic used by platform companies to encourage workers to work on weekends.

Makhanda is a small town where educational institutions have a large footprint (Hoefnagels et al., 2022). This means that during the school months the town is buzzing with students from private institutions in the form of primary and secondary schools, Rhodes University, and the East Cape Midlands College who constitute a large portion of consumers in Makhanda. Participants indicated that the downfall of doing platform food delivery in Makhanda was that when the students leave town they make less money, so taking up other livelihood strategies was essential to making up for the vacation (January, June, and December) months when students go home for holidays. Kate cited:

> It's very hard to estimate how much you will make. Some days you make less some days you make more. (15 October 2021)

The statement by Albert highlights the fluctuations in income. Platform workers are paid on piece rates varying by distance, location, and company. The harder they work, the higher they earn. This in turn results in excessive hours worked and a higher risk of errors or accidents due to a race against time. The participants in this study indicated that they are often faced with unpredictable income as they do not have consistent gigs. Clearly gig work remains a survival strategy for most workers, but at a minimum it enabled workers to earn some income for themselves and their families. The majority of the participants cited that they made enough money, as the money they made allowed them to live within their means. This meant that they had enough money to pay for rent, utilities and send some money back home.

3.5.2 Language barriers and social isolation

According to Potter et al. (2008) access to livelihoods is connected to language and identity in direct and complex ways. Language and identity thus play a significant role in the structuring

and maintenance of the livelihoods of Zimbabweans in the gig economy. The inability to speak or understand local languages directly impacts their livelihoods because they are unable to communicate engage and interact with locals. Some participants indicated that they could not speak English well, so even being part of this study was a bit of a challenge for them. John expressed:

> I only know Shona because it is my home language…with English I try, but Xhosa.
>
> (14 October 2021)

Not being able to speak the local language directly impacts the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers. Van Doorn et al. (2020) extrapolates that migrants with poor language skills, often face difficulties when it comes to accessing information and support. The majority of the participants shared similar experiences about language hindering their access to public services and pursuing their livelihoods in South Africa. Fred expressed:

> Here in here in Makhanda, its better, but we still feel it especially at home affairs once they ask for your ID and you give them your passport or when they speak to you in Xhosa and you say you don't understand, (sigh) it's a problem and the mood changes but they will help you…. sometimes they will continue speaking Xhosa just to make funny of you or to make it harder for you. (15 0ctober 2021)

Some participants expressed that they faced major constraints when looking for work in South Africa. The inability to communicate with their prospective employers or customers turned them to manual work. Mellon indicated that prior to working for Mr. Delivery he worked for a call center in Johannesburg, he expressed:

> I can understand and speak English but obviously I'm used to Shona, my tongue is very stiff, but I speak that dodge Xhosa (laughs)… sometimes the customers would be rude because of my accent, I just stopped working there because it wasn't good for my esteem and my boss would complain, so stated in construction just like with this job we don't have to speak too much [laughs]. (14 October 2021)

This statement shows that even when language is not a barrier to understanding, having a distinct accent is an obvious indicator of outsider status, thus limiting integration and reinforcing their position as 'outsider-inhabitants' (Standing,2011). Consequently, sharing a language is important to be included in South African society. Language barriers thus form a major hurdle for migrants looking in the process of social and economic integration.

Participants expressed that working in the gig economy allows them to do their jobs and keep track of their earnings without much verbal communication, however, participants indicated that gig work left them feeling isolated and alienated. Jazz expressed that:

> Yho! sometimes it gets lonely, it would be nice to interact with people you are working with you know, it's just maybe language is a problem. Sometimes I do deliveries and I can go 5 hours not talking to anyone because everything is on the phone, even when I come to sit here the other guys are not here because they are doing deliveries. (15 October 2021)

Even after securing employment, many felt isolated and struggled to build networks in their new work environments. The above statement the absence of co-workers can be isolating and alienating for workers. Participants in this study indicated that they were directly impacted by social isolation and language barriers in the process of navigating their livelihoods in South Africa.

3.5.3 Documentation limiting access/ Restrictiveness of permits.

Many Zimbabweans enter South Africa on a temporary basis, increasingly, many extend their stay in search of permanence, however upon arrival they are met by restrictive and confusing immigration policies. Many migrants experience limited rights, with notable restrictions placed on work permits. This has a direct impact on the livelihoods of Zimbabweans. The country prioritises securitization and public order at the expense of the livelihoods of immigrants. The challenge is that obtaining a work visa is a strenuous and time-consuming process. When applying for a work visa immigrant, are required to produce an employment offer letter from an employer to the Home Affairs office, which is not always feasible, because the planned or expected work is informal.

