

“WILLING VICTIMS”: A STUDY OF ZIMBABWEAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE
CITRUS INDUSTRY OF THE SUNDAYS RIVER VALLEY, EASTERN CAPE

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ABSTRACT

The citrus fruit industry is a large, lucrative industry on the global market. South Africa's citrus fruit industry competes globally and is firmly intergraded into the citrus global value chain (GVC). Sunday River's Valley (SRV) in the Eastern Cape is a powerhouse citrus producer in South Africa. This dissertation interrogates the impact of the citrus value chain on Zimbabwean unskilled immigrant farmworkers in the SRV, positioned at the bottom of the value chain. Mainstream global chain literature, which adopts a neo-liberal approach to development, assumes that businesses in the global south stand to benefit from integrating into global chains. This line of thinking also assumes that, by virtue of the suppliers' experiencing economic upgrading, farm owners' employees may experience social upgrading. The idea of social upgrading stems from the International Labour Organisation's Decent Work Agenda, which promotes workers' rights and conditions globally. In the agricultural sector, there is a growing trend of producers (in the global south) employing undocumented immigrant farmworkers. Free market economists perceive these immigrants' employment in the agricultural value chain as a progressive step for immigrants to step out of poverty. This study employs a qualitative research method to analyse social upgrading for immigrant workers in the citrus GVC. This is done by examining the selected workers' working and living conditions against the key pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. Using the critical GVC framework and a Marxist orientation, this study seeks to show that the use of migrant (especially undocumented) labour in the agricultural value chains is not empowering immigrants in the global south but is essentially a strategy of securing cheap and docile labour for profit maximization. While this can be said for local South African workers as well, the migrant workforce is peculiar as their fragile citizenship in South Africa makes them a less resistant labour force to farm owners labour law violations. This study's findings validate this contention, as they show that immigrants employed in the citrus industry in the Eastern Cape are subjected to several Decent Work deficits. The findings also show that these immigrants have no access to mechanisms of empowerment and are barely surviving from their earnings.

Key words: Decent Work Agenda, labour migration, social upgrading, global value chains, employment creation, social protection, social dialogue, workers' rights

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AgriSA:	Agriculture South Africa
BCEA:	Basic Condition Employment Act of 1997
COSATU:	Congress of South Africa Trade Unions
ECARP:	Eastern Cape Agriculture Research Project
GCC:	Global Commodity Chains
GPN:	Global Production Networks
GVC:	Global Value Chain
ICESCR:	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICCPR:	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ILO:	International Labour Organisation's
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHSA:	Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993
SSAC:	Sub-Saharan African countries
SRCC:	Sundays River Citrus Company
SRV:	Sundays River Valley
SANDF:	South African National Defence Force
UDHR:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UIF:	Unemployment Insurance Fund

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 FOCUS AND MOTIVATION

The primary research focus is to examine if immigrant workers work and live in 'decent' conditions. The research question will be answered by extracting data from Zimbabwean immigrant workers from case studies within the Sundays River Valley (SRV), Eastern Cape. The dissertation's focus areas map out the general dynamics of the citrus value chain and the South African citrus industry. Also, the aim is to explore push and pull migration factors of immigrant labour employed within the agriculture sector in South Africa. The research question also allows the researcher to contribute to a knowledge gap by assessing the benefits and challenges of immigrant farmworkers experiences working within the SRV citrus value chain. Lastly, the dissertation aims to examine the working and living conditions of permanent and casual immigrant farmworkers to assess whether the ILO's Decent Work Agenda's various dimensions have been realized.

The employment of unskilled immigrant labour has been argued and perceived by some as a progressive step for immigrants to get out of poverty. This study employs a qualitative research method to analyse the efficacy of social upgrading for immigrant workers at the bottom-end of global chains. This is done by examining a few workers' working and living conditions against the key pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. Using a critical Global Value Chain (GVC) analysis, this dissertation seeks to show that the increase of immigrant labour in the agricultural value chains is not empowering immigrants in the global south but is essentially a strategy of securing cheap and docile labour for profit maximization. This dissertation maps out exactly how South African farmers go about that. My research will also provide evidence that can be used to better decision making around sectoral wage decisions, given the exploitative nature of the South African farmers, farm owners will experience economic upgrading while immigrant workers do not transcend to experience social upgrading.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

South Africa, while an economic giant in Africa, has itself been shackled and chained to GVCs. In some cases, the integration into these GVC created further systematic problems with explicit structural exploitation lines that have become the defining feature of work relations on citrus farms. Exploitation can take different forms; however, this research defines exploitation in the Marxist sense.

As a starting point, it is necessary to note that exploitation means a structured relation of inequality in class societies (Maisiri, 2019). To understand exploitation, the starting point is understanding that society is divided into classes, and those classes have a relationship with the means of production. Some own the means of production, while others do not despite being the producing class (Maisiri, 2019). This class division is the reality on the ground at the citrus farms, as the class that does all the labour to produce wealth within the industry is alienated from owning the means of production. The producing class works for a smaller class that owns the means of production, which has allowed for the continuation of class exploitation that can be tracked in the country's poorest province, the Eastern Cape firmly integrated into the citrus GVC (Maisiri, 2019).

GVCs are international networks in which parts of the product are made in different geographical areas before becoming a finished product that is consumed. 'Value' is a central theme in the GVC literature, highlighting the value-added processes, through human effort, at each node in the GVC (Gereffi & Lee, 2016). The literature on agricultural value chains highlights the path of commodities 'from field to fork'. A key assumption in parts of this literature is the claim that the integration of developing countries into GVCs will benefit both employers and employees (through "economic" and "social" upgrading, respectively) (Bair, 2009). In contrast to the conventional approaches, a critical GVC analysis highlights the fact that all value chains under capitalism seek to maximise value at every node of the value chain, creating a source of contention, which may systematically result in a portion of the labour force at the bottom of the chain experiencing precarious working conditions (Robin & Gore, 2018).

My research focused on the citrus fruits value chain as experienced by documented and undocumented immigrant workers on farms in the SRV, Eastern Cape. The citrus industry is

one of the biggest processing and export industries globally (ECSECC, 2017). The South African agriculture industry has a long history of being an export-oriented industry; however, it suffered a brief disconnection from the global economy due to international trade sanctions because of apartheid policies. After the democratic transition in 1994, South Africa re-connected to GVCs (Feinstein, 2005). The main argument for South Africa to connect to GVCs is best explained by the modernisation theory. The modernisation theory argues that underdeveloped countries should take a strict developmental path to achieve economic development, akin to the path western countries took to develop (Bair, 2009). This path consists of adopting a neoliberal framework and export policies to access economic opportunities on the international markets (Bair, 2009; Maswood, 2018). Therefore, connecting to GVCs is presented as leading to economic upgrading, which may trickle down to social upgrading. Economic upgrading refers to firms moving up from low-profit activities to high-profit activities within the chain (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011). Social upgrading is the improvement of entitlements of workers' rights within value chains, based on the International Labour Organization's Decent Work Agenda (ILO, 2016).

The ILO (2016: 17) defines decent work as work with adequate income, where workers' rights are protected under conditions of human dignity, security, and equality. The South African government has ratified most ILO conventions, and the country's labour laws are generally compatible with most ILO conventions. Former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, stated: "decent standard of living, adequate nutrition, health care, education and decent work for all are common goals for both the South and the North" (cited in SAHO, 2001: 1).

This dissertation aims to explore immigrant farm labourers' living and working conditions on citrus farms in the SRV. The significance of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda to the dissertation is that it sets out a floor of basic rights, which are inclusive of vulnerable groups such as immigrant farm labourers. The agenda aims to tackle issues of poverty and social justice violations (ILO, 2002). These are the conditions immigrant farmworkers are reported to work in. Immigrants are paid below minimum wage, work in health hazard areas, and experience human rights abuses (Addison, 2014; Agri-SA, 2019; Bolt, 2013; Hall *et al.*, 2013).

The dissertation adopts the four pillars of Decent Work – namely, social protection, employment security, social dialogue, and the promotion of workers' rights (ILO, 2016) – to assess the social upgrading experiences of immigrant labour in a global fresh fruit value chain.

Many governments, NGOs, multinational organisations, and lead firms agree with the standards of 'decent work' as a means to assess and to improve working conditions in GVCs (Das, 2012; ILO, 2002 (a); 2016).

The agricultural sector in South Africa is labour intensive and has a long history of precarious conditions for unskilled farm labourers. Working conditions for jobs that require unskilled labour are generally characterised by antagonistic labour relations, sexual harassments, wage agreement violations and human rights violations (Bolt, 2017). The abuse of unskilled farm workers in South Africa expresses itself in unique ways towards unskilled immigrant farmworkers. This is because (among other reasons) a portion of immigrant farmworkers do not have work permits. Failure to have work permits hinders immigrant workers from negotiating with farm owners and access collective bargaining structures (Rutherford & Addison, 2007).

Similarly, to local farmworkers, immigrant farmworkers have been reported working in precarious conditions and living in poor conditions (Bolt, 2017). Unlike local farmworkers, unskilled immigrant farm labourers within the agriculture sector in South Africa often do not have access to alternative job opportunities due to their fragile legal citizenship status within the country, resulting in a particularly vulnerable workforce (Devereux, 2019). Their vulnerability is compounded by the economic crises in their home countries that compel immigrant farmworkers to accept poor working conditions at relatively low wages (Ulicki & Crush, 2007). Farmers have been reported to hire immigrant labour to avoid fulfilling their legal obligations as an employer and reduce labour costs by hiring 'cheap' labour (Bolt, 2017). Immigrant farmworkers often live in unmaintained, unsanitary farm accommodations that negatively impact their well-being. Studies have shown a widespread lack of Decent Work in agriculture, which casts doubt on the claims about 'upgrading' in the GVC literature (Bolt, 2017; Hall *et al.*, 2013; Rossi, 2013; Selwyn, 2013; 2016). This dissertation does not analyse the entire citrus GVC but rather sought to generate insights into how the pressures on producers (generated by the structure of the GVC) are manifested in the working and living experiences of immigrant workers at the 'bottom' of the value chain (as compared the ILO's standards of decent work).

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary research goal is to investigate if Zimbabwean immigrant farmworkers, who are employed on citrus farms in the SRV in the Eastern Cape, live and work in ‘decent’ conditions. The GVC framework was adopted to understand what working conditions are like at the production node of a buyer-driven value chain. As the conditions in the workplace cannot be understood by only focussing on the relations between employers and employees; we also need to consider the type of value chain (if any) that a firm/ farm is integrated into. The research question was answered by obtaining information from Zimbabwean immigrant workers on citrus farms in the SRV. This research area is of prime importance in the agricultural context, as there has been a growing trend to hire documented and undocumented immigrant farm workers. The citrus producers attempt to convince consumers in Europe and elsewhere that their products are ‘ethically’ produced, while many workers are subjected to conditions that do not qualify as ‘decent’ on any reasonable interpretation of the term (Robin & Gore, 2018). Data collection was accomplished primarily through semi-structured interviews and supplemented by analysing the existing research on immigrant farm labour in South Africa and elsewhere.

The secondary objectives of my research are:

- 1) To understand the general dynamics of the citrus value chain and the South African citrus industry.
- 2) To explore the push and pull factors of migrant labour employment in the agriculture sector in South Africa.
- 3) To assess the benefits and challenges that (especially undocumented) migrant farmworkers experience working in the citrus value chain.
- 4) To examine the working conditions of permanent, seasonal and casual immigrant farmworkers to assess whether the various ‘pillars’ of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda have been realised.
- 5) To examine the living conditions of permanent, seasonal and casual immigrant farmworkers by assessing whether the social protection pillar of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda has been realised.

To address the above-mentioned goals, the researcher focused on Zimbabwean immigrant workers' experiences of the working conditions on citrus farms in the SRV. The researcher sought to establish whether the conditions experienced by these farmworkers meet the standards of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. The researcher assessed the immigrant workers' living conditions by using the social protection pillar of the Decent Work Agenda. This pillar aims to provide workers with the minimum decent standard of living. To achieve these objectives, the researcher gathered in-depth, personal experiences from Zimbabwean participants expressed through descriptive narratives guided by interview questions. The researcher collected objective data from Zimbabwean workers such as the amount of money that the workers are paid expressed as wages on the citrus farms. In addition to the objective data collected from workers, a subjective interpretation of the world was extracted as well, such as exploring the individuals' perspectives whether the wages they receive is sufficient to support their livelihoods. To this end, the use of objective and subjective data required a research paradigm aligned to a realist ontology and an interpretive epistemology (Patton & Cochran, 2002). Such an approach is supported by Frazer and Lacey (1993:182), who argue that,

even if one is a realist at the ontological level, one could be an epistemological interpretivist ... Our knowledge of the real world is inevitably interpretive and provisional rather than straightforwardly representational.

A realist ontology is premised on the assumption that there is an objective reality that exists independently of individuals' perceptions of it. While acknowledging this ontological commitment, my research simultaneously draws on an interpretivist epistemology, which focuses on social interactions and the meaning of these interactions as perceived by social actors. That is, it is assumed that the ways in which social actors experience reality is constructed from the meanings that they attach to the phenomena in question (Patton & Cochran, 2002:3). An interpretivist epistemology is invariably associated with a qualitative research methodology (Patton & Cochran, 2002:3). The chosen research paradigm ('realist interpretivism') will hopefully shed light on both the objective realities such as workers' employment conditions and the subjective meanings that they attach to their day-to-day experiences of these conditions.

Qualitative research seeks to systematically answer a research question or hypothesis by collecting in-depth empirical evidence to answer a research question. Qualitative research expresses its findings in a non-numerical manner (Sarandakos, 2005) and tends to answer descriptive questions of a social phenomenon such as ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘what’? A qualitative methodology also tends to be associated with an inductive analysis, which is a process of using the data collected to create a hypothesis to explain the phenomenon in question (Patton & Cochran, 2002). By adopting a qualitative research design, the researcher was able to collect detailed, descriptive life experiences from the immigrant workers in the citrus value chain.

1.4 SAMPLING

The researcher selected 11 Zimbabwean immigrant farmworkers in the SRV citrus industry for interviews using convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Convenience sampling was useful in making the initial contacts with prospective interviewees in the sample frame. Snowball sampling refers to the process whereby research participants put the researcher in contact with relevant people to take part in the research (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Snowball sampling is commonly used when there is some difficulty in locating participants. Snowball sampling depends on ‘social networks’ to succeed (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Largely due to the Covid-19 restrictions, there was some difficulty in accessing Zimbabwean immigrant farmworkers. In addition, these migrants were fearful of participating in any study or being associated with any organisation because of the farmers’ propensity to victimise workers, especially those who were undocumented, who complain and/or advocate for better working conditions.

The participants, who all worked on citrus farms and packhouses in the SRV, consisted of nine men and two women. This gender ratio was a consequence of the fact that immigrant women appeared to be more fearful of participating in a study than the men. This fear may be because women have been reported to be the most vulnerable group on the farms and may face severe ramifications if thought to be a ‘troublemaker’ on the farm (Devereux, 2019). Not surprisingly, women tended to refuse to partake in the study. Of the eleven interviewees, three were permanently employed while the remainder were seasonal/casual workers. The immigrant

workers whom I interviewed ranged from 22 to 40 years of age and had an average range in education levels of Form Four (Zimbabwean educational standard two years earlier than the period required to finish high school in Zimbabwe but, equivalent to the South African NQF level 4). The participants' age range is not representative of the migrant workforce in the SRV but rather a consequence of snowball sampling.

Convenience sampling, as noted above, was adopted to overcome the challenges associated with gaining access to a vulnerable and largely undocumented social grouping. The researcher gained initial access to some of these workers with the assistance of the East Cape Agricultural Research Project (ECARP), an NGO with an established network of farmworkers in the SRV. Likewise, snowball sampling proved to be particularly useful given the difficulties in contacting immigrant workers on farms during a nationwide lockdown. Furthermore, snowball sampling assisted in contacting participants, considering that the literature shows that many migrant labourers from Zimbabwe (and elsewhere) tend not to have valid immigrant work documentation (Bolt, 2017; Zamchiya & Sciences, 2008). Snowball sampling allowed the researcher to leverage social networks to garner trust from the interviewees to partake freely in the research, despite their legal status.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION REQUIRED

The literature suggests that immigrant workers employed on farms are a vulnerable group and generally experience poor working conditions (Devereux, 2019). This research required in-depth, descriptive accounts about working conditions and living conditions from Zimbabwean immigrant farmworkers in the SRV. The data-collection and sampling process started by attending a meeting called by Eastern Cape Agriculture Research Project (ECARP) with immigrant farmworkers in the SRV. At this meeting, the researcher obtained the contact details of one immigrant farmworker for an interview. After interviewing this farmworker, the researcher requested the interviewee to provide contact details of participants who would potentially be willing to partake in the study. This process was replicated until eleven participants were interviewed telephonically.

1.6 DATA-COLLECTION METHODS

The primary data collection method the researcher used is semi-structured telephonic interviews. This research technique requires the researcher to design a set of questions to learn as much as possible about the social phenomena from the interviewees (Patton & Cochran, 2002). However, the questions in the semi-structured interview were not rigid and gave the researcher flexibility to explore the conversation outside the pre-set questions. This qualitative data collection method usually occurs through face-to-face interaction (Patton & Cochran, 2002). However, semi-structured interviews were done telephonically due to the health risks associated with travel and direct physical contact during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The advantages of using this data collection method stem from a set of prepared questions that guides the conversation and keeps participants discussing topics relevant to the research (Patton & Cochran, 2002). However, semi-structured interviews involve open-ended responses from participants. This flexibility is useful as it allows the researcher to explore more topics that they may not have been considered in the existing literature on the topic, thereby yielding new or more detailed information (Patton & Cochran, 2002). Semi-structured interviews allowed for two-way communication, which gave the researcher a greater ability to steer the conversation. This data-collection method was also useful in navigating sensitive topics, such as immigrant workers' legal status and vulnerabilities in the workplace (Patton & Cochran, 2002).

However, there were limitations associated with semi-structured interviews (Patton & Cochran, 2002; Tracy, 2013). For a start, it was time-consuming to sit down with each participant to have open-ended conversations on a phone call. Considering the intense work schedule that the participants had, they did not have much time to spare for a telephonic interview. The length of time demanded from the interviewees led to some cutting the conversation short or not answering all the questions adequately.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

The researcher recorded the interviews conducted during the fieldwork stage of the dissertation. After transcribing the recordings, the interviews were thematically coded by grouping them into categories that allowed the researcher to identify the similarities, differences, and patterns of specific social phenomena (Tracey, 2013). Thematically coding the research data, allows the researcher to organise, describe and explain social phenomena systematically under

common themes. These themes centre on the application of the four pillars of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda to undocumented migrant labourers and their working conditions (Tracey, 2013).

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The interviews carried out adhered to the ethics protocol set by the Rhodes University Ethics Committee (RUEC). The process of ethical approval from the RUEC involved the researcher handing in the potential research interview questions to be examined by the board, while weighing out the potential risk the research could have on the research participants. The researcher received his ethical clearance in September 2020.

Interviewees were informed about the purpose of the study. They were also guaranteed confidentiality as the dissertation adopted pseudonyms, which were also used to protect immigrant workers' identity from potential victimisation by the farm owners. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could leave the interview at any time.

1.9 THESIS OUTLINE

The next chapter outlines the context of migrant labour in the agricultural sector in South Africa. Chapter two outlines the GVC framework and unpacks the immigrant labour literature focusing on Zimbabwean farmworkers. The chapter explores the push and pull factors that drive migration and explores immigrant workers vulnerabilities within the citrus chain. Lastly, the chapter analyses the current literature on immigrant workers vulnerabilities on South African farms against the Decent Work Agenda.

The third chapter discusses the research findings by detailing immigrant Zimbabwean workers' living and working conditions in light of the International Labour Organisation's Decent Work Agenda, contextualized within the GVC research. GVC research illustrates the potential consequence of immigrant workers living and working conditions, due to South African

producers who attempt to maximize their profits by employing 'flexible' labour. This empirical chapter answers the main and subgoal objectives set for the dissertation.

Chapter four concludes the dissertation by highlighting the main findings. This chapter shall briefly unpack the main points and arguments presented within the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS, DECENT WORK AND MIGRANT LABOUR: THE CASE OF SUNDAY RIVER VALLEY CITRUS FARMS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The citrus fruit industry in South Africa is integrated within the global market. The global citrus fruit industry produces the highest value fruit crop on the international markets. Its use-values range from medicine, and beverages to cooking. For the South African citrus industry to remain globally competitive, the industry has casualised its labour force and tends to hire documented and undocumented migrant labour. This chapter presents the literature on citrus GVCs. The chapter explores how and why migrant labour is employed within the citrus chain, while assessing the working and living conditions of migrant labour. These conditions are analysed using the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda.

2.2 GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS AND MIGRANT LABOUR

The fabric of economic globalisation' is constructed through GVCs. GVCs have facilitated the flow of the production process stretching across national borders and consumed on international markets (Alford, 2016). GVCs have been argued to be an opportunity for developing countries to develop through economic opportunities presented on the international markets (ILO, 2016). As noted, this is echoed by modernisation theorists, who argue a deterministic approach to economic development for developing countries, which modelled western development through GVC's (Bair, 2009). This dissertation adopts the GVC literature as a theoretical framework in assessing the labour conditions within the citrus fruit sector.

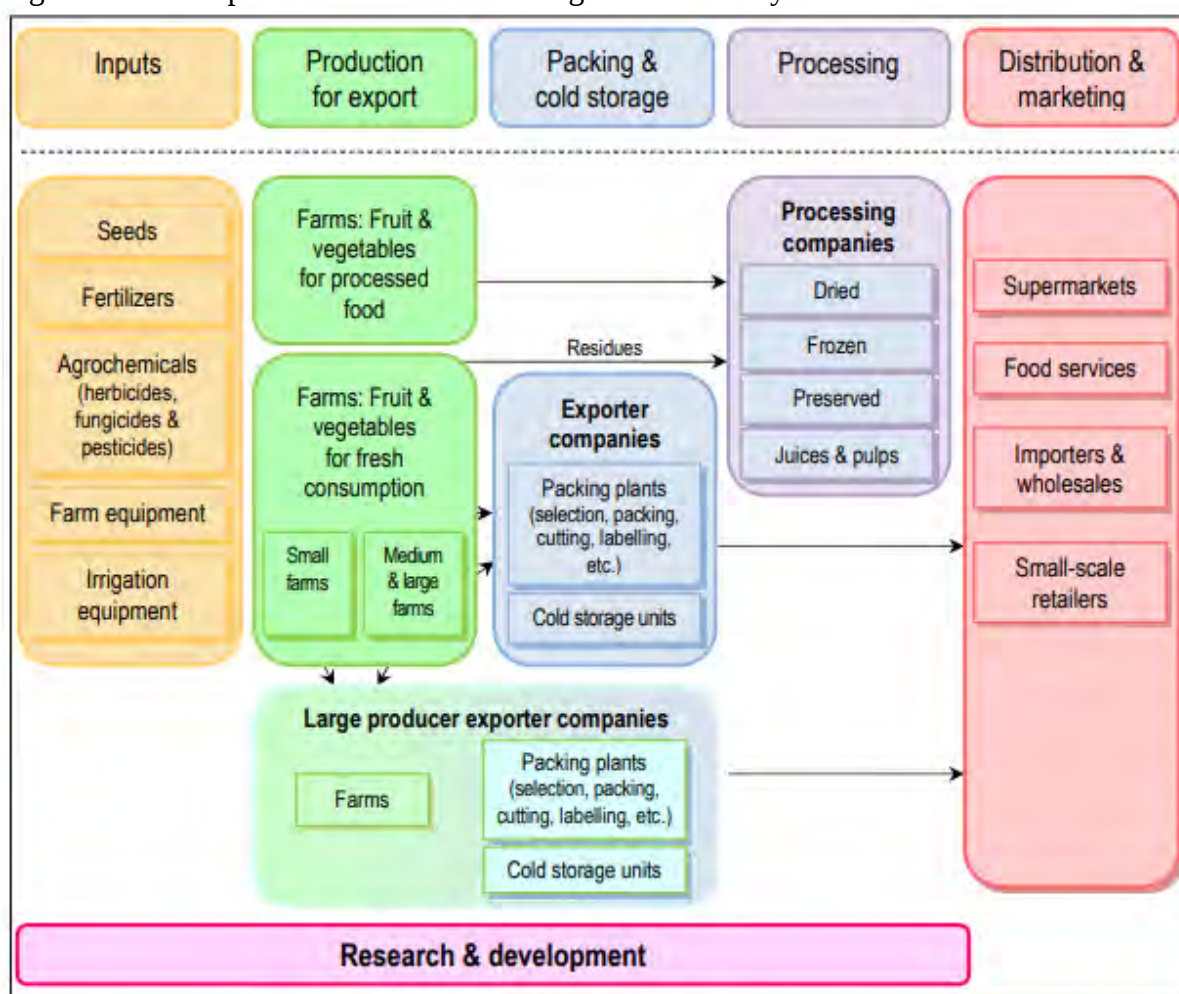
The global chain literature is divided into three broad theoretical frameworks ranging from Global Commodity Chains (GCC), GVCs and Global Production Networks (GPN) (Bair, 2009). The trilogy of these interrelated theoretical frameworks originated from GCC and evolved into three different theoretical frameworks due to changes within the global economy (Bair, 2009). The focus of this dissertation is the GVC theoretical framework. GVCs originates from the world systems theory. The world system theory was developed by Wallerstein, who argues that the relationships between core, peripheral and periphery countries are based on economic dominance (Bair, 2009; Binns *et al.*, 2018). This relationship reproduces global inequality across countries as a global hierarchy is created through national exploitation (Bair, 2009). World-system scholars used the GCC framework to illustrate how commodity chains reproduce global inequality. GCC can be described as "a network of labour and production processes whose result is a finished commodity" (LeBaron *et al.*, 2018:3). Hopkins and Wallerstein (2011) argue that commodity chains represent the fabric of global capitalism.

A key theme in the GCC literature is the role that lead firms of the chain play in providing prospects for producers' economic development within the global south. In the early stages of global chain research, Gereffi & Korzeniewicz (1994) claimed that lead firms of the chain could coordinate global chains to be buyer-driven or producer-driven. Production-driven commodity chains are multinational firms that have full control of the production system across borders with international subcontracting playing a vital role in these centralised networks, as the headquarters of the multinational firm governs all actors within the network (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz, 1994; Gereffi, 2015). On the other hand, buyer-driven commodity chains refer to lead firms that focus on marketing, product designs, and branding. The headquarters residing in the core countries would delegate the production processes to firms in the periphery areas. The buyer-driven chain's lead firms decentralise the production network (Bair, 2009; Gereffi & Korzeniewicz, 1994).

Buyer-driven chain literature is relevant to this dissertation. Agri-food supply chains have been characterised as a buyer-driven chain, where power and financial dominance have fallen into the elite supermarkets' hands (Robin & Gore, 2018). An elite group of buyer-driven supermarkets dominate the agriculture supply chain with four companies accounting for 70 per cent of the revenue of agricultural commodities globally, while in Europe, 50 per cent of all retail food sales are controlled by ten firms (Robin & Gore, 2018:38). Supermarkets as lead firms are gatekeepers to the global agri-food market and thus dictate the rules of the market to suppliers. Supermarkets use their power to dictate price, just-in-time systems and place

production risks on producers. This general agricultural trend is also reflected in the citrus GVC (DALRRD, 2017; Robin & Gore, 2018). Supermarkets' ability to source products from different suppliers within the chain makes producers easily replaceable if they do not want to adhere to the rules set by the lead firms. While these lead firms' power and control of the GVC have grown, suppliers' powers have reduced over time (Robin & Gore, 2018). Local government intervention is limited due to the de-regulation of global agricultural markets. The power gap between producers and lead firms is a strong motivator for supermarkets to coordinate production through buyer-driven chains (Robin & Gore, 2018). Figure 1 displays a simplified agriculture buyer-driven value chain, illustrating how contracted firms and producers are integrated at various nodes of the chain across the globe.

Figure 2.1: A simplified value chain in the agri-food industry



(Fernandez-Stark *et al.*, 2011:12)

Since the early 2000s, the dual model of governance consisting of the buyer and producer-driven chains proposed by Gereffi and Korzeniewicz (1994) was criticised for being too static and narrow-focused (Altenburg, 2006, Hess, 2016). Thus, the switch took place from 'commodity' to 'value' chains, as commodities did more than move up and down the chain, but people's activities added value to the raw materials creating finished products for consumption (Davis, 2018). A central theme in GVC literature is governance. Governance can be understood as "the inter-firm relationships and institutional mechanisms through which non-market coordination of activities in the chain occurs" (Humphrey, 2001:1). The governance of a chain plays a crucial role because, how the chain is coordinated affects how information is shared, skill transfer and how profits are distributed. Thus, affecting how much economic upgrading and social upgrading is realised within the chain (Altenburg, 2006; Hess, 2016).

As noted in section 1.2, a key area of GVC research is the claim that it is beneficial for developing countries to integrate with the global economy to experience 'economic upgrading' (Dicken *et al.*, 2001; Engel & Taglioni, 2017). The assumption of these scholars, who subscribe to neoclassical economic theory, was that connecting to GVC will result in the creation of jobs through economic upgrading that will, in turn, potentially create social upgrading for workers at the bottom-end of global chains (Bair, 2009; Engel & Taglioni, 2017). As noted above and worth emphasizing is that social upgrading involves (among others) improvement of entitlements of workers within value chains, which is often based on the ILO concept of "Decent Work" developed in 1999 (ILO, 2016). The Decent Work Agenda focuses on bettering the working conditions, rights, and entitlements of workers. However, how these commodity chains are governed have a direct implication on worker's ability to upgrade socially (Clelland, 2014; Selwyn, 2016).