The introduction of ZEP has allowed many Zimbabweans in South Africa to work in South Africa. However, these documents are costly, and the conditions are restrictive and complex. This sometimes causes challenges towards the livelihood activities and options of Zimbabweans gig economy workers who are for ZEP holders. Hungwe (2013) argues that the restrictive nature of ZEP is an attempt by South African institutions and officials to draw boundaries separating insiders from outsiders. Some participants expressed that applying for these documents was tedious and daunting, Parker expressed:

> I came to South Africa with traveling documents, but I couldn't get a work permit, I went through everything that they needed to be done, radiography, police clearance, I even went to the department of labour so they could explain to me everything that was needed. They found out that the permit I wanted I did not qualify because they wanted the skilled visa, So I wanted the general one. By then I was using an asylum which I endured a lot of pain to get that asylum, I had to travel from here to Pretoria I couldn't get it, then I travelled from here to Musina and got it the very same day…This is the most challenge I have had in South Africa. (14 October 2021)

Majority of the participants expressed that they felt that the South African government provided them with these avenues to be in South Africa, but they make it difficult for them to access these documents this ultimately limits their livelihood strategies and outcomes. The time of the interviews, participants expressed their concern regarding the talks of the South African government wanting to discontinue the ZEP. The ZEP allowed Zimbabweans to stay, work, study and run business in South Africa due to the political and socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe. The key informant from explained:

> The government has decided that their visas at the end of the year will expire so they are required to go on a normal visa. That process is not easy, and it is costly. It took me a good three years to get a normal visa…The ZSP was meant to be almost like a blanket visa for anyone who is looking for assistance and is in South Africa, so they have documentation, now they have to move in a different category visa. We encourage drivers to start soon, the earlier you submit your papers the better, because the longer you take you are going to run into trouble. They now have to apply for a work visa, Spousal visa, Special skills visa or study visa, you have to apply for one of those and there lies challenges… Personally as someone who has gone through that process and keeps up with current affairs, I suspect that a good two thirds of Zimbabweans working in South Africa are going to be affected, by affected I mean they won't qualify for the other visas, and they will have to go home. (26 November 2021).

The reason for regularizing the process of ZDP was to avert the pressure exulted on the asylum seeker management process. The South African government announced that the ZEP will expire on the 31 of December 2021, however a year's grace period has been granted to allow permit holders to legalise their stay in South Africa according to the permit depending on their permit category. This will ultimately have a massive impact on the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig economy workers. The key informant cited:

> They will be required to apply for work permits that often take a while to come out. Waiting for a permit means you cannot work and are forced to go back to Zimbabwe as they wait for the permit to come out. The sad thing is many of these guys have been working in South Africa for a long time, but the ZEP did not allow people to apply for permanent residence. Our platforms won't even recognise them without theses permits. Also, what visa will they apply for its so uncertain. (26 November 2021)

This highlights Moyo's (2020) argument that permits keep migrants in a state of permanent temporality. This uncertainty of which visa category they fall under could have a direct impact on the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers, because if they apply for the wrong visa their application will be unsuccessful and they will be forced to go back home to Zimbabwe.

3.5.4 Exploitation and discrimination

Literature has shown that global migration continues to rise, however the presence of migrants and their contributions to host countries are not widely understood and accepted by locals as result leaving migrants to live and work in the shadows. The lack of social acceptability from locals leads to discrimination, exploitation, and marginalization of migrants. All people living in South Africa have legally have worker rights regardless of their immigrant status. However, majority of the participants indicated that they had experienced some form of discrimination or exploitation because they were from Zimbabwe.

> Before I was working for Mr. D, I came here with that company they have done a lot of steel work here, in GT, in Cradock and in East London, so when we were here, you know what these white people do sometimes they knew that they were using foreigners, so sometimes they don't want to pay, I waited for like two weeks and I just got angry and there is nothing we can do so they take advantage. (14 October 2021).

The above statement by Zack shows that in as much as migrants are aware of the exploitation and abuse inflicted on them, they are less likely to take action or raise their grievances with their employers or the authorities for the sake of keeping the peace. They are most likely to give bribes, walk away or settle for low wages, because they are afraid that they could lose their source of income or face further harassment from the police. Zack added:

> Even the police don't care they just want money, I felt like I was being discriminated because I'm a foreigner, we have names that we are being called like aMakwerekwere, it emotionally drains you. (14 October 2021)

Discrimination and exploitation can physically and emotionally disturb migrants, and this can have a negative impact on how they structure and maintain their livelihood strategies ultimately affecting their livelihoods. All the participants had a story to tell about a time when they were discriminated against because of their foreign status. Many immigrants experience discrimination and stigma especially from locals. They are subjected to abuse and violence from locals who fear that migrants come to South Africa to compete with them for limited opportunities and resources provided for them. The key important explained that:

> Currently there is an anti-Foreigner syndicate going on, the locals were complaining that only foreigners are being employed in the town instead of South Africans.
>
> (26 November 2021).