Scholars, such as Selwyn (2013; 2016), argue that what takes place within these chains is social downgrading, where these GVCs create precarious jobs. Precarious jobs are created due to producers experiencing pressure from lead firms to produce high-quality goods while being expected to sell them at a low price. Therefore, producers attempt to maximise their profits by cutting down on labour cost and creating precarious employment (Selwyn, 2013). These arguments have been rooted in multiple case studies, especially within the agriculture sector where the distribution of wealth within the chain is hugely biased against labour. An example of social downgrading is a case study conducted by Ulicki & Crush (2007) on farms that employ Lesotho immigrant labour. Here immigrant workers are reported to live in poverty and are overworked. In the study they worked an average of ten hours per day for about six days a

week. Immigrant workers reported earning R8.05 pay per day, in contrast, living in inadequate living arrangements within the farms (Ulicki & Crush, 2007). Thus, despite the farms experiencing economic upgrading, this did not translate to immigrant workers experiencing social upgrading. This dissertation focuses on the citrus GVC within South Africa to assess if immigrant labour experiences social upgrading.

2.3 CITRUS VALUE CHAIN IN SOUTH AFRICA

The citrus value chain refers to the production process of citrus fruit from the raw product to added value nodes of the chain, until the final product is ready for consumption. This section looks at citrus value chains in South Africa's citrus fruit production. Citrus production can be traced back to East Asia approximately 2000 B.C (Joshi & Gurung, 2020). However, the most productive citrus regions today include Brazil, China, Mexico, Spain, Mediterranean countries and South Africa (Joshi & Gurung, 2020). South Africa's citrus industry is predominately an export industry. There are local sales primarily sold directly to wholesalers who resell produce to partnered retailers. However, export markets tend to be farmers preference due to the economic opportunities it presents. In 2017 the average price per ton of oranges was R8656 compared to local markets that stood at R3604.00 (DALRRD, 2017). This is mirrored in the soft citrus sector where export markets on average price ranged at R13 489.00 per ton compared to local markets at R6 037.00 per ton (DALRRD, 2017).

Consequently, most citrus production is targeted overseas; for example, 66 per cent of total lemon and lime production in South Africa was exported in 2017 (DALRRD, 2017). Only 4 per cent of lemon and limes were received in the local market, while the processing industry absorbed 30 per cent. In 2017, Europe absorbed 39 per cent of all South African lemon and limes production (DALRRD, 2017). South Africa's citrus fruit exports were valued at R18.5 billion in 2017 (DALRRD, 2017). The South African citrus industry is globally competitive. In 2017, the South African citrus industry contributed 14.9 per cent of total world exports, ranking at number two globally. During the same year, within the grapefruit industry, it exported 14.5 per cent worldwide ranking South Africa as the number three highest grapefruit exports globally (DALRRD, 2017).

In 2017, a total area of 77708 ha was used for citrus production, with the top three areas of production consisting of Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and Western cape, producing 42 per cent, 26 per cent and 17 per cent respectively (DALRRD, 2017). Oranges play a crucial role in South African citrus fruit, contributing 64 per cent of total citrus production. The most common citrus fruit produced in South Africa in 2017 is the Valencia orange tree fruit (DALRRD, 2017). Limpopo was producing 59 per cent of all-Valencia oranges that year, followed by Eastern Cape at 15 per cent. Apart from this, soft citrus production also contributes massively to South African citrus production. The total contribution of lemon and limes to citrus production is 20 per cent in 2017. Lemon and limes contribute 15 per cent of soft citrus production in 2017 and grapefruit 10 per cent (DALRRD, 2017).

Citrus fruits' high demand is due to its many uses and health benefits. Oranges can be used for animal feed, essential oils, juices, teas, marmalade, slug repellent, cooking or eaten fresh (ECSECC, 2017), while lemon's use value stems from teas, juices, soups, wine, and cooking. Lime, on the other hand, can be used for alcohol. Grapefruits are popular in breakfast dishes, juices, wines, fruit salads, seed oils and syrup (DALRRD, 2017; Robin & Gore, 2018).

The Eastern Cape is a significant region in South Africa's citrus sector. The province contributed 30 per cent to soft citrus fruits, which is the second-largest contribution second to the Western Cape in 2017. The Eastern Cape was the largest producer of lemons and limes in 2017, producing 45 per cent of the industry's output (DALRRD, 2017).

The citrus industry is labour intensive, with many workers working in packing houses and orchards, supporting an estimate of a million households in South Africa (DALRRD, 2017). The South African citrus industry is generally on a growth spurt. The COVID-19 health scare has provided the citrus industry with new economic opportunities on international markets and has pushed demand to new heights the citrus industry is struggling to meet. A farmer stated this in a Fresh Plaza article:

The demand for oranges at this point in just about all markets is outstripping supply. It is a delicate balance trying to keep all our clients happy with the extra volume that they are looking for, given that we are ending early and slightly down on volumes (Jansen, 2020).

Despite the growth the industry has experienced, the distribution of wealth in this labour-intensive industry remains stark. However, existing studies show that farmworkers are often paid less than a 'decent' wage and experience poor working conditions, despite the value the GVC produces. The above statement can be illustrated by the South African agricultural export sector largely dependent on the fruit industry, contributing R22 billion rand in 2016 (SA-tied, 2018). The citrus industry produces R13.2 billion of this total fruit export value and contributes over 25 per cent of total agricultural export value (SA-tied, 2018). On the other hand, in the same year of 2016 workers received a minimum wage of R14.25 per hour, which would average out to R2778.83 per month (SA-tied, 2018). Cost reduction strategies aimed at labour costs within the chain include hiring documented and undocumented immigrant labourers (see Addison, 2014; Bolt, 2017; Crush & Williams, 2005; Ulicki & Crush, 2007).

The above section, by unpacking the export driven citrus industry, contextualizes the dissertation within the South African citrus GVC. This dissertation interrogates the notion of 'upgrading' in the GVC literature pertaining to immigrant workers. The GVC analysis is useful, as the way the value chain is governed impacts workers' ability to experience social upgrading (Rossi, 2013). The South African citrus industry is firmly integrated within the citrus GVC. South Africa performs relatively well in this industry compared to most countries (SA-tied, 2018; DALRRD, 2017). The lead firms (International Supermarkets) of the citrus GVC manages to appropriate enormous wealth, at the expense of workers. Due to the nature of chain governance, they are usually enforced through contracts (Robin & Gore, 2018). However, these contracts are incomplete and cannot completely codify the relationship between supplier and buyer. Incomplete contracts create a 'contractual dilemma' because after the agreement of the contracts - the buyer and seller have different interests, so they act in an individualistic opportunistic manner which inevitably leads to conflict amongst stakeholders at different nodes of the chain (Trienekens *et al.*, 2012). South African farm producers within the chain therefore adapt to these uncoded contracts by casualizing their labour force (Bolt, 2017).

It is worth emphasizing here that the manner value chains are governed determines the opportunities producers get in manufacturing higher-value goods and upgrading within the value chain. Governance coordinates the human resources, financial and material flow within the chain of production, and has unique implications for labour at the bottom of the value chain (Trienekens *et al.*, 2012). The South African citrus industry may have generally experienced economic upgrading, however that has not necessarily translated to social upgrading.

In the next section of the chapter, the researcher will begin to unpack the Zimbabwean migrant labour literature employed within these chains.

2.4 ZIMBABWEAN IMMIGRANT LABOUR ON COMMERCIAL FARMS

In this section, the researcher discusses a brief history of migration within South Africa relevant to the dissertation and the motives for migration, while relating labour migration to the agriculture industry. The importance of exploring this segment of migration literature is to paint a vivid picture of immigrant workers living and working conditions within this agri-food GVC. The use of immigrant farm labour in the agri-food GVC is a global practice (Williams, 2019). The increase in migration within Africa stems from (among others) the process of globalization. Globalization has left Africa with a 'colonial hangover' that has contributed to several African economies being in debt and dependent on foreign aid, resulting in socio-economic disparities being deepened by the process of globalization (Umezurike, 2008). One of the results of this polarization between African regions has been a significant flow of migration into countries such as South Africa and Nigeria. More than any other African country, South Africa has experienced large waves of migration (Umezurike, 2008).

Broad migration trends into South Africa can be traced back to the permanent European settlement in 1652 at the Cape of Good Hope. Over time, more Europeans migrated into South Africa, strengthening the agricultural and mining sector (Umezurike, 2008). These two sectors triggered an influx of international migration to work in these industries, especially from neighbouring countries. This is because these industries benefited from cheap migrant labour (Umezurike, 2008). The discovery of diamonds in 1871 in South Africa, coupled with discovering the largest gold source globally, made South Africa a country of economic opportunities for migrants. The agricultural sector transcended into commercial farming with advanced productivity methods ushering South Africa to industrialize relatively faster than other African countries (Umezurike, 2008). Migrant labour played an irreplaceable role in the development of these industries and the creation of South Africa's modern industrial economy (Crush & Williams, 2005; Umezurike, 2008). This is reflected in contemporary South Africa, where mining and agriculture still attract a large immigrant workforce (Bloch, 2008).

However, a historical key turning point for the agricultural sector in South Africa was in relation to how firms integrated into the GVCs during the 1990s. The agricultural sector in South Africa shifted from a regulated to deregulated market in the 1990s (Umezurike, 2008). The deregulation of agricultural markets was driven by President Mbeki's government's economic policies (as reflected in GEAR) and the influence of (neoliberal) financial institutions in the global north (Rutherford & Addison, 2007; Umezurike, 2008). Consequently, producers were forced to compete globally without government assistance (Rutherford & Addison, 2007). The deregulation of the farming sector forced local farmers to remain competitive within the global market. The instability of the international markets requires producers to be adaptive in one in two ways. These two adaptive strategies are named 'high road' and 'low road' strategies (Williams, 2019). High road strategies refer to local farmers remaining globally competitive by training workers and adopting technological advancement strategies (increasing production cost) (Williams, 2019). South African producers profit margin compared to what the supermarkets absorb within the citrus GVC is spread thin—thus resulting in the adaption of 'low-road' strategies to cope with the international market. Low road strategies involve (among others) creating precarious work, casualization of labour and hiring undocumented immigrant workers (Williams, 2019). Local producers adopt these strategies due to the imbalance of power between producers and Supermarkets. Producers tend to have little to no power to negotiate the nature of trade they part take in with lead firms. Producers continuously find themselves in situations where they absorb production risks, and unplanned costs such as short-notice order cancellations (Crush & Williams, 2005; Robin & Gore, 2018; Williams, 2019).

The agricultural sector hosts the bulk of immigrant labour, especially in geographic areas where South Africa and Zimbabwe share borders such as Mpumalanga and Northern Province. Crush and Williams (2005) have categorized the migrant movement into four big categories in these areas. The first is village residing immigrants near the border areas that tend to be employed during harvest times on farms (Crush & Williams, 2005). Secondly, immigrant workers who reside on farms tend to work on them throughout the year. Thirdly immigrant workers who do temporary work on farms to gather some money before they move to their intended bigger cities to search for employment. Lastly, Mozambican labour, who previously had refugee status living near farming areas, tend to migrate (Crush & Williams, 2005).

A portion of the agricultural immigrant workforce has been reported to be undocumented. Unskilled agricultural immigrants are undocumented mainly because to get a permit the Alien's

Control Act of 1991 prohibits permits to be given out in jobs where local labour can fill the position (Crush and Williams, 2005). The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) may facilitate negotiations for the use of immigrant labour. An example of this is the existence of a "special zone" near the border areas where Zimbabweans can be recruited and registered by companies, while providing them with an identity card and a letter of employment which is valid for up to six months (Crush & Williams, 2005). The above procedure provides immigrant workers a permit under "section 41" from the DHA to be lawfully employed (Crush & Williams, 2005). However, the provisions provided for immigrant workers on paper as stated above is not what translates on the ground, as immigrant workers still find it difficult and costly to obtain lawful permits. The inflow of undocumented immigrant labour is impossible to measure and has been exaggerated by the media (Crush & Williams, 2005). According to Crush and Williams (2005:16), "circumstantial evidence seems to support 'the flood' of popular mythology." An example of this mythology is the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) claiming they catch one in four border-jumpers with no quantifiable method to measure that or know that. On the other hand, the agricultural workforce also consists of documented labour. The above section illustrates that producers employ immigrant workers as a 'low road' strategy to remain competitive within international market. The following section of this paper will explore why immigrants seek to work for these producers within South Africa.

2.4.1 Push and Pull Factors of Zimbabwean Migrant Labour

The dissertation aims to understand the causes of migration using the push and pull theory. For migration to take place, they are factors from the sending and receiving countries that facilitate reasons for migration. These factors are economic, social, political, legal, educational, cultural, and historical. These factors push immigrants out of the country or pull immigrants towards the receiving country simultaneously for migration to take place (Mejia *et al.*, 1979). Immigrants weigh out the potential benefits and risks associated with geographic relocation. Immigrant workers will only change occupation if they perceive it to be worthwhile and can stand to gain economically with their current limited resources (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). Push and pull factors have a direct impact on immigrants living and working conditions. The following section unpacks the push and pull factors that facilitate migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa.

2.4.1.1 Push Factors

The major push factors for immigrant workers to relocate into South Africa can be crudely boxed in economic and political reasons. Zimbabwean emigration is commonly characterised as a 'crisis-driven' migration. This came as a surprise considering the economic and social advancements the country achieved after its independence. However, the cost of poor leadership created vital push factors such as unemployment, economic sabotage, and political oppression (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015).

The first push factor the researcher discusses is political oppression expressed as human rights violations. Due to the authoritarian nature of the Zimbabwean government, reports of freedom of speech violations; government kidnapping and torture against all who may not share the government's ideology, results in citizens emigrating to South Africa (Bloch, 2008; Ranga, 2013). A recent example of repression of freedom of speech is the arrest of Hopewell Chin'ono in 2020, an independent journalist who got arrested for exposing government corruption. The research of Padarath *et al.* (2003) echoes the above statements and discovered that the fear of human rights violation played a crucial role in the emigration of teachers from Zimbabwe to South Africa, especially during the Zimbabwean 2002 elections. A Zanu-PF used violent means to gain votes for the elections. This is mirrored by the Refugee Board of Canada (2011), who illustrated the Zimbabwean government using political youth activists to carry out its violence in exchange for jobs in the 2008 elections (cited in Ranga, 2013). Ranga's (2013) research shows that teachers were violently targeted due to their association with the opposition party MDC. This Resulted in teachers fleeing to South Africa to avoid political abduction. The fear of political violence serves as a push factor for emigration (Raftopoulod, 2009; Ranga, 2013; Kiwanuka & Monson, 2009).

A push factor for professionals to seek employment elsewhere is what Ranga (2013) coins the 'misplacement of talent.' This occurs mainly in Zimbabwe, where individuals fill skilled job vacancies with political ties and political patronage. This does not happen only at an individual level but also within the private sector where businesses gain government assistance orders not due to performance but political patronage (Ranga, 2013). Individuals occupy skilled job vacancies with little to no qualifications for the job at all! Job opportunities handed out under the umbrella of "corruption, nepotism, tribalism, and other similar forms of behaviour have permeated every level of organisational life" (Ranga, 2013:4). Crudely put, political

patronage as a pre-request to employment motivates skilled labour to emigrate due to the unemployment caused by 'misplacement of talent'.

The Zimbabwean economy has been in free fall for just over two decades. "Zimbabwe has been described as one of the world's most unequal societies with less than 5 per cent of the population (including black and white families and businesses) owning almost 70 per cent of the country's income" (Ranga, 2013:63). The standard of living in Zimbabwe can be described as unbearable, with 70 per cent of the population reported to be living in poverty in 2002, while hyperinflation results in basic needs being inaccessible. Oxfam International (2009) (cited in Ranga, 2013) reported "that 80 per cent of Zimbabwe's population lived on less than one dollar a day, without access to basic commodities such as food and water. Almost 5.1 million people, half of the nation, struggled to eat one meal a day" (Ranga, 2013:71).