Majority of the participant expressed that they feared working in South Africa, although they expressed that working in Makhanda was a safer option, compared to other parts of South Africa. Participants in this study also pointed out was that, sometimes when they did deliveries, some customers would not pay or trick them. Jazz cited:

> I once delivery to this guy and he selected a cash payment option, when I got to my delivery destination, he came out and said he didn't have cash and he would send me an e-wallet, while I was there, he sent the e-wallet, but when I left, and I was about to withdraw the cash he had reversed the payment. I had to pay that money myself. (15 October 2021)
>
> Albert also added:
>
> Eish, sometimes customers will complain that you took the wrong order, just to get a refund, it hurts our pockets. (15 October 2021)

The above sentiments indicate wage theft; in this case the customers steal from the gig workers. Gig companies put the customer first, so if the customer makes a complaint or something goes wrong on the customer's side, gig workers are liable. Some people take advantage of this without realising that their actions have a detrimental impact on the gig worker's income. Participants in this study indicated that for them each delivery counts towards sustain their livelihoods.

3.5.5 Lack of opportunities for growth in the industry

Participants in this study acknowledged that there were no opportunities for growth in the industry, most of them indicated that what motivated them to continue working in the gig

economy was the pay and the flexible hours. Participants indicated that they enjoyed being their own boss. Gig workers are misclassified independent contractors (self-employed individuals) they are faced with several challenges in platform gig work which include lack of limited growth in the industry. Mellon expressed:

> The main challenge in this kind of work is that there is no promotion even when you do well it's the same thing. (15 October 2021)

While the gig economy eases the burden of seeking casual work, both physically and financially, there is often no room for progression. Participants in this study were explicitly looking for ways to improve their skills sets and strengthen their qualifications. One participant Kate who completed her tertiary education in Zimbabwe spoke about how she wanted to further her studies at Rhodes University. The SLA contents that people in vulnerable positions are often seeking ways to better their human capital in order to broaden their different livelihood strategies which adds to their existing diverse livelihood strategies (Reed et al., 2005). Kate seeking to improve her improve her qualifications plays an important step in fostering the transition from an informal to a formal economy.

3.5.6 Lack of social protection

As discussed in the literature reviewed platform companies often misclassify gig workers as independent contractors. This allows them to evade labour relations such as health and safety requirements, and unemployment insurance benefits that are often associated to standardised labour (Anwar and Graham, 2021; Gandini, 2019; Lata et al., 2022). The misclassification of gig workers as independent contractors is more harmful to migrant gig workers, because their migrant status already makes them vulnerable, and they tend to be more reliant on flexible and less protected forms of work.

The Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges associated to being a migrant independent contractor. During the pandemic in the South African Government instituted very strict lockdown regulations due to the alarming rise in Covid-19 cases. No one was allowed to leave their houses unless they had to do essential shopping or with a special permit This affected people in various ways; it particularly affected the food courier riders where there is a policy of 'no work no pay. Dave cited:

> During covid I made no deliveries first I was struggling to buy electricity and food then I had to move out because I could not pay rent, that month. 2020 was hard YHO! Lucky,

> I went to stay with a friend and his wife, I was not even comfortable in that situation. (14 October 2021)

Dave's situation illustrates some of the compounding challenges associated to lack of social protection for migrants, especially during a crucial time like the pandemic. Participants in this study indicated that they were hard hit by lockdown restrictions. The participants cited challenges ranging from reduction in wages, increased difficulties in accessing social protection benefits and bad living and working conditions. Parker stated:

> I heard the government was giving some money to people during the time of COVID, but as a Zimbabwean with a special permit I didn't qualify. My friend he is also from Zim he has a refugee permit he managed to get that R350. I was even considering changing my documents it was tough. (14 October 2021)

Mellon was the only participant in this study who indicated that he had refugee status, meaning they fled from Zimbabwe due to fear of persecution, without legal documents such as a passport or visa. He indicated that he tried applying for the COVID-19 unemployment grant however his application was declined, even after he appealed it got declined again so he just gave up. The other nine indicted that they were on the ZSP during data collection. Consequently, they did not qualify for the Temporary Employee Relief Scheme (TERS) or the COVID-19 temporary employee/ employer relief scheme that was introduced by the government to shield those that were hard hit by the lock down restrictions. The study found that none of the participants received any form of social protection, given their status as independent contractors. Kate the only female participant in the sample voiced her concerns when it came to maternity leave. She cited:

> If I get pregnant that means, I won't be able to work, cause who will look after my baby? Also, if I'm not working that means I am not getting paid, how will my family eat?... This is some of the challenges I experience as a woman in this job. (14 October 2021).

Participants expressed how their financial situations deteriorated during times of need, leaving them in extreme financial precarity.

3.6 Livelihood outcomes of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda

Livelihood outcomes are the results of livelihood strategies, for example, more returns, welfare, a decrease in vulnerability, improved food security, and sustainable natural resources. Livelihood outcomes are important because they determine whether the strategies and activities

which were adopted by a household or community contributed effectively to people's livelihoods (DFID, 2002). This section looks at the livelihood outcomes that Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda obtain as a result of their livelihood strategies.