The debates around the causes of Zimbabwe's economic decline are important, but they are beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, the economic situation in Zimbabwe makes families livelihood unbearable, creating a push factor to obtain a source of income in South Africa through remittances to the migrant's home country (Bloch, 2008). This push factor of not having a stable source of income for households results in immigrants emigrating to remit funds. Zimbabwean migrant labour, on average, it has been argued, support five individuals on average back home (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015). An estimated 75 per cent of migrant families depend on remittances as a source of income to sustain livelihood in Zimbabwe due to economic distress (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015). However, remittances serve as a poor strategy to elevate individuals from economic strife (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015). The dissertation will discuss this in further detail when exploring Zimbabwean farmworkers' livelihood in the following section. However, the emphasis at this point is that the Zimbabwean economy collapse has threatened migrant's livelihood, placing them in a position where emigration is the only option for survival.

Zimbabwe's weak social welfare and public service programs serve as a push factor. This is due to negligent leadership coupled with Sub-Saharan African countries (SSAC) implementing Structural adjustment programmes (Ranga, 2013). The Structural adjustment programmes placed SSAC in debt, restricting funds for social welfare programs. A reduction in spending in social sectors made some employees experience job loss (Ranga, 2013). Despite Governments attempts to increase tax rates, the economic constraints result in its inability to provide essential goods and services. This low standard of living 'pushes' Zimbabweans to emigrate (Ranga, 2013). Social programmes were

further starved out from western donor support due to political sanctions. Western donors who previously donated began to take their funds outside the country. This resulted in lack of funding in social welfare sections, such as the health sector with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reporting US\$43 million in foreign aid being extracted in 1994 and 2003 for the Zimbabwean health sector. The economic blow around the same time also resulted in fewer people being able to afford health care (Ranga, 2013). The decline in health care revenue significantly hurt its ability to carry out its services. Today, the ripple effects can be seen with the multiple health care protests in Zimbabwe during the years 2019/2020 for shortage's medical supplies, stuff, and unlivable wages. Poor welfare and public services create push factors for emigration.

The economic collapse touches all spaces of the Zimbabwean economy, creating a ripple effect of emigration to the agriculture sector. The education system continues to collapse, with teachers unable to sustain hyperinflation and a weak currency. As a result, women are encouraged to work on farms to play the traditional village wife (Bolt, 2013). This entails cooking, cleaning and sex. In some cases, parents who cannot pay school fees for their children due to the dire economic situation send their daughters to get jobs that resemble a domestic helper for a secure permeant worker on the South African farms who will pay the helper. The helper has been reported to save up enough money after some years to eventually pay for their school fees and complete studies (Bolt, 2013).

2.4.1.2 Pull Factors

As stated above the presence of pull factors are required to facilitate migration. The primary pull factor for immigrants are the source of income from job opportunities (Umezurike, 2008). This is supported in a study done by Wentzel & Bosman (2001) that determined macroeconomic variables are the main reason why Mozambican and Zimbabwe emigrate into South Africa. Macroeconomic factors such as a more stable currency, job opportunities, higher salaries provide pull factors for emigration.

The first pull factor the research discusses is the availability of jobs for migrant labour. The migrant agriculture literature illustrates two main reasons why employers hire migrant labour creating a pull factor. The first being to fill labour shortages and the second is employer's

preferences due to stereotypes surrounding migrant labour (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). Stereotypes help fuel immigrants' job opportunities by framing the farm owner's perspective of migrant workers in a positive light. Stereotypes are that migrant labour is more disciplined, is easy to control, cheap and loyal with a strong work ethic (Addison, 2014; Kruss *et al.*, 2016; Crush & Williams, 2005). Migrant labour is deemed loyal because a portion of them are 'unfree' labour, as they cannot easily move around within the labour market, especially undocumented immigrant labour (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). This is due to the legal barriers prohibiting migrant labour in some sections of the labour market. However, on the ground, this is not always the case as migrant labour can be mobile depending on their visa situation and region (Bolt, 2013). Some workers work on farms with the intention of relocating to the main cities full of economic opportunities such as Johannesburg, however, due to accommodation issues and finances to fund their journey they temporarily work on farms (Bolt, 2013).

Nonetheless, stereotypes of the migrant workforce result in employers creating 'targeted' job posts for immigrant labour, creating a massive inflow of immigrant workers looking for a job (Bolt, 2013). This pull factor is strengthened due to the negative perspective employers have of local labour. Local workers are described as alcoholics, lazy, disobedient by employers (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). This perspective is consistent with segmented labour theory, which breaks the labour market into 'goods job' and 'bad jobs.' This theory's focus point for this dissertation is the 'bad jobs', which consist of the absence of union presence, low pay, and precarious conditions as described in the agriculture sector (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). However, the theory illustrates that workers employed in such positions tend to be unreliable, lack punctuality, and regular absenteeism as the "bad jobs" reinforce this behaviour. This is consistent with how farm owners view South African farmworkers (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). This research argues that the reason why immigrant workers do not portray these characteristics as much as local labour, is because of their extreme vulnerability and fear of deportation forcing them to work diligently on these farms (Uys & Blaauw, 2006). The perception employers have of foreign and local workers creates job opportunities for migrant workers resulting in a pull factor for emigration.

The agriculture sector also facilitates job creation as it is well known for low wages, poor working conditions, casualisation of labour and no unionisation. Department of Labour research illustrates the dire effect of job shortages in the agriculture sector, as local unemployed work-seekers reject jobs in agriculture more than the security and hospitality industry due to

the poor conditions of employment (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). As a result, under the Immigration Act of 2012, farm owners have the right to fill in vacant labour shortages with immigrant labour if their operational needs require it (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). On the other hand, scholars such as Bosok (2002) argue that migrant labour is dressed to be structurally necessary and this claim has some truth to it. However, it is also used for farm owners convenience as it aligns with their goal of profit maximisation. Immigrant farm labour is generally perceived as cheap and docile labour (Kruss *et al.*, 2016). This paragraph's relevance lies in labour shortages being present in the agriculture sector ensures economic job opportunities for immigrant workers to be pulled towards South Africa.

There are other pull factors outside job security, such as business development in South Africa which has proven to be a pull factor. Zimbabwean migrants also involve shoppers who buy goods in South Africa to take back home due to food shortages, coupled with informal cross border traders (Ranga, 2013). Other non-economic reasons include a family reunion, better education, and better public service that facilitates higher living standards.

South African farmers adopt 'the intensification of fragmented labour (Bernstein, 2007:45). This is the use of immigrant labour in the border areas to obtain 'cheap and manageable labour' (Bolt, 2013:7). The operational activities for many farms in the border depend on immigrant labour where a large portion of them went through the fence between the two countries in search for economic opportunities due to the continuously declining Zimbabwe economic post-2000s and political instability (Bolt, 2013). The pull factors of immigrant workers may benefit immigrants in many ways. However, within the agricultural sector, many immigrant workers abuses' experienced on the farms, poor working conditions keep immigrants in vulnerable positions and not necessarily make drastic changes in bettering their lives. The next section will discuss the vulnerabilities of immigrant workers in the agricultural sector.

2.5 MIGRANT WORKERS' PRECARIOUS POSITION IN AGRICULTURE

This research centres around the working and living conditions of immigrant workers in citrus GVC. For firms and policymakers to better understand the working and living conditions, the immigrant worker's vulnerabilities need to be identified first. The following section explores the vulnerabilities of immigrants' experience within the agricultural sector.

Structural Institutional bias against immigrant workers contributes to facilitating immigrant workers vulnerability. An example of this is the barrier against women to apply for asylum status due to the extreme emphasis on what Convention 1951 determines as proof of a need to gain asylum status that tends to evade women (Bloch, 2008; Tuitt, 1996). Institutions in charge of the migration process make obtaining documentation to work on farms, tedious, lengthy and costly with a low probability of acceptance. This results in immigrants opting to work on farms without documentation (Bloch, 2008). Bolt (2008) argues negative institutional bias can be spotted from officials working within the visa allocation institutions having their own subjective biases and prejudice. An example in South Africa is migrant workers who attempt to apply for visas under the asylums status, have been reported to be unfairly brushed as 'economic migrants' due to workers within the visa allocation institutions prejudice against migrants and therefore negatively hindering immigrant workers odds of receiving their asylum status. Migrant workers avoid the visa application process due to the visa cost and the belief that even if they applied for a visa they will probably not qualify (Bloch, 2008). Consequently, some migrant labour remains undocumented in South Africa. In 2006 the Department of Home Affairs received 2000 asylum request, and only just above 5 per cent of the applicants were accepted (Bloch, 2008). In short, being undocumented places migrants in a vulnerable position.

A source of vulnerability is the disconnect of migrant labour and South African authorities. The lack of an authority figure to represent their rights adequately plays a crucial role in facilitating migrant abuse (Umezurike, 2008). South Africa restricts the inflow of foreign workers to protect the real wages of their local labour force. Even though to a large extent South Africa has encouraged international migration, but usually these formal channels protect semi-skilled to skilled labour, and negate unskilled migrant labour (Umezurike, 2008). Umezurike (2008) argues that South African migration policies have been on the fence on how aggressively to manage international migration illustrated by inconsistent migration policies (Umezurike, 2008).

The South African government attempts to resolve the large influx of undocumented immigrant workers by enforcing anti-migration policies on immigrant workers and not placing an emphasis of anti-migration policy on farm owners. Hence the severe militarisation of the border areas to deport undocumented immigrants (Crush & Williams, 2005). There is a strong military and police presence continuously doing raids to check immigrant's documentation to deport

unlawful workers by the borders (Bolt, 2013). The fear of being deported hangs over the heads of undocumented immigrant workers which results in them being less militant against labour conditions.

Immigrant workers fear of being deported and heightens farm owners' power when negotiating the terms of immigrant workers employment. South African farm owners have been reported to use the deportation process to get free labour in research carried out by Bolt (2013), as farm owners call the authorities to deport immigrant workers right before the immigrants were scheduled to be paid for the work they had rendered. South Africa has one of the highest deportation schemes globally (Nshimbi & Lorenzo, 2014). The massive army of undocumented labour results in immigrant workers being easily replaceable and desperate to accept jobs for low wages. The fear of deportation plays a crucial role in fuelling Zimbabwean vulnerabilities (Bolt, 2013).

Migrant representative structures in the agricultural sector in South Africa are weak. Undocumented immigrant workers have no national labour union to represent them (Bloch, 2008). The deportation threat expresses itself in different ways in the working and living conditions of immigrant workers. An example of this is that seasonal workers do not reside in their allocated compounds, in fear of continuous police raids in search for undocumented labour during the start of the harvest season. For this reason, immigrant workers may reside in bushes or their social networks' accommodation (Bolt, 2013).

The militarisation of the current South African border is reflective of the apartheid state. The connection between the two needs to be explained to explain border management (Umezurike, 2008). The apartheid state needed to use means of coercion such as border patrols and human rights violation towards migration to enforce racism and social arrangements (Umezurike, 2008). This is because migrant labour during the pre-apartheid period moved freely within Southern Africa. The apartheid government used policies to regulate foreign traffic within the country to protect local workers jobs (Crush & Williams, 2005). Apartheid migration policy was racialised to favour white immigrants while restricting black/African and Jewish immigrants. This migration policy trend can still be seen today where migration policies such as the number of permits granted favour white European immigrants (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015). The apartheid government controlled the intake of cheap foreign labour on mines and farms while denying them receiving temporary or permanent visas (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015).

Umezurike (2008:616) states very well that, “the victims of these deportation exercises today are the same citizens of SADC who had borne the brunt of apartheid regional militarisation.” The disconnect with migrant workers and South African government leaves immigrant workers institutionally vulnerable.

However, it is worth mentioning here that these raids are also not in the interest of employers (Bolt, 2013), even though the fear of deportation fuel farmers negotiation power. Continuous raids that lead to deportation hurt the farm's operational schedule by continuously having to recruit the replacements for the immigrant workers resulting in additional administrative cost. The above is worsened by workers who were previously deported, who unlawfully re-enter the country to return to the farm they previously worked on to ask for the wages they worked for before deportation and for their jobs back (Rutherford & Addison, 2007; Bolt, 2013). South Africa has been said to have a revolving door syndrome where deported migrants return (Bloch, 2008). The following table 1 shows the number of deportations of Zimbabweans from South Africa for the year 2000-2013. The deportation levels peaked during 2008, due to the influx of undocumented immigrants into South Africa in attempts to escape the economic crisis during this period. In 2007 and 2008 living in Zimbabwe was described to be unbearable due to hyperinflation and food shortages during that period (Crush *et al.*, 2017). During the period of 2000 until 2013 an estimated two million migrants were deported, 42 per cent of whom were Zimbabweans (Crush *et al.*, 2017).

Table 2.1: Deportations of Zimbabweans from South Africa, 2000–2013

Year	Number of Zimbabweans deportations	Total deportations from South Africa	Zimbabwean deportations as % of total deportations
2000	45,922	145,575	31.5
2001	47,697	156,123	30.6
2002	38,118	135,870	28.1
2003	55,753	164,808	33.8
2004	72,112	167,137	43.1
2005	97,433	209,988	46.4
2006	109,532	266,067	41.2
2007	204,827	312,733	65.5

2008	164,678	280,837	58.6
2009	35,693	105,960	33.7
2010	4,805	56,793	8.5
2011	10,100	65,383	15.4
2012	38,897	103,259	37.8
2013	35,251	113,554	31.0
Total	960,818	2,284,787	42.1

(Source: Crush *et al.*, 2017:18).

Immigrant workers are attached to their respective farms; this vulnerability hinders them from looking for other economic opportunities or having a separate personal life away from the farm. This can be seen by seasonal workers receiving farm identity cards to protect them from authorities from deporting them (Bolt, 2013; Bloch, 2008). However, if workers are seen outside the farm even when doing a social activity such as visiting the friend the farm identity card holds no value in protecting them from deportation—resulting in them being a prisoner to the farms (Bolt, 2013; Umezurike, 2008). This vulnerability of limiting workers' ability to seek better employment hinders immigrant workers life chances significantly to continuously remain below a decent standard of living and accept poor working conditions (Umezurike, 2008).

Immigrant workers vulnerability expresses itself in negative gender roles within the immigrant workforce. Men claim to access more 'ownership' of land, creating a source of power for them over women. A large portion of women tends to operate on the farm in the capacity of 'sexual and domestic partners' (Bolt, 2013:19). Women are reported to be attached on farms through their relationship with men. As a result, this creates a vulnerable situation for immigrant women as their livelihood is depended on continuously providing domestic services (Bolt, 2013). Their desperate situation to economically live a better life result in them having sexual relationships with permeant workers. The disparity in representation of women in senior positions and claims on land limits their options. Women's marital attachment to men played a crucial role in the social stratification within farms. Farm marital status refers to a domestic arrangement that resembles and are in some cases, farm marriages, however, are not legally recognised marriages (Bolt, 2013; Crush & Williams, 2005). Gender vulnerabilities may be also illustrated by immigrant teenage girls crossing the border to take care of farm workers' children and being paid as little as R150 monthly. This income is largely sent back home to

support their families in Zimbabwe. These teenage girls furthermore also experience sexual abuse on the farms (Bolt, 2013).

On the other hand, a source of immigrant women vulnerability is the burden of raising children which tends to be placed onto their shoulders as fatherhood is commonly neglected by men (Bloch, 2008; Bolt, 2013). The economic burden associated with children only deepens the need for farm wives to be depended on men who tend to have a higher source of income. Immigrant workers wages' labour is stratified by gender (Crush & Williams, 2005). Women usually work in packhouses which is one of the lowest paying jobs on the farm. Women experience unpaid labour in their domestic homes, as they wake up as early as 7 am to carry out their domestic duties. The factors mentioned above negatively impact female immigrant workers vulnerabilities and hinder their life chances (Crush & Williams, 2005).

Apart from the above, remittances sent back home to support families back home results in immigrant labour being in poverty loop (Bolt, 2013). Those who intended to go on to better economic opportunities are unable to because a bulk of their wages is sent back home. Ranga's (2013) study showed that immigrant workers send up to half of their remittances back home. These remittances can be monetary or paid in non-monetary forms of support such as food and clothes. In a study conducted by Bloch (2008), 86 per cent of immigrant labour sent remittances back home and the main reason was to support economically struggling family members, while some sent remittances to pay for their children's education. Sending remittances reduces immigrant workers prospects of wealth-building (Bloch, 2008; Ranga, 2013).

The issue of immigrant remittances has received attention from organisations such as the World Bank, and the International Organization that has placed remittances as a method to curb poverty and help in the development of receiving countries. However, remittances are used not to build wealth, buy assets or job-creating investments to help curb poverty but for basic survival (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015). Dinbabo & Nyasulu (2015) rightfully argue that remittances fail to build wealth and creates a culture of 'dependency' on the breadwinners sending money back home, resulting in no developmental progress. This results in the need for immigrant workers to continuously send financial aid which compounds their poverty. Remittances are a source of migrant labour vulnerabilities, as it keeps them in poverty loops, and minimizes any prospects of wealth creation (Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015).

When discussing immigrant vulnerabilities in South Africa, xenophobia comes to mind. Reasons for xenophobia in South Africa has been argued to be due to loss of local jobs, violent crime, and alleged drugs that have been alleged to have been facilitated by foreigner's being present within South Africa (Umezurike, 2008). The main concern for some local South Africans being that migrant employment take jobs away from local workers (Umezurike, 2008). There is no data to prove that the primary cause of unemployment is due to migrant labour, as there are multiple reasons that contribute to South Africa's high unemployment. However, there are consequences to the large inflow of migrant labour entering the South African labour market (ILO, 1998). ILO (1998) makes an example of the 1987 worker strikes. South African workers lost their jobs due to managers adapting to the strikes by employing more immigrant workers in attempts to have a more docile labour force.

The narrative of the displacement of jobs seems to be the primary source of xenophobic anti-foreigner trends. This is worsened by the South African government using foreigners as a scapegoat for post-apartheid governmental failures (Umezurike, 2008). Trimikliniotis *et al.*, (2009) shows how politicians with imaginary facts paint a picture of 'Makwerekwere' (foreigners) being the reason for unemployment and high crime rates in order to avoid accountability from bad government decisions (Trimikliniotis *et al.*, 2009). This trend is not new, as, in the same way apartheid government used 'race' to paint a picture of black being the cause of crime rates pushing forward negative stereotypes. In the same way, stereotypes are being used by the post-apartheid South Africa to push forward a 'nationality' for South Africa's problem- while fanning xenophobia (Trimikliniotis *et al.*, 2009). This is also seen in the Human Sciences Research Council estimating the illegal migrant population to range from 2.5 to 4.5 million. This exaggeration of the migrant population was retracted by the Council in 2002, but the false information was reiterated in media outlets by former Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi (Trimikliniotis *et al.*, 2009). These exaggerated figures only fan xenophobia and paint migration inflow as 'the problem.' However, academia has argued that these figures tend to be imaginary as the undocumented migration labour force could be as low as 500000 (Reitzes, 1998; Trimikliniotis *et al.*, 2009). The relevance of this paragraph is to illustrate immigrant workers vulnerability due to xenophobia even at an institutional level.

Kruss *et al.* (2016) show that unemployed work seekers have a negative attitude towards migrant labour. This is because of the stereotypes around migrant labour, such as foreigners accepting low wages, consequently resulting in wage stagnation. These stereotypes are not

unique to the agriculture sector but carried through a large portion of sectors within the country. In Kruss *et al.* (2016) national study, 53.7% per cent of unemployed participants agreed to these stereotypes. This belief system 'others' immigrant labour and sees them as threats. Chairperson of AgriSA's Centre of Excellence, Tommie Esterhuyse spoke out against the negative impacts that xenophobic attacks have on the agriculture industry, and how it adversely affects the livelihood of immigrant workers (AgriSA, 2019).

The social networks among immigrants themselves are a source of vulnerability. Permanent and seasonal workers on farms stratify migrant labour. The core workforce that resides on the farm permanently tends to have privileges on the farm at the seasonal workers expense (Bolt, 2013). This is because having more secure employment comes with privileges, a degree of power and resources that affect not only the working conditions but livelihoods of labour (Bolt, 2013). This is echoed as well in the Grootplass case study farms where 'mapermanent' (secure workforce) are involved in the selection process of hiring workers to the farm in exchange for bribes (Bolt, 2013). The hierarchy of labour relations is also shown in Addison (2014) in Limpopo. Permanent immigrant managers in senior positions had access to running water, satellite television and electricity. Seasonal immigrant workers in contrast resided in mud huts (Addison, 2014). This results in seasonal workers to be in a more vulnerable position regarding their working and living conditions. The social networks on farms are worth exploring further to understand the working and living conditions of immigrant labour.

2.6 SOCIAL NETWORKS OF THE MIGRANT WORKFORCE

South African white farmers have a stained history' of paternalism.' This father-child reputation is associated with racism, abuse, and human rights violations. Contemporary white South African farm managers have continuously adopted lean production methods to step away from "father-child" relations to cater to a more professional employment relationship and adapt to international markets fluctuations (Bolt, 2013). However, the move away from paternalism has resulted in some agricultural farms adopting managerial strategies such as delegation despotism (Addison, 2014).

Delegated despotism refers to the process where farm owners hire immigrant workers to manage other immigrant workers' exploitation. The farm owner delegates authority to

immigrant managers to make decisions that affect the farm's production process and farmworkers everyday life (Addison, 2014). In exchange for exploiting immigrant workers on behalf of farm owners, immigrant supervisors receive farm privileges. These privileges may involve vehicles, decent housing with essential utilities such as running water, satellite television and electricity (Addison, 2014). In contrast, most immigrant workers' housing on the farm consists of mud huts, shacks, and compound housing made from poor materials. Delegated despotism goes beyond the historical use of black labour as intermediaries of controlling black workers within the agriculture and mining sector. Delegated despotism goes beyond the production process, as managers govern all aspects of farm life (Addison, 2014).

However, immigrant supervisors being delegated with decision making power is not a transfer of ownership but merely a symbol of power. The housing and vehicles these managers receive are not formally owned by the immigrant managers but still serves as a source of wealth within the stratified immigrant labour force (Addison, 2014). Delegated despotism benefits the farm owners. It creates a more controllable workforce as immigrants can identify with foreign managers looks, ethnic and language better than white South African farm owners. This ultimately does not help most immigrant workers. This is because managers adopt the farm owners' values, interest, and ethos in exchange for the farm privileges provided (Addison, 2014). The farm owner's exploitation and value extraction from immigrant workers is extracted more effectively through the hands of immigrant supervisors.

These social networks negatively impact immigrant workers and living conditions in important ways, such as the process of externalisation. The process of externalisation is crucial in fuelling the immigrant manager's power base. The process of externalisation refers to the use of formal or informal labour brokers to hire and pay seasonal workers (Du Toit & Ally, 2003). Externalisation is done for two reasons, the first is it relieves the farm owners the responsibility to provide non-wage benefits such as pension pay-out; administrative hassles or costs that come with hiring workers directly (Hall *et al.*, 2013; Du Toit & Ally, 2003). Secondly it allows farm owners to pay workers low wages, as seasonal workers would have to negotiate an increase in wages with their labour brokers and not with farm owners (Hall *et al.*, 2013). Often labour brokers are forced to allocate low wages to temporary workers as the labour brokers themselves must capture profit. The use of labour brokers is prevalent in South African Agriculture (Du Toit & Ally, 2003; Hall *et al.*, 2013; Johnston, 2007).

The process of externalisation fuels immigrants' managers power because they employ individuals from their villages and social networks. These hired workers end up having a sense of loyalty to these immigrant managers. On the Limpopo farms, Addison's (2014) study illustrates an 'elite group of Zimbabwean workers' that extract bribes in exchange for jobs on the farm. Bribes cost up to R200 per person hired and sexual favours are provided by women in exchange for employment (Addison, 2014; Crush & Williams, 2005). These bribes continuously occur even after employment, increasing the cost of living for immigrant workers. The spirit of paternalism still lives on through delegated despotism as 'mediated paternalism'. As the governing role of black immigrant managers on farms 'disrupts and reproduces the circuits of paternalistic power' (Addison, 2014:289). Immigrant managers reinforce social networks on the farm in a way where authority is centralised around them. This facilitates room for black immigrant managers to reinforce their own rules, even against the farm owners (Addison, 2014). The seasonal workers are depended on immigrant managers throughout their farm life. Workers depend on managers even for small activities such as charging their phones or watching television, as immigrant managers houses have electricity, unlike those of seasonal workers (Addison, 2014). Privileges are not only restricted to immigrant managers, but senior immigrant workers also exercise privileges at the expense of new seasonal workers (Bolt; 2013).

Besides immigrant managers, the process of externalisation is also carried out by third party labour brokers. The South African legislation was catered towards a two-party workplace relationship involving an employer and employee (Theron, 2010). However, labour contractors, being a third party who hires workers, creates an opportunity for farm owners to reduce their labour costs. This has strong implications on employee relations such as contractual agreements not being signed by a farmworkers and farm owner, but by farm owners and labour brokers that do not include employment benefits for farm workers (Theron, 2010). Labour brokers whose main objective is to maximize profits hire immigrant workers willing to work for low wages (Theron, 2010).

For the dissertation objectives to be achieved, the dissertation aimed to understand the social networks in the agriculture sector of immigrant workers. The international market demand for agricultural produce is relatively volatile, and farm owners remain flexible to meet lead firms' demands due to the nature of buyer-driven value chains. The process of externalisation provides the flexibility farm owners need, as farmworkers are

employed by farm owners and can be sent home at farm owners will (Robin & Gore, 2018). Understanding the context immigrant workers operate in allows for a better understanding of workers' decent work pillars have been realised.

2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF DECENT WORK

This section aims to contextualise the decent work agenda concerning immigrant labour within the agriculture sector, while laying out the theoretical tools to be adopted to analyse the research data. The ILO defines decent work as work with adequate income, where workers' rights are protected under conditions of human dignity, security, and equality (ILO, 2016). The dissertation uses the four pillars of decent work – namely, social protection, employment security, social dialogue, and promotion of workers' rights – to assess if social upgrading is realised among immigrant labour within the citrus GVCs (ILO, 2002). There is a body of literature that speaks on the effectiveness of decent work; however, that falls beyond the dissertations focus areas.

2.7.1 Employment Opportunities

Immigrant workers gain employment opportunities within the agricultural sector that generally do not elevate them from poverty. This pillar focus is not only to create employment but to create jobs that illustrate decent work (Webster, 2011). This pillar attempts to battle the increasing trend of the casualization of the labour force. These informal jobs tend to have low wages keeping individuals just above the poverty line. This pillar aims to create decent employment characterized by skill development, encouragement of formal employment and decent wages (Webster, 2011). This pillar has been argued to be generally weak in South Africa, as the South African labour market has a large unemployed population and a large informal sector (Moodley & Cohen, 2012).

Migrants from Southern Africa perceive South Africa to be a haven to battle poverty. The primary motivation for most immigrants who emigrate to the agricultural sector is due to economic frustrations (Crush & Williams, 2005). Immigrants' emigration choices usually are taken out of survival instinct; they often apply and take employment that is made immediately

available to them (Crush & Williams, 2005). Agricultural farms close to the borders appear to be a quick way to gain an income to the immigrant households near the border areas. In a study conducted by Bloch (2008), 61 per cent of undocumented immigrants said they migrated due to the lack of financial stability at home in search of a source of income. Crush & Williams (2005) survey amongst migrant workers shows that among foreigners, they view their local homes equal or sometimes in many aspects would argue their homestead as better in every aspect except employment opportunities. Foreign labour primarily views South Africa as a source of employment. The employment opportunity pillar of the Decent Work Agenda is a crucial pull factor to emigration, as immigrant workers hope to land a job that may possibly reflect the values of this pillar.

Due to South African farmers' taking on production risks within the value chain, farm owners tend to obtain flexible farm labour (Bolt, 2013). Employing 'flexible' farm labour allows South African firms to hire and dismiss at farm owners will. Employment in this sector provides no job security. Seasonal workers employment contracts can last up to four to six months within the year.

Immigrant's labour contractual agreements are vague with no job descriptions. General contracts allow the farm owners to make 'work' to be whatever task they desire, thus giving farmers more control of the labour force (Bolt, 2013). This is mirrored in the Limpopo farms where jobs are task-based not time-based (Addison, 2014). Consequently, immigrant workers work overtime, and are not compensated for the overtime needed to complete tasks. This is likely because workers are performing duties beyond their agreed contracts. Addison's (2014) study on Limpopo farms illustrated that contracts are generalized to the extent workers are unaware when their contracts end.

Agricultural work pays unskilled workers poorly, and immigrant workers are reported to be paid below minimum wages. Immigrant workers have little to no control over their payment arrangements (Crush & Williams, 2005). This can be illustrated by farm owners taking deductions from their wages without the worker's consent (Rutherford & Addison, 2007). Core farmworkers appear to be paid hourly; seasonal workers are generally attached to piece rates. Piece rates motivate workers to be more productive to earn more money. A large fraction of Bolt's (2013) study of the immigrant labour force study averaged R300 a month which

fell below the R785 minimum monthly legal wage. Rutherford & Addison (2007) mirrored these findings with their research reporting farm owners refused to pay minimum wage rates for undocumented and documented immigrant labour. This is echoed by Crush & Williams (2005) findings that immigrant women are significantly paid less. It is worth repeating here that domestic immigrant workers who provide day care services on the farms receive wages as low as R150 a month (Bolt, 2013).

Immigrant workers tend to work in precarious jobs that are physically demanding and tedious. Despite there being a legal cap on working hours, immigrant workers are reported to work extensive hours. Within Rutherford & Addison (2007) research, over a quarter of the workforce worked 50 hours a week. On Grootplaas farms, immigrant workers reported working up to 13 hours a day (Bolt, 2013). The work is physically demanding in areas such as pack houses where workers stand all day sorting out the fruits. In orchards, workers are required to carry heavy and large boxes of fruits. Immigrant workers are paid low wages, for extensive hours and physically demanding work (Bolt, 2013). Immigrant farm labour is mostly precarious with poor working conditions.