3.6.1 Investment capabilities

Investment indicates the degree to which they feel able to sacrifice current well-being for the sake of an improved future (Levine 2014; Carr, 2013). People can choose to invest in diverse ways (money, time). All the participants in the study indicated that they were working hard to fend for their families in South Africa and those in Zimbabwe.

All the participants share the same attitudes when it comes to working hours, in as much as the gig economy, affords them flexibly the participants felt like they did not really have the luxury of working whenever they wanted to. They invested most of their time doing deliveries so that by December they are not heavily impacted by the absence of the students who constitute a large portion of their client base. Choosing to work more hours is an investment because the expectation of returns higher than taking days off. Participants highlighted that they come to South Africa to make money, as a result investing their time affords them the means to invest in their children's education for a better future. According to Waddington (2003:30) migration is an accumulative strategy, that is not only used for survival purposes, but future generations may also benefit through investment in their education. A hand full of the participants indicated that they had no intention on living in South Africa permanently as a result they were building homes in Zimbabwe for retirement purposes and for the future of their children. Billy cited:

> My dream is to go back to Zimbabwe when I have made enough money, I am building my house in Zimbabwe, so once I bring my children here, I will relax, I want to build my house in Zimbabwe so that when I am no longer there, they can have something. (14 October 2021).

This study shows that many Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda opt to invest in Zimbabwe where they feel welcome, safe and can claim their rights. Participants in this study indicated that they felt like their future in South Africa is uncertain because their livelihoods and lives are based on negotiated permits that are very restrictive. So, by investing in their home country they felt more secure. This correlates with Cortes (2004) and Khan (1997) argument that immigrants' visions and aspirations for themselves in the host country are important for investment in the eventual growth of their earnings.

3.6.2 Asset ownership

To work for platform food delivery companies, individuals are required to possess some form of transportation such as a motorbike or a car. The livelihood strategies at their disposal allow them to gain access to different types of assets. According to (Levine 2014) livelihood outcomes are not only simply economics but being able to make claims over certain assets. Essentially platform food delivery requires gig workers to have certain physical assets (Car, Motorbike, phone, and uniforms). As independent contractors they are required to source these physical assets themselves. Jazz cited:

> Sometimes I use my car as a cab when I'm not doing deliveries, or I have my app on and I'm also driving people around. (14 October 2021).

Some participants indicated that when they started their gig jobs, they rented motorbikes but were later able to buy their own bikes. Others indicated that they started off with bikes but now they use cars which are a bit more expensive in terms of fuel, but the cars allow them to deliver in any weather condition and it also allowed for them to diversify their income.

According to Farrington et al., (2002) access to housing plays an important part in the productive and reproductive process and facilitates livelihoods of migrants. Some well-established migrants can afford to buy or build their own houses, others rent accommodation or stay temporarily with those who are already established. Six participants cited that platform work allowed them to buy houses back in Zimbabwe, while they were temporarily renting in Makhanda. This is also a clear indicator that the majority of the Zimbabwean gig workers in this study do not intend on permanently living in South Africa.

3.6.3 Increased wellbeing

Participants described how working on platforms engendered a strong sense of purpose in their lives, and this helped them to feel that they were worthwhile. Being labelled as an independent contractor translated into increased self-esteem, and this was beneficial for their mental health. Participants acknowledged that despite the challenges they faced as migrants in the in a foreign country their lives have improved since they moved to Makhanda and started working in the gig economy, mentally and physically. Gig work was viewed to be better than experiencing the low mood and feelings of inadequacy arising from unemployment. Mellon stated:

> I used to be so stressed, things have become better since I started this job, and my family is now living well in Zimbabwe. (14 October 2021)

Unemployment can have detrimental effects on an individual's wellbeing. Participants expressed a sense of relief that they were able to start work upon arrival to Makhanda. Their gig jobs allowed them to take care of their families in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Participants indicated that being labelled as independent contractors gave them gave them a feeling of purpose and self-worth. Gig work engenders a sense of self-fulfilment and sense of belonging, facilitating successful integration into a new community. A hand full of the participants indicated that enjoyed the perceived autonomy that the gig economy afforded them, because they were not stressed about working on other people's terms and conditions. Participants responses coincide with Bates et al (2019) study that showed that the autonomy that platforms provided has a positive impact on the wellbeing of gig workers. Participants indicated that doing gig work held direct positive benefits for their physical and mental health.

3.6.4 Access to legitimate employment and documentation.

Gig work promotes entrepreneurship among migrants who might find it difficult to find jobs in constricted labour markets. Participants in this study indicated that working in the platform food delivery sector ensured that they were documented, mainly because in order to stay active on platform apps worker's documentation had to be up to date. Participants stated that upon arrived in South Africa documentation such as the ZSP, allowed them to access employment legally in South Africa.

Participants also indicated that working as platform food delivery kept them out of illegal and harmful livelihood strategies. Porter et al. (2008) argues that a range of illegal and potentially harmful livelihood strategies are practiced when migrants are undocumented, these activities and this include prostitution, selling drugs, robbery (including armed robbery). Machecka et al (2015), unemployment is usually associated with illegal immigration activities. In this study none of the participants confirmed that they involved in potentially harmful livelihood activities. Nine of them indicated that they had the valid documentation to operate in the Mr. Delivery and Uber Eats. However, one participant indicated that had some problems with regard to his documentation. So, he was sharing his account with someone else: Parker explained:

> When I applied online Uber Eats rejected my application, so someone voluntarily asked that I use their app and we have an agreement of 50/50 in everything…His details are on the app, and I do the deliveries. (14 October 2021)

Literature has shown that sharing apps is mostly common among undocumented migrants. A study done Harrisburg and Schapiro (2021) on risks for South Africa's migrant food couriers surge during the pandemic found that migrants from Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda were sharing identity papers and ride-hailing accounts as they waited for the outcomes of asylum applications. It appears that this is the case for Parker, who had earlier explained that he was having trouble when it came to applications for his asylum seeker application. This illustrates that even though Zimbabwean gig workers might struggle to obtain the correct documentation, they are still determined to get the right papers and while waiting for documentation they come up with "legitimate" ways to make ends meet.

3.6.5 Sending remittances.

Many families in Zimbabwe rely on remittances from South Africa to sustain their livelihoods (Makina, 2007). All ten of the participants interviewed indicated that they sent remittances back to Zimbabwe. A study done by Nzabamwita (2018) found that among all the migrants in South Africa, Zimbabweans remit the most. This is supported by other studies (Makina, 2007; Maphosa, 2007) that found that the high transfers among Zimbabweans are due to the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe and the close geographical proximity between Zimbabwe and South Africa. Most of the participants indicated that they remitted cash and goods to their families in Zimbabwe, this coincides the study done by Crush et al., (2017), that showed that over one-third of third of the participants sent remittances at least once a month (Crush et al., 2017: 1; Thebe, 2015).

Sending remittances plays a vital role in reducing poverty and benefits the economies of both countries. Remittances help sustain the livelihoods of the family back in Zimbabwe while reducing the inflow of migrants decreasing factors such as unemployment and a large number of asylum seekers or undocumented immigrants. When asked how many times they sent money back home five participants indicated that they sent money only once a month while the other five indicated that they sent money back home up to three times a month depending on the situation back home and the amount of money they made during the week. The study also found that marital status played a role in remittance behaviour. All the married participants indicated that they were obligated to send money home to their immediate family and their extended family members back home in Zimbabwe. Those who were single indicated that they sent money back home, however it was not an obligation. Billy cited:

> I send money to my parents back in Zimbabwe who are looking after my kids while me and my wife work here…with the money I get from deliveries every month I can send 500 to my parents then I send 500 to my wife's parents. (14 October 2021)

Participants who stayed in Makhanda with their immediate family indicated that they still sent money home to their extended family members. Banksy stated:

> I send money to both my mom and dad, my wife's parents, my young sisters I have two then my brother he stays in the rural areas, and he has three children I am the one who is buying school uniforms, stationery, and school fees and then my wife's side her parents. (14 October 2021)

Level of income is correlated to the remittance behaviour (Makina, 2013). Participants indicated that the number of remittances they sent ranged from five hundred rands to two thousand rands. Due to the fluctuating nature of income in platform food delivery, the amount they sent was dependent on how many deliveries they made in a week. The participants in this study indicated that they sent all types of remittances (cash and goods). The number of dependants (See table one) had a significant impact on the amount and type of remittances and how often they are sent remittances. This shows that working in the gig economy allows Zimbabwean gig economy workers to invest and save in their homes and support their family.

3.6.6 Family reunification

Family reunification is the process of bringing together family members, particularly children, spouses, and elderly dependents. Even though majority of the participants indicated that they did not plan on staying in South Africa forever, they brought their family members to come and stay with them in South Africa. Mellon cited:

> My wife she was staying in Zimbabwe with the kids, but she came to Grahamstown to stay with me. The kids are still in Zimbabwe living with their grandparents. All we can do is send money for them for now, but we plan to bring them to South Africa so we can all live together as a family.

Additionally, Kate said:

> My husband got papers, so he came to South Africa first, He was working and staying there alone. He used to send money to us in Zimbabwe via mukuru and malaitsha. I was also working in Zimbabwe, but I got papers, so I came here with my two kids…We both do deliveries for Mr. D…Not living with your husband is tough the children are

also not growing up with their father who is supposed to be an important part of their lives.

This study found that prolonged separation and isolation of family members can lead to hardships and stress affecting both the migrants and the dependants left behind, which may give rise to social, psychological and health problems, and even affect workers' productivity.