2.7.3 Social Protection

The pillar of social protection aims to protect individuals at a community level, to provide individuals within a society a minimum decent standard of living. This pillar aims to protect workers from struggles outside the workplace, such as ill-health, natural disaster, or work-related difficulties such as retrenchments (ILO, 2006). Just under three-quarters of the world's labour force are either uncovered or partially unprotected by this pillar in 2017 (Bob, 2019). There are three focus points that developing countries tend to focus on to attain this pillar—the first consists of providing basic needs such as shelter and clean water. Secondly, security from natural hazards that may result in the eradication of individuals' livelihoods. Lastly, social protection includes "contingencies" such as old age or an accident that may affect workers income (Bob, 2019; ILO, 2006).

South Africa has introduced initiatives to provide social assistance as social security is constitutionally enforceable. However, inadequate results have stemmed from the lack of constitutional enforcement as workers in the informal sector still lack access to social assistance that affect their livelihoods, such as health care (Moodley & Cohen, 2012).

Furthermore, undocumented immigrants and informal workers tend to be excluded outside welfare programmes, excluding them from experiencing this pillar of decent work (Moodley & Cohen, 2012). Thus, South Africa's main obstacle from achieving this pillar is to effectively include the informal labour sector. Unskilled immigrants fall within the informal sector and tend not to experience this pillar of decent work. Undocumented immigrant workers have little to no legal capacity to negotiate for the improvement of this pillar. However social promotion of workers is a universal principle for all workers (working within the formal or informal market) promotion of rights to be protected worldwide set up by the United Nations Declaration of human rights (ILO, 2006).

Immigrants' failure to realize this pillar results in them living in deteriorating living conditions. As discussed above, managers and to a certain extent, core immigrant workers tend to have better housing, made from better materials consisting of bricks and metals. However, seasonal workers tend to reside in homes with shack like standards (Bloch, 2008). These rooms usually can accommodate up to 30 individuals. These accommodation compounds are unoccupied or maintained during the offseason, attracting insects and rats. The overcrowded rooms leave workers vulnerable to illness, such as the spread of lice (Bolt, 2013). Grootplaas farms toilets and bathing areas are health hazards (Bolt, 2013). Seasonal immigrant workers have no real incentive to start developing their hostiles as they will depart from those areas in a few months. On the other hand, the farm owners seem uninterested in investing in maintaining better hostels for seasonal labour (Bloch, 2008). As a result, immigrant workers hostels do not improve, exposing immigrants to potential illnesses or natural hazards from poorly built shacks such as fire (Bolt, 2013).

The standard of living between seasonal and permanent immigrant workers are polarised. An example of this is that permanent workers have access to electricity and thus cook on a stove. In comparison, seasonal workers' accommodation has no access to basic utilities and creates a fire to cook a meal (Bolt, 2013; Ruther & Addison, 2007). Seasonal immigrant workers in Limpopo have been reported to sleep on floors (Addison, 2014). A lot more needs to be done at a community level to guarantee social protection for migrant workers.

2.7.4 Promotion of Workers

This pillar speaks to the protection of human rights within the work environment (Webster *et al.*, 2015; ILO, 2006). Immigrant workers human rights are violated, especially during the

deportation process (Umezurike, 2008). Rights appear to be attached to an individual's citizenship (Williams, 2019). However, International laws set basic human rights for all personnel within the South African border, regardless of citizenship or documentation. This framework is stated under the international bill of rights consisting of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Most of the rights in these treaties are also part of customary international law which South Africa constitution acknowledges the need to follow principles set by international law stating, "customary international law is law in the Republic unless it is inconsistent with the Constitution or an Act of Parliament" (HRW, 2006).

The South African Constitution adheres to the internationally recognised human rights laws. The responsibility to enforce migrant rights according to ICCPR rest on the hosting government. This discussion aims to build up to the argument that documented and undocumented workers have basic human rights, regardless of citizenship. The International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, though not in force, coupled with ILO treaties - sets out the provisions of rights for migrant labour (HRW, 2006). In South Africa, these rights are enshrined in bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries that provide a source of labour in mining sectors. These human rights agreed on are reported to be violated within the agriculture sector (AgriSA, 2019; HRW, 2006).

This pillar's focus is crucial as migrants are not represented by their governments or national trade unions. These defence mechanisms being absent leaves them vulnerable and hinders this pillar from being realized. However, there is a deepened disconnect with immigrant workers and local authorities (Bloch, 2008). The ICCPR convention as a steppingstone to protect undocumented migrated workers is toothless as it gives countries sovereignty to deport 'aliens' within the country. An example of the above is South Africa, with the deportation rate mentioned in the above sections, creates a barrier for undocumented immigrants to report human rights violations, as they fear reporting violations carried out by farm owners to the authorities may result in their deportation (Bloch, 2008).

2.7.5 Social Dialogue

This pillar aims to include all forms of information transfer amongst key actors in South Africa, such as trade unions, businesses, and government. It hopes to increase democratic involvement with all three key social actors to deal with social issues. This pillar is designed to promote collective bargaining even within the informal sector giving vulnerable workers a 'voice' (ILO, 2006). This pillar is internationally protected by the Freedom of Association and Protection of the right to organise convention (Convention 87, 1948). In South Africa, this pillar is constitutionally protected and regulated by Labour Relations Act of 1995. In South Africa, the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) is a structure in which labour, government and capital engage in social dialogue to discuss and compromise each party's interests (Moodley & Cohen, 2012). However, this discussion tends to ignore the voices of the informal sector groups, such as undocumented immigrant workers. Except for farming estates owned by large corporations, collective bargaining for farmworkers is non-existent in South Africa (Moodley & Cohen, 2012).

Trade unions are weak within the agriculture sector, and immigrant workers tend to be voiceless on farms. Immigrant workers tend to have no bargaining structures to express their grievances, due to their insecure citizenship status. This is seen in the De doors- Royal Mushroom and Kurboschkloof farms. Workers took off to strike to be paid the minimum wage. This strike was deemed unprotected as it did not follow the steps set out in the LRA 1995 (Alford *et al.*, 2017). At Royal Mushrooms Basotho immigrants joined the protest, which resulted in 35 immigrants being deported due to lack of work permits (Alford *et al.*, 2017). The farm's management informed the police about these immigrant workers undocumented status after the strike in order to discourage other farm workers for asking for the minimum wage (Alford *et al.*, 2017). The above is echoed in Rutherford & Addison (2007) research shows that immigrant workers have little to no social dialogue. Undocumented workers could not report farm owners labour violations due to their fear of deportation. Immigrants are generally 'voiceless' within the agriculture sector and do not experience the social dialogue pillar.

There is a need for improved bargaining structures to be set up in the agriculture industry and develop this pillar. South African trade unions have had a contradictory approach to immigrant workers' trade union membership (Trimikliniotis *et al.*, 2009). COSATU has a pro-immigration stance, advocating to stop placing policies on unlawful immigrants, instead

policies must be targeted on firms that benefit from their vulnerability. Trimikliniotis *et al.*, (2009) demonstrates COSATU's pro-immigration stance using the Draft White Paper on International Migration, where COSATU accused the DHA of being xenophobic and behaving in an inhumane manner towards unlawful immigrants. Thus, from this perspective trade unions appear to be in support of immigrant labour and encourage social dialogue.

However, on the other hand, trade unions can be seen to contradict their stance mentioned in the above paragraph, as they have been reported to argue against many proposals to allow legalised migrant entry into the South Africa labour market (Trimikliniotis *et al.*, 2009). An example of the statement above is trade unions arguing against the hiring of temporary migrant workers from the SADC region, as suggested by the White Paper (para. 4.4.7). This suggestion was argued against by COSATU in fear of a multi-tier labour market (Trimikliniotis *et al.*, 2009). Trade unions views foreign trade union membership not as an opportunity to expand but as a threat to the federation. COSATU's contradiction as explained above leads to a spirit of indecision on what action must be taken to protect immigrant workers, which hurts the prospects of immigrant workers using organised institutions like trade unions to facilitate social dialogue (Trimikliniotis *et al.*, 2009).

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter adopted the GVC analysis to illustrate the role lead Supermarkets in the buyer-driven agri-food value chain play in coordinating the extent to which information, wealth, skills, and economic opportunities are distributed throughout the value chain. Lead firms tend to focus on core activities such as marketing and branding while delegating citrus fruits' production process to local farms within the global South. The farm owners bear the production risk and cost while being forced to adapt to the swings of the international markets. Thus, farm owners employ undocumented and documented Zimbabwean workers generally through labour brokers to reduce labour production costs.

Zimbabwean unskilled immigrant farmworkers are a vulnerable group. Zimbabwean unskilled farmworkers are generally in a desperate situation as they left Zimbabwe due to political violence and economic collapse. Zimbabweans emigrated in search of jobs; the ability to send remittances, and a better standard of living. Undocumented immigrant labour is particularly vulnerable as they are deemed to be 'unfree' labour and cannot lawfully enter the broader labour

market. The fear of deportation deprives them of access to legal structures that are designed to protect them from labour abuses.

Farm owners generally use immigrant workers vulnerability for their gain by intensifying work and to avoid paying out employee benefits. Consequently, unskilled immigrants generally do not experience any of the four pillars of Decent Work.

CHAPTER 3

CITRUS FARMS IN THE SUNDAYS RIVER VALLEY, EASTERN CAPE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa exports one of the highest volumes of citrus fruit globally, as it is firmly integrated into the citrus fruit GVC (ECSECC, 2017). The GVC literature implies that a country integrating within GVCs will experience economic upgrading, potentially allowing for social upgrading for workers within the value chain (Bair, 2009). However, studies such as Rossi (2013) have shown that economic upgrading does not always translate into social upgrading. In fact, Selwyn (2013) argues that integrating into GVCs may result in social downgrading. Case studies of immigrant labour in South African agriculture show that these workers tend to experience social downgrading (Bolt, 2013; Bloch, 2008; Du Toit & Alley, 2003; Rutherford & Addison, 2007).

This dissertation examines the working and living experiences of immigrant labourers in the citrus industry (farms and packhouses) in the SRV, Eastern Cape. The primary objective of my research is to examine whether the SRV citrus producers' integration into GVCs facilitated any social upgrading for Zimbabwean immigrant workers at the bottom end of the value chains. The responses of the selected Zimbabwean workers on citrus farms in the SRV are examined against the four pillars of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Decent Work Agenda, which are Promotion of workers, Social Dialogue, Social Protection and Employment Opportunities. The Zimbabwean workers were examined against the four pillars by soliciting data from the participants through semi-structured interviews and making use of the Decent Work Agenda literature to assess if the Agenda's pillars were being realized.

3.2 THE SUNDAY RIVER VALLEY

This dissertation focuses on the working and living conditions of Zimbabwean workers within the SRV. The Valley is located in the Sarah Baartman District, Eastern Cape Province. The area is known for high-intensity agricultural activities within the citrus fruit industry, with a

Gross Domestic Product value of R 2.5 billion in 2016 (ECSECC, 2017). The citrus fruit ‘capital’ of the SRV would be Kirkwood; however, there are citrus farms in urban settlements such as Addo, Colchester, Bersheba and Enon with a total population of 70,000 people (ECSECC, 2017). In 2016, the working population was estimated at 42,200; however, only 26,500 people were economically active (ECSECC, 2017). The agriculture sector employed 33.9 per cent of the total employment population of the SRV. The agriculture sector is the largest employer in the area in 2016 (ECSECC, 2017). However, Nieuwenhuizen (2013, cited in Chirara, 2013) reports an undersupply of labour within the agriculture sector in the SRV, despite being situated in an area where there is a considerable amount of unemployment.

Figure 3.1: Map of the Sundays River Valley



The citrus industry’s success in the SRV can be largely attributed to the advanced irrigation systems supplied by Lake Mentz and the conducive climate. The area is covered by its namesake, a 250km river that is one of the fastest flowing in South Africa (Chirara, 2013). The continuous water supply from the lake, coupled with an average annual rainfall of 250-500mm and complemented by temperatures as high as 40 degrees Celsius, play a crucial role in the production of large volumes of export-quality citrus fruit in the SRV (Chirara, 2013).

There are small citrus fruit processors and citrus packaging facilities within the SRV. The industry’s main ‘gatekeepers’ are Sundays River Citrus Company (SRCC), as this company is the bridge for most SRV producers to sell on the international market. SRCC is the largest citrus fruit marketer to international markets in the SRV (ECSECC, 2017). Citrus production

and the Addo Elephant National Park tourist attraction are the main income sources for the SRV municipality. The following section shall unpack immigrants push and pull factors that facilitate immigrants' migration choices to the SRV.

3.3 PUSH AND PULL FACTORS OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN THE SRV

This section aims to understand the living and working conditions of immigrant workers. The researcher explored the socio-economic backgrounds of immigrant workers. The socio-economic backgrounds of workers determine their push and pull factors that influence Zimbabwean's emigration decisions. The following table shows the biographical details of the interviewees, who were all black and Zimbabwean.

Table 3.1: Biographical details of the interviewees

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Employment Status	Citrus Products
Phila	26	Male	Single	Permanent	Oranges, Lemons
Siya	23	Male	Single	Casual	Grapefruit, Livestock, Oranges
Blessing	28	Male	Single	Casual	Tangelo, Grapefruit, Oranges
Leroy	30	Male	Married	Permanent	Oranges, Lemons
Seth	22	Male	Married	Casual	Oranges, Grapefruit

Kudzai	31	Female	Married	Casual	Oranges, Grapefruit, Lemons
Chipo	28	Female	Single	Seasonal	Oranges, Dairy, Mohair, Lemons
Kyle	27	Male	Single	Casual	Oranges, Lemons, Pineapples
Rodney	33	Male	Married	Permanent	Livestock, Oranges, Lemons
Nkosi	40	Male	Married	Permanent	Oranges, Lemons
Methembe	27	Male	Single	Casual	Oranges, Mohair, Lemons

The participants in this research, given their common class position, have similar life stories, which are marked by structural poverty. They were all raised in rural towns in Zimbabwe with little to no economic opportunities to facilitate social mobility. When examining the research participants' socio-economic background, participants born in such socio-economic conditions tend to be trapped in a cycle of poverty, where the only option to survive is to emigrate.

Push factors that result in emigration as noted in section 2.4, boil down to economic and political factors. Crudely put, the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy serves as a strong push factor for emigration (Maisiri, 2019). An estimated 90 per cent of the Zimbabwean population is unemployed. Zimbabweans' manufacturing industry is on 'life support,' and massive black markets support millions of Zimbabweans' livelihoods (Maisiri, 2019:10). The standard of living in Zimbabwe is generally expensive. On the 13th of January 2019 the Zimbabwean fuel

price inflated to the point it had the most expensive fuel price in the world (Maisiri, 2019:11). The political climate in Zimbabwe is violent, an example of this is 600 Zimbabweans were arrested and 15 killed for having a peaceful protest against their living conditions in 2019 (Maisiri, 2019). Consequently, immigrants generally emigrate in search for a better life.

Several participants described their living conditions in Zimbabwe without basic utilities such as water and electricity – which are needed to experience a decent standard of living according to ILO (2016:12). As one of the interviewees noted:

It's a normal house we have back home in the location with tap water and electricity. It is not the cleanest areas, but its ok. Although we cook over firewood most of the time because electricity is too expensive, we could not afford to use the geyser or stove every day, only on some days. So, we would alternate by using firewood. Sometimes there won't be any water for three days – you know how Zimbabwe is (Kudzai, 27/11/2020).

The unbearable living conditions as described above encourage immigrants to emigrate into South Africa in search for a higher standard of living. These poor working conditions places immigrant workers in a desperate position to accept poor living conditions within the SRV.

This data coincides with Ranga (2013:168) study findings consisting of 200 Zimbabweans, who described the lack of access to basic utilities as a strong push factor. Ranga's (2013:168) participants reported food shortages; rise of food prices; erratic wage pay outs, inconsistent water, and electricity supply resulted in their decision to emigrate.

The interviewees were asked their preference between current living conditions in South Africa or living conditions back home. All unanimously agreed that living conditions in South Africa surpasses those back home. Nkosi said:

It's definitely better in South Africa. In Zimbabwe, you may stay in the house, but you sit and starve. There is no work, nothing works back home. At least here there is a functioning economy.

Poor standards of living appear to be a key push factor for emigration among the participants in my research. The interviewees statements are consistent with Raftopoulos & Mlambo (2010:3) research who argues that the attrition of living standards due to the collapse of the economy and high unemployment is a primary reason for Zimbabweans to emigrate.

This is echoed by Ranga (2013: 63) who points out that nearly three quarters of the Zimbabwean population in 2002 were living under the poverty line set by the ILO. Oxfam International (2009) (cited in Ranga, 2013) reported 80 per cent of the country lives on less than a dollar a day in Zimbabwe.

The research participants had limited access to economic opportunities, one of the reasons for this is their lack of education/training. None of the respondents finished high school, and the highest achieved qualification from the sample was an ordinary level high school certificate (As noted in section 1.4, this is a Zimbabwean educational standard two years earlier than the period required to finish high school in Zimbabwe but, equivalent to the South African NQF level 4). The workers' inability to finish their high school limits their ability to provide for their households, as it places them in the unskilled category on the labour market. Interviewees generally stop pursuing education in search for employment. Rodney said he started looking for employment at a young age and left school because "... my family needed the money at that point in time, and it's obvious we all need to work in order to make a living."

Chipo mirrored the same sentiments:

I started working at the age of 16. It's when I started thinking that I am a woman and also because I had a child. So, I had to provide for my child. My family could not afford to raise my child and they needed an extra income. So, I had to go to work. The father of the child disappeared.

Opportunities for social mobility among immigrant workers interviewed were severely constrained by a lack of adequate education and job opportunities, which kept their families in a generational loop of structural poverty. The data illustrate that immigrant drop out of high school, not by choice but due to circumstances out of their control that negatively impact their livelihood. Raftopoulos (2009) and Kiwanuka & Monson (2009) rightfully argue that these conditions make immigrant workers a vulnerable labour force desperate to accept any wage to survive. As a mother, Chipo was prepared to accept the most precarious working conditions in order to feed her child.

According to the literature on migrant labour in the agricultural sector by scholars such as Ranga (2013), Raftopoulos (2009) and Kiwanuka & Monson (2009), a key push factor is the human right violations carried out by the Zimbabwean ruling party, ZANU-PF. The respondents contradicted these findings and did not reflect this as a key push factor to migrate from Zimbabwe.

The participants in my research reported not to have experienced human rights violations in Zimbabwe, nor did they acknowledge it as a reason to emigrate. For them, the lack of economic opportunity was the key driving force for emigration. Seth (13/10/2020) was the only interviewee who mentioned politics and corruption: he emigrated from Zimbabwe “... because of the money, my friend. Because of the money. There are no job opportunities in Zimbabwe. Only ZANU-PF has money in that country”.

Job opportunities in South Africa were therefore a strong pull factor for migration from Zimbabwe among the interviewees. Similarly, Bosman & Wentzel (2001) show that macro-economic variables, such as job opportunities and a stable currency, are the main reasons why Mozambicans and Zimbabweans emigrate to South Africa. Kyle’s (14/11/2020) reason for emigrating to South Africa was as follows: “Only one reason, there’s no money in Zimbabwe. You will sit and sit and sit. There is no money there. At least here I have job. I came to South Africa to look for work”.

Economic opportunities were emphasised by the respondents above political reasons because they (understandably) regarded their family’s livelihood as a priority. The ability to send remittances appeared to be a significant pull factor for all research participants. Despite differences in age, sex, and marital status, all the immigrants whom I interviewed supported their family back home in Zimbabwe. Blessing (5/11/2020), for instance, sent as much as a third of his monthly income back home every month: “I have to buy groceries and send money back home to my mom”. Likewise, Kyle (14/11/2020) responded: “Sending school fees back home for my son is the main thing, and just supporting him.”

These findings correlate with those of the studies done by Bloch’s (2008:3) study consisting of 500 Zimbabweans working in South Africa whose main motivation for emigration was largely to send remittances home. McGregor (2007:806) echoes these findings and states “families of all social classes have increasingly been compelled to send members abroad to ensure basic survival, escape brutal attacks or meet aspirations for accumulation and education.” Crush & Tevera, (2010, cited in Ranga (2013:78) estimates that three quarters of all migrant families in Zimbabwe receive remittances. This highlights the gravity remittances has as a pull factor into South Africa for immigrants. This finding has stood steadfast despite the province, industry, or employment type unskilled migrant workers find themselves in.

However, in contributing to the discussion that remittances are a vehicle to curb poverty, for immigrant workers households as it provides a source of income that may not have been possible without a family member emigrating, as argued within the literature review section 2.5. The arguments provided by Dinbabo & Nyasulu (2015) against this notion, stood true from the research respondent's answers. Remittances only create a cycle of poverty and hinder any prospects of wealth creation. There has been no real improvement in immigrant workers lives working within these farms, as participants have failed to participate in any asset or wealth building. Migrant workers remain in a perpetual cycle of poverty where their meagre wages can be shared with a family of six individuals. Furthermore, as Dinbabo & Nyasulu (2015) argue, remittances created dependency on the breadwinner. Chipo has been the sole bread winner for her family since the age of 16, she is currently 26 years old and has acquired no wealth and struggles to make 'ends meet'. Ten years later, her family still depended on her as the sole bread winner. The following section explores why the Eastern Cape served as a strong pull factor for immigrant farm workers.

3.4 THE EASTERN CAPE AS A 'HAVEN'

Migrant farmworkers are prevalent in areas where South Africa and Zimbabwe share borders in the Limpopo province. Agriculture migrant literature conducted in Limpopo by researchers, such as Umezurike (2008), Crush & Williams (2005), Rutherford & Addison (2007) and Bolt (2013), show that immigrant farmworkers experience poor living and working conditions. Immigrant workers work along the border due to the convenience of working so close to home (Bolt, 2013:8). Immigrant workers tend to lack the financial resources needed to travel deeper into South Africa and settle for finding farm jobs near the border areas. Undocumented immigrant labourers tend to be hesitant to travel further south without the appropriate visa documentation in fear of being arrested. The lack of work visas also limits what economic activities immigrants can participate in within the host country (Umezurike, 2008). Lastly, the fear of the unknown results in Zimbabwean immigrant labourers settling for jobs in the northern areas of South Africa, which are mostly in the agricultural sector, renowned for its poor working conditions.

The above findings beg the question why immigrant workers would go through the trouble of using the little resources they have to travel to the southern parts of South Africa far from the border. When asked the question 'Why did you seek work on farms in the Eastern Cape rather than on those closer to the Zimbabwean border?', the respondents painted a picture of the Eastern Cape

as a 'safe haven' when compared to the farms close to the South African border with Zimbabwe. This perception was based mainly on the fact that the Eastern Cape has less military and police presence to look for undocumented migrant labourers. The fear of deportation along the border is really due to the extensive police presence (Bolt, 2013). Unlike the studies done on farms near the Zimbabwe-South African border, such as Umezurike (2008), none of the respondents in my study experienced any military patrols in Eastern Cape. In short, as a place of employment, the Eastern Cape posed less risk of deportation for undocumented migrant labourers.

According to Umezurike (2008: 616), human rights violations are often experienced by migrant labourers during military border patrols. The rural areas of the Eastern Cape provided an environment for immigrant farmworkers to work with a significantly reduced feeling fear of deportation. As Blessing (5/11/2020) put it: "No one bothers you; no police person will ask for your documents." Methembe (16/11/2020) shared the same sentiment: "My friend, at least here you can relax. There's no pressure. No one will come after you about your visa."

The pull factors that encouraged Zimbabwean immigrants to seek employment in the Eastern Cape were identified as the increased safety and better job opportunities compared to the border region. The importance of safety from military border patrols as a pull factor to the Eastern Cape is underscored by the fact that only two immigrants from my sample possessed a valid work permit. The remainder were undocumented immigrant farmworkers. When asked why they did not have a work permit, the respondents indicated that they not only lacked information on how to acquire work visas, but they also believed that Zimbabweans were not welcome in South Africa. Participants experienced a strong xenophobic sentiment as they felt 'othered'.

As a result, many of them did not bother to apply for a work permit, leaving them in a vulnerable position. As Kyle (14/11/2020) stated: "No, I don't (have a permit) – those people [locals] don't want us here". This is resounded by Kudzai (27/11/2020) when asked Why did you not apply for refugee status? Her response was: "I don't know you can do that but that's a waste of time they won't give it to you." Methembe (16/11/2020) opined: "They will ask you to pay, pay and pay to apply, 'cos they want your money, but they will never give it to you. They don't like Zimbabweans." There is some truth to the claims above, this is because in order to acquire a work visa in South Africa, migrants generally need to possess a rare skill to be

awarded a critical skills visa. Immigrant unskilled farm labour do not fall into the 'critical skills' category, therefore they are discouraged from even attempting to apply for a work visa.

Immigrant labour perceptions of the visa allocation processes conducted by the Department of Home Affairs being biased against them may not be misplaced. Bloch (2008) found cases of structural, institutional bias against immigrant labour (as noted in section 2.5). Workers within Home Affairs have reported to have negative prejudice against migrants, which reduced the probability of a migrant worker receiving a positive outcome on his or her visa application. In 2006, out of 2000 asylum requests just under 1900 were declined (Bloch, 2008:5). Migrant workers tend to leave their countries with little to no resources to survive in South Africa and deem using the little resources to apply for a visa as an inefficient survival strategy. As a result, migrant workers remain undocumented (Bloch, 2008). Undocumented migrant labourers have been reported to experience human rights abuses and exploitation, especially within the border region, where they live in constant fear of both losing their source of income and deportation (Crush & Tshitereke, 2001; HRW, 2000; Umezurike, 2008).

Another reason (but secondary to the fear of police presence by the border area) why the Eastern Cape served as a strong pull factor for Zimbabwean immigrants as a favoured destination for employment was the perception that more job vacancies were present within Eastern Cape relative to the border region. Due to the high levels of competition for jobs in the border region, some immigrant farmworkers failed to find employment. The vast unemployment of immigrant workers by the border areas makes workers easily replaceable. As a result, immigrants accept lower wages in fear of being easily replaced by another immigrant who is willing to accept the poor working conditions on the farm (Umezurike, 2008).

The competition for employment in the border areas allows farm owners to intensify exploitation, as workers compete for jobs by accepting lower wages - reducing the farm owners input labour cost. However, farm owners finished product price continues to increase in products such as oranges. The reduction of labour production costs and the increase of the finished product prices over time results in profit maximization for farm owners at the expense of workers (Crush & Williams, 2005). Added to this, the competition for jobs gives farm owners an increase in their negotiation power, because any immigrant who attempts to negotiate their wages does not get hired for the job (Crush & Williams, 2005). Farm owners

would not bother with negotiating with workers and just opt to find someone else who is willing to accept low wages, adversely affecting immigrants' workers bargaining power (Crush & Williams, 2005). My interviewees claimed that Eastern Cape was attractive to emigrate to, as competition for employment is not as fierce relative to the Limpopo areas. There were apparently always jobs available in the Eastern Cape province, which have better employment conditions than those in the northern border region.

Kyle (14/11/2020) stated his reason for relocating to Eastern Cape as follows:

I actually tried working on the farms at the border, but I got scared because there's too much police that side, and also there's small money that side. At least here they are always looking for people and it is better.

Similarly, Kudzai (27/11/2020) noted: "I was looking for the greener pasture. The money that side [border areas] is so little compared to here [Eastern Cape] and there is always police there. There's just too much problems there." Chipso (20/10/2020) shared the same sentiments: "You will struggle to find jobs that side; there's no opportunities there. In Eastern Cape. there is plenty. It's safe ..."

Amongst the respondents, there was a conscious awareness that they are vulnerable because they did not have a work permit. As a result, they relocated to the most southerly parts of South Africa, such as the Eastern Cape, as a survival strategy. This observation illustrates that Zimbabwean farmworkers are adaptive to the poor working and living conditions by the border areas. Eastern Cape differs from other immigrant studies within areas close to the border such as Rutherford & Addison, (2007:1308) who reports heavy police presence by the border areas leading to a mass deportation. Umezurike (2009:616) reports persistent police harassment of undocumented immigrants. Bolt (2013:13) echoes these sentiments by stating, "the farm's border location leads to it being treated by the South African army and police as part of the 'border situation.... Police vehicles, often with army escort, move through the compound at unpredictable times, rounding people up." However, working on Eastern Cape farms does not guarantee Decent work, this observation is only relative to the border areas as studies. Visser & Ferrer (2015:207) indicate that Decent Work Pillars in Eastern Cape have historically been weak in general.

Immigrant workers emigrate to the Eastern Cape by using social networks, for example farm managers practicing nepotism to provide their families with employment on the farm (Addison, 2014:295). To understand if the four pillars of Decent Work (pertaining employment opportunities; social dialogue; social protection and promotion of workers' rights) have been realised in the SRV, one must contextualise the social networks and context of immigrant workers working in the SRV, because farming jobs do not operate in a vacuum but within a farm's social hierarchy (Addison, 2014). Individuals on the upper end of the hierarchy for example senior farm workers, tend to have better housing; wage rates and farm privileges relative to seasonal workers who are at the bottom ends of the farm social hierarchy (Addison, 2014). The following section unpacks the social networks that impact the working and living conditions of the Interviewees.

3.5 SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE SRV

Social networks play a crucial role in the daily lives of immigrant labourers' working and living conditions. The research participants reported entering South Africa and relying on social networks to assist with the relocation. All participants reported gaining employment by having some relationship with a worker on the farm or a worker who can introduce them to a labour contractor.

As Siya (23/11/2020) stated: "My uncle was working here in the Eastern Cape [and] he introduced me to the guy [labour contractor], who was looking for workers for the farm. Likewise, Leroy (5/11/2020) noted: "I had a friend, who worked on a farm, and introduced me to working on farms".

To gain employment, immigrants need social capital to be introduced to labour contractors within the host country. The majority of the participants gained employment through labour contractors. The use of social capital is consistent with the agriculture literature, which illustrates that there has been a growing increase in the use of labour contractors (Barrientos & Kritzinger, 2004). Labour contractors are essential for immigrant farmworkers to include within their social networks if they want to obtain a job. Theron (2010: 16) argues that labour contractors have a unique impact on the living and working conditions of immigrant workers. It results in workers experiencing a two-tier exploitation process for immigrant workers, as farm owners pay the labour brokers low wages for workers.