Hence doing gig work combined with other livelihood strategies provided means for participant's family members to join them in South Africa.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter focused on understanding the lives and livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda. The chapter revealed that due to the ongoing economic and political challenges in Zimbabwe migration has become a crucial response for many Zimbabweans seeking better socio-economic conditions. It is evident that upon arrival Zimbabweans face multiple challenges, especially when it comes to finding employment in South Africa's constricted labour markets. The gig economy plays role in integrating Zimbabwean migrants into labour markets by creating a quick pathway to employment and self-sufficiency in the working in the gig economy affords Zimbabwean platform delivery workers the opportunity to add to existing economic and social strategies which ultimately produce livelihood outcomes. The concluding chapter to this thesis (chapter 4) demonstrates how this chapter was able to address the subsidiary objectives and the main objective of the thesis, and how the SLA offers a solid basis for understanding the lives and livelihoods of the Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

4.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter seeks to give an overview of the conclusion of the whole thesis. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section looks at five of the subsidiary objectives and explain how these objectives have been archived. The second section details how the main objective was addressed, seeking to find out whether it speaks directly to the main objective or main goal of the thesis. The final section highlights the limitations and areas for further research on this research topic.

4.2 Addressing subsidiary objectives

This thesis consisted of five overlapping subsidiary objectives. This section will explain each of these objectives to see how they were achieved throughout the thesis.

The first objective sought to *understand the demographic backgrounds of Zimbabwean platform food delivery workers.* This objective was achieved by exploring the various demographic characteristics of participants in this study. This study focused on participants' age, sex, marital status, educational background, investment level in platform gig work, primary delivery company, and household members. Participants in this study had varying demographic profiles. The study found that gig work reinforces migrant, gender, and racial stereotypes as participants were predominantly male, black African men, who come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds in Zimbabwe.

The second objective sought to *investigate pathways to employment in platform food delivery in Makhanda*. To achieve this objective, the study looked at Zimbabwean gig workers' migration and employment trajectories. Literature shows that Zimbabweans generally face a sharp decline in employability upon arrival in South Africa. This is because of the constricted formal labour markets that are unable to absorb large numbers of people. Gig work, particularly platform food delivery created pathways that assist migrant workers to easily integrate into labour markets. The Zimbabwean gig workers indicated that the main push factors for migration were the perceived lack of viable employment in Zimbabwe and a better standard of living. Various forms of social and financial capital were used to travel from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Some indicated that they were employed, in various forms of informal work, nevertheless, their informal jobs aided them to pay for various things required to travel to South Africa. Others indicated that their traveling depended on assistance from friends and family.

This showed the determination that they had to improve their livelihoods. Furthermore, this objective looked at the upsurge of gig work in Makhanda, where platform food delivery is relatively new. With high unemployment rates in Makhanda, the participants viewed gig work as a safety net and often combined it with multiple livelihood strategies. The Zimbabweans were attracted to the perceived flexibility, autonomy, and easy onboarding process that the gig economy affords them.

The third objective sought *to examine the livelihood strategies of Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda*. This objective was achieved by reviving literature on the various livelihood strategies at the Zimbabwean gig worker's disposal. The findings in the study showed that livelihoods are not merely based on economic activities, but other aspects such as social activities. Furthermore, the perceived flexibility and autonomy that gig work afforded them opportunities to engage in a variety of livelihood strategies outside their gig work. The objective explored the key economic and social strategies that Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda have access to. Economic strategies included saving societies which seemed to play a vital role, in positions where they were unable to access financial institutions. Saving societies also contributed to their social capital because through these societies they were able to build social networks. Multi-mapping where Zimbabwean gig workers would work across multiple food delivery platforms to fully maximize income from gig work. Livelihood diversification strategies allowed them to participate in other income-generating activities to secure their livelihoods, considering the precarity of gig work. The contribution of income from other family members in the household. Social strategies included networking which helped Zimbabwean gig workers play an important in finding employment via referrals and building connections. Zimbabwean gig workers exhibited resilience to overcome often associated with xenophobia and discrimination. Social media kept them posted on current affairs in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The SLA enabled me to look at the different assets at the participant's disposal and how these assets were used to formulate livelihood strategies.

The fourth objective sought to *determine the challenges that Zimbabwean gig economy workers encounter when constructing their livelihoods in Makhanda.* This objective explored the challenges that Zimbabwean gig workers encounter in the process of navigating their livelihoods in Makhanda. Broader literature showed that Zimbabweans face compounding challenges due to their migrant status and being misclassified as independent contractors. The case study showed how the gig economy further exacerbates these challenges due to its precarious nature which results in uncertain income. Inadequate social protection was a

pressing concern for the Zimbabwean gig workers. Being misclassified as independent contractors and their migrant status had a double effect on their insecurity. Zimbabwean gig workers expressed their difficulties when it came to language barriers and social isolation, which are associated with gig work. They also expressed their challenges with the restrictive immigration policies. Zimbabwean gig workers also voiced their experiences with xenophobia and exploitation. The Zimbabwean gig economy workers acknowledged the lack of growth in the gig economy, despite this many cited it as a challenge however they were happy to be working at that time. They are often excluded from social protection schemes like maternity leave and government lead schemes.

The fifth objective aimed at *Understanding the livelihood outcomes for Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda.* The final objective aimed to understand the livelihood outcomes that gig workers obtain from their livelihood strategies. The case showed that with their gig jobs combined with their other livelihood strategies Zimbabwean gig workers were able to invest back home, in the form of building homes in Zimbabwe and investing in their children's education others indicated that they were investing in their education. Enhanced asset ownership they were able to buy cars and motorbikes to improve their gig work. They indicated having some form of work despite it being precarious put them at ease because they no longer had to deal with the economic and physical challenges associated with unemployment.

4.3 Addressing the main objective

This section focuses on the main objective of this thesis, to establish how it was achieved through the research that was done. The main objective of this thesis is to: Understand the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig economy workers in Makhanda South Africa: The case of platform food delivery workers. The goal was achieved through two sections, the literature review, and the data analysis chapter in the context of the SLA.

To achieve the main objective of the study the sustainable livelihoods approach was used. The SLA is often critiqued for providing not a temporal analysis of livelihoods. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda the study looked at the present, past, and future of participants using the SLA. The study found that participants had different socioeconomic backgrounds and migration trajectories. The literature review covered migration patterns that exist between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The SLA contends that migration is often seen as one of the options available to vulnerable

people seeking to diversify their livelihoods. The case of Zimbabwean gig workers' migration played a significant role in their livelihoods. The ability to migrate afforded them opportunities that were not available in Zimbabwe.

The literature review discussed the gig economy broadly and then narrowed down to Makhanda. According to the SLA Policies, Institutions, and Processes (PIPs) are key in determining access to the various types of capital assets that people use in pursuing their livelihood strategies. Structures such as technological advancements, changes in market conditions, industrial transformations, and changes in the organisation have changed the world of work. This has fuelled the development of the gig economy. The gig economy acts as a safety net for Zimbabwean gig workers creating a pathway to employment and self-sufficiency. The easy on boarding process of gig work has created a pathway that assists migrant workers to easily integrate into labour markets. Consequently, enabling migrant gig workers to obtain access to employment that enhances their choices and potential possibilities in Makhanda On the other hand the highly unregulated and flexible nature of gig work results in inadequate salaries, lack of representation, job insecurities, and poor working conditions, increasing the vulnerability of Zimbabwean gig workers.

Despite these challenges, the study found that Zimbabwean workers combine a number of livelihood strategies with their gig work to obtain favourable livelihood outcomes that contribute to their livelihood sustainability.

4.4 Limitations of research and areas for further research

A primary limitation was the hesitancy of participants to review their migration and residential status in fear of incriminating themselves. This occurred more frequently among the older participants. They appeared apprehensive about what would be done with the information they provided, despite prior explanation of the research's purpose. Participants who had already undergone interviews were asked to provide them with an overview of the upcoming questions. The nature of this study, an exploratory research study in partial fulfilment of a master’s degree, had an impact on the size of the data set; this prevented me from conducting a study with more participants. Thus, this research study is not necessarily a reflection of the livelihood experiences of all the Zimbabweans involved in the gig economy in Makhanda. Rather results from the use of non-random convenience sampling in the data collation phase. The language barrier was another limitation. While conducting the interviews, some participants chose to withdraw from the study due to language barriers. This delayed the data collection because

when participants withdrew from interviews, I had to find other participants who were willing to partake in the study. Lastly, in the analysis stage I realised that even though a qualitative research methodology was best suited for this study, a quantitative research approach could have been used to better understand the economic research aspects.

In concluding this thesis, the areas I would recommend as areas for future research in the livelihoods of migrant gig workers who generally constitute a large number of the gig economy workforce. Several studies on the gig economy in South Africa tend to focus on larger metropolitan areas. To expand our understanding of the gig economy and its links with migration in relatively small towns more research needs to be done in smaller towns like Makhanda that are rapidly seeing the growth of the gig economy.

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Appendix A: Participant Interview Schedule

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender? (Male or female, other, choose not to specify)
3. What population group do you belong to? (Black, White, Coloured, Indian)
4. What is your nationality? (South African or other)
5. What is your current marital status? (Married; Living together like married partners; Single/Never married; Widower/Widow; Separated/Divorced)

SECTION B: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

6. Describe the area where you spent your formative years? (i.e., the economy; the labour market; the quality of public services; crime; unemployment etc)
7. Describe the type of dwelling you grew up in?
8. Who raised you and how many people lived in the household you grew up in? (List and explain their relation to you)
9. What type of household did you grow up in? (Nuclear household, single parent household, extended household, grandparents (no parents present), foster home, child headed household, other, please specify)
10. What is your guardian/s' highest level of education? (Why did they stop at this level?)
11. Describe the types of schools that your guardian/s attended?
12. Discuss your guardian/s employment history (i.e., highlight the type of jobs that your guardian/s were mostly employed)
13. Were your guardian/s able to make ends meet with their income/s? (Did they have alternative forms of income e.g., through selling commodities; owning livestock; receiving government pension etc.?)
14. What are some of the main challenges that you and your family experienced when you were growing up? (Financial, emotional, health, etc.
15. Describe the type of schools that you mostly attended
16. What is your highest level of education? (Why did you stop at this level?)
17. Did your parents/ guardians play a critical role in your career decisions?

SECTION C: EMPLOYMENT

18. At what age did you start working and why? (Discuss the factors that motivated this

decision)

19. Describe your employment history in your home country before coming to South Africa (Job positions, duration of employment and reason for leaving etc)
20. What motivated you to come to south Africa?
21. Describe your relocation to South Africa? (The year, where did you settle and why? The number of people you relocated with and their relation to you?)
22. What challenges did you experience upon your arrival in South Africa?
23. Describe your employment history in South Africa before current job?
24. How did you come across the 'gig-economy' and what motivated you join it?
25. How did you join this industry?
26. Describe your involvement in the 'gig-economy'? (How does it work? How do you get recruited for jobs? unpack the use of the Apps? Length of each contract etc.).
27. How many restaurants utilize your services?
28. What is the nature of the relationship between you and your clients?
29. How much authority and control do these clients have over your work?
30. Describe the remuneration process in the 'gig-economy'? (How do you get paid? How often? Etc.)
31. How many hours do you work in this 'gig-economy' per week?
32. Do you rely on the 'gig-economy' alone to survive?
33. Would you be able to survive on the gig-economy alone?
34. Do you have other ways of securing an income? (Explain what these channels are? how long have you been involved in them?)
35. How do the alternative sources of income contribute to your livelihood strategies?
36. How do these alternative incomes contribute to your livelihood?
37. Do you utilize the services of financial institutions for credit and loans?
38. Are there opportunities for growth in this industry? (explain)
39. What are your long-term goals in this industry?
40. What are some of the benefits of operating in this industry?
41. What are the main challenges of operating in this industry?

SECTION D: HOUSEHOLD AND LIVELIHOODS

42. Describe the area that you currently live in (township, rural area, town etc.)

(Discuss the quality of the public services in your community)

43. Does the dwelling you live in belong to you or do you rent? (If you rent, how much do

you pay for rent? if you own, how did you get to own this house?)

44. How many people live in your household? (Describe each of their relationship to you and their current occupations)
45. How many people rely on your income? (People living with you and those back home?)
46. Describe your monthly expenses?
47. Describe the type of dwelling you live in? (Brick/concrete block structure on a separate stand; Traditional dwelling; House/flat/room in backyard; Informal dwelling)
48. What type of energy/fuel is mainly used for lighting, heating and cooking in your dwelling? (Electricity; Gas; Paraffin; Wood; Coal; Candles etc.)
49. Do you have access to water?
50. Do you own a plot of land for agricultural activities? (If yes, what is the size of the land? What do you do with it? Do you own livestock? If yes, list the type of livestock you have? Are you able to secure a decent livelihood with the land and livelihood?)
51. Is there any other way you secure your livelihood that you have not mentioned?

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Project Title: "Every gig counts": Understanding the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig worker's in Makhanda The case of platform food delivery workers in Makhanda, Eastern Cape, South Africa

Kombe Mwansa, from the Department Sociology, Rhodes University has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project. The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to: Understand the livelihoods of Zimbabwean gig workers in Makhanda, particularly platform food delivery workers.

2. Rhodes University has given ethical clearance to this research project, and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.

3. By participating in this research project, I will be contributing towards the study of technological advancements in the workplace.

4. I will participate in the project by participating in an interview concerning the objectives of the study and to give a truthful account of my perspective and experience.

5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

7. There are no risks associated with this study, as it is purely for academic purposes, and the names of the bank and the participants will not be mentioned.

8. I have a right to pursue legal action, if the researcher publishes the names of the organization or the participants.

9. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a dissertation. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

10. Any further questions that I might have concerned the research, or my participation will be answered by Kombe Mwansa

11. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

13. The interviews will be recorded, as the student needs to transcribe the interviews at a later stage.

14. The interviews will not be conducted at work, but rather telephonically when the participants are free.

15. The branch manager is aware of the study and has given consent.

I, ……. have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand, and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask, and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

…….. …… ……

Participants signature Witness Date

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics

Ethics Coordinator: ethics-commitee@ru.ac.za

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Room 220, Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Grahamstown, 6139

Appendix C: Key informant

Table 1:Key Informant

Pseudonym	Age	Education	Occupation	Nationality
Mike	32	Tertiary level	Operations manager	Zimbabwean