However, the labour brokers themselves also aim to maximize profits and give their employees a fraction of the farm owners' wages. Leroy (5/11/2020) narrated a complaint about his labour broker: "It was very bad; he didn't pay me my full pay ... He will say the farm owners have no money, but those guys eat your money." Such dissatisfaction with labour brokers was a common theme amongst the research participants. Labour brokers take advantage of the immigrant workers' desperate position: "The contractors, they just come and say I need 10 people. If he has 10 people and you pay him [a bribe], he will chase the others away and give you the job" (Kudzai, 27/11/2020).

Kudzai pointed out that the relationship between labour contractors and immigrant workers is commonly facilitated through corruption and bribes. All the research participants, who gained employment through a labour contractor, either needed to bribe the contractor or knew of workers who had to provide bribes in exchange for employment. The participants reported that the bribes to access employment ranged from R100 to R250 per worker. The two females in my sample reported that, even though they did not offer sexual favours in exchange for employment (see Bolt, 2013), they had heard about it and noted that it was prevalent within the SRV. In the words of Chipso (20/10/2020): "No. No one has ever tried that with me, but it happens all the time, if you want a job."

Theron (2010) argues that labour brokers often employ undocumented migrant labourers in low-paid jobs and practice poor labour relations due to the immigrants' vulnerability. The labour contractors' social status as the gatekeeper to employment provides them with the power to take advantage of migrant workers. This is worsened by the fact that a majority of the interviewees have no work visas allowing labour contractors to take advantage of their desperate situation. The abuse of labour brokers extracting additional bribes and/or sexual favours in exchange of employment is not unique to the citrus industry or the SRV. Addison's (2014) research on tomato farms in Heddons Estates along the South African and Zimbabwean border reports Zimbabwean supervisors accepting bribes in exchange for access to employment.

Another point of entry to employment in the SRV is to be introduced to the supervisor on duty. As Rodney (23/11/2020) stated:

It didn't happen to me, but it does happen. People pay R100 bribes to the supervisor to get work. Sometimes you have to get him a beer. There's a lot of favours the supervisor can come and ask for.

These payments – called *kudiza* – include the bribes that migrant labourers pay to supervisors on Limpopo farms to gain employment. They are “typically R100 and should be paid before one is hired” (Addison, 2014:294). Immigrants paying for their employment (through bribes) facilitates for a submissive relationship between employees and supervisors. Du Toit & Ally (2003) argue that the process of ‘externalisation’ is a source of power for supervisors, who tend to hire workers willing to submit to their authority and pledge some form of loyalty, as expressed in bribes. Workers tend to have a better relationship with supervisors than with the farm owners. The latter tend to distance themselves from the workers and to delegate some decision-making regarding the farm’s day-to-day operations to supervisors. As noted above, this process is described as “delegated despotism” on the Limpopo tomato farms by Addison (2014). Supervisors’ decisions have a direct impact on workers working conditions, for example they decide the number of working hours and disciplinary fines, which has an impact on immigrant’s wage payments. Addison (2014) case study illustrates that supervisors’ decisions impact immigrant workers living conditions through issues such as ‘accommodation rules’ and continuous bribes (among others) has an adverse effect of immigrants day to day lives. Thus, delegated despotism has serious implications on the Decent Work Agenda.

The immigrant workers whom I interviewed had little, if any, interaction with the farm owners. As Blessing (5/11/2020) noted with regard to her hiring process: “The supervisor just takes you to the office with the boss to sign your contract and you leave. We did not talk much.” Referring to daily operations, Methembe (16/11/2020) noted: “The supervisor tells you what to do every day ... [and] the farm owner tells the supervisor what to tell us.” Addison’s (2014) study also found that the power of farm managers operated even outside of working hours. For instance, as Rodney (23/11/2020), who stayed on the farm, said: “He just comes, even as late as 10 o’clock [at night]. He will tell you to do something, and you can’t refuse, or you will be in trouble.”

Delegated despotism is a practice in the citrus industry as found in the tomato industry case study carried by Addison (2014). The above findings show that regardless of the product farmworkers will part take in the process of externalisation. A similarity with Addison’s (2014)

study and the answers the interviewees provided can be found, as the process of delegated despotism is a common experience for Zimbabwean workers working at the bottom of the value chain, that is buyer driven. In both cases, farm owners adopted the process of externalisation specifically for Zimbabwean workers, in order to compete on the international markets. The processes of externalisation can be seen in both SRV and Limpopo in Addison (2014) study to cope with the pressures that supermarkets place on local producers. As Robin & Gore (2018:10) suggest, these pressures include demanding low-priced products, which hinders the profit margin of South African producers. Consequently, the process of externalisation is adopted to reduce labour cost (Robin & Gore, 2018).

When exploring the social relations between local and immigrant workers, there was an undertone of hostility. The immigrant farmworkers never felt accepted and always felt ‘othered.’ The main reason for this, as (Kruss *et al.*, 2016:100) argues, is that local workers think that foreign workers are taking their jobs. This sentiment was a common refrain among the participants. As Siya (23/11/2020) said: “Zimbabweans work, and they work hard, farmers like us for that, these people (South African workers) don’t like that.”

Seth (13/10/2020) elaborated:

It’s not xenophobia *per se*, but these South Africans don’t want us here. They really don’t. They say we are taking [their] jobs – [they] really do not want us here. You can feel it when you are shopping in supermarkets or anything really, but I wouldn’t call it xenophobia.

The stereotype of immigrant workers taking locals jobs was a repeated fear amongst the interviewees. This stereotype has been reported to cause divisions amongst workers, which prevents them from cooperating and working together to attain decent work. The division between local and foreign workers allows farm owners to negotiate with workers individually and not collectively. The hostility of local workers towards immigrant workers hinders both groups from organizing as a collective unit to approach the farm owner and address the issues surrounding the working conditions of the farm. Instead, the farm owners use stereotypes such as ‘immigrants are hardworking’ to increase tension between the two groups and drive-up farm productivity. As Siya (23/11/2020) noted: “Zimbabwean teams will finish a target quicker than South Africans”. Siya (23/11/2020) underlined the tension between

local and foreign workers. He suggested that immigrant workers tended to work harder to make as much money as possible. In comparison, the local workers did not work as hard, which causes tension on the farms because the farm owners would shout at local workers for not completing the targets as fast as the Zimbabwean workers did. The local workers' frustration lay in the work intensification associated with the farm owners' pressure on them to achieve higher production targets (set by Zimbabwean immigrants). Immigrant workers felt a sense of exclusion.

The social networks of workers provide the context in which Decent Work is realised. The way supervisors interact with workers determine the extent in which the four pillars of Work are realised in immigrant workers living and working experience. Labour contractors and managers continuously extracting bribes as noted above contributes to the inability of immigrant workers' ability to afford the basic utilities needed to have decent standard of living. Immigrant workers being 'othered', results in immigrants isolating themselves from structures that may facilitate social dialogue on the farm. The next section discusses the application of the four pillars of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda in the SRV's citrus industry.

3.6 FOUR PILLARS OF DECENT WORK

In the previous section, I showed why the SRV was perceived as a preferred destination by the interviewees in their search for a decent standard of living. This section's central aim is to contextualise the study with specific reference to the four pillars of Decent Work as conceived by the ILO. These pillars are employment opportunities, social promotion, social dialogue, and social protection as discussed above (section 2.7). In the discussion below, they are used as a conceptual framework to assess whether the conditions faced by Zimbabwean immigrant workers amount to 'social upgrading' in the citrus industry in the SRV, which is firmly integrated into the global citrus value chain.

3.6.1 Employment Opportunities

This pillar of Decent Work aims to create quality employment that can take individuals out of poverty. This pillar was conceived due to the alarming increase in the casualization of work within labour markets globally (Webster, 2011). A study carried out by Rossi (2013) uses

quantifiable, measurable standards to assess if this pillar of Decent Work has been created within a GVC. These yardsticks include employment security, wages, working conditions and skills development. This dissertation will adopt these standards to determine if this pillar of Decent Work has been achieved. Employment security will be assessed through yard sticks such as the type of employment and the presence of contractual agreements between farm owners and immigrant workers. While wages shall be assessed by the national South African minimum wage and the immigrant's ability to use those wages to acquire their basic utilities. Lastly, skill development shall be assessed by describing what new skills immigrants acquired on the farms and how transferable are these skills on the labour market.

This pillar does not just aim at providing employment but rather secure employment. The type of employment relationship is therefore important. Eight participants that were interviewed were employed as casual or seasonal workers. This finding is consistent with the research on immigrant farmworkers that shows most of these migrants are employed in casualized jobs (Bolt, 2013). Methembe had been working on the same farm for six years and had not yet been permanently employed. In this period, he only signed one short-term contract in 2018, which was never renewed. Similarly, Seth had been working as a seasonal worker for three years on the same farm.

In general, the respondents described their employment conditions as precarious and intermittent. Chipso indicated that she worked "three to five months" and is unemployed for the remainder of the year. Meanwhile, the other participants reported that, if they are not re-employed to carry out off-season jobs on the farm, they tend to work on average six months of the year. Most of the other participants either looked for piece jobs or depended on social networks for survival. Siya (23/11/2020) noted:

I have been working since form four [high school grade]. I needed to help my parents bring money home. So, if there's no work [on the farm], I would do part-time jobs as a gardener.

The 'informal' employment of immigrants, with little if any contractual agreements or statutory protections, is an important type of employment on the citrus farms in the SRV. While Nkosi reported having received a contract, he expressed his frustration at having no access or the capacity to review or re-negotiate his contract. When asked whether he had a copy of his

contract, Nkosi (1/10/2020) responded: “Never. Those guys keep those contracts. You won’t even have time to read them or know what they are saying. You just sign because you need the job.”

Immigrant workers shared the same sentiments during an ECARP meeting. At the workshop, ECARP’s fieldworkers reported that many farmers in the Eastern Cape refuse to give workers a copy of the contract they were made to sign when starting their employment. The reason for farmers refusing to provide the workers with a copy of their contract may be because they required the workers to perform duties beyond the agreed terms. This sentiment is supported in Addison’s (2014:292) case study of Limpopo farms, which illustrates that contracts tend to be framed in excessively generalised terms with no job-specific criteria.

A refusal to provide workers with a copy of their employment contract is unlawful in terms of South African labour legislation. However, workers shy away from reporting their employers to the relevant authorities as most of them are working unlawfully in the country in the first place. Migrant workers’ hesitation or reluctance in reporting violations allows employers to bend the rules as they see fit. Of participants who identified themselves as permanent workers reported to have general contracts, as expressed by Addison (2014:292), none of them could stipulate to the researcher any particulars on the contract. The participants were just made to sign the contract in order to get their jobs, despite having no understanding about the terms and conditions of employment. Generalized contracts entail less legal obligations for the farm owners to carry out towards the workers, such as conditions of their employment and employment benefits, the absence of a legally binding contract facilitate an environment where farm owners frequently break verbal agreements with no consequence.

As Rodney (23/11/2020) stated: “Yes, I have [a contract], but it’s kept in the offices if you want to see it ... I don’t know what it says. They just make you sign, and you go to the farm and work.”

Nkosi is the only immigrant farm worker from the study to receive a copy of a contract. In contrast, workers such as Kudzai (27/11/2020) noted:

No, they didn’t give us something like that [a written contract]. You just work through the season, then they [the employers] take some of the guys to continue when the season over and other guys they tell you to go [leave the farm].

Extremely vague or the absence of contractual agreements allowed the farm owners to remain flexible in responding to new opportunities and fluctuation in demand on international markets. For example, if the international markets demand dropped, the absence of contracts allows for farm owners to dismiss workers at will. As noted above, however, contractual agreements as stipulated by the Basic Condition Employment Act (BCEA), 1997 are legally enforced between employer and employee stipulated to promote job security, an indicator for the employment opportunity pillar of the Decent Work Agenda. The BCEA requires farm owners to provide contracts with description of the job to be carried out, ordinary working days and hours and the duration of the contract in writing. Interviewees report that farm owners neglect the guidelines stipulated by the BCEA. Immigrants' desperation for a job, coupled with the absence of a work permit, results in them continuing to work on the farms without the presence of a contract.

The agriculture sectors' failure to provide unskilled farm workers with contracts or receive an open-ended contract is a growing trend (Bolt, 2013:3). All the women in the dissertations sample group did not receive any contracts. This is reflective of Naidoo & Manganeng's (2007:36) findings that women on farms relative to men are less likely to receive written contracts due to (among other reasons) farmers avoiding issues that may impact productivity on the farms such as pregnancy and maternity leave cost. Bolt's (2013:10) study on Grootplaas farms 'permanent' core workers were reported to also have open-ended contracts. Consequently, due to farm workers residing on the farms a large majority of immigrant workers did not receive any contracts completely (Bolt, 2013:10). Seasonal workers who did not reside on the Grootplaas farms were subjected to, "contracts that were clearly limited, and their movements regulated and their relationship to the farm tenuous (Bolt, 2013: 11)." Visser & Ferrer (2015: 22), points out that the orange industry (such as the SRV) are labour intensive and farm owners opt to continuously renew short term four-month contracts instead of employing a permanent worker in order to reduce labour costs. The interviewees experience with the lack of contracts is not unique to the SRV region, as it is a continuous crisis in the agriculture industry nationally. Contracts play key role in making jobs 'secure,' and in part play an important role in making employment formal or informal (Williams, 2019).

The Employment opportunity pillar of Decent Work encourages jobs to provide long term security for workers (ILO, 2016:12). However, job security appears to be absent for the participants working on the SRV farms. The participants were asked to rate the farm's turnover rate ranging from low, acceptable, and high. Nine of the participants reported a high turnover rate on the farms, which illustrates employers' constant resort to dismissals as a key means to instil labour discipline, the

substitutability of these workers, and the general lack of job security. The almost total absence of job security for immigrant workers on the citrus farms in the SRV, in particular, is a strong indicator of a Decent Work deficit. Responding to a question relating to long-term employment, Kyle (14/11/2020) responded: “No, any day I can be deported, or these guys can tell me they don’t want me anymore. Nothing is guaranteed.” This finding is consistent with Selwyn’s (2016) argument that the jobs created in industries that are integrated into GVCs do not automatically result in social upgrading, as they do not allow all workers access to decent jobs that are stable and allow them to cross the poverty line.

3.6.2 Skills Development

The GVC literature assumes that a knowledge spill-over may translate into skill development for workers in firms that are firmly integrated into the international market (Gereffi, 2005:61). As Gereffi (2005:61) highlights, economic upgrading attained through integrating to the international market, introduces the use of new technology for developing countries. Local producers are taught by lead firms how to use new effective production processes; fill in knowledge gaps from the producer’s perspective within the industry; and new skill sets. Jobs are created in developing countries when firms enter the global markets Gereffi (2005:61). Gereffi (2005:61) analysis of job creation has stood true within SRV citrus farms integrated into the global market (ECSECC, 2017 :42). As noted, in 2016 a total of 22 600 people were employed within the SRV and the largest source of employment was the agriculture sector consisting of 34% of total employment within these areas (ECSECC, 2017:43).

The quality of skills workers have acquired from the jobs that are created is often ignored within the GVC literature (Clelland, 2014:3). The Decent Work Agenda encourages the exploration of the quality of jobs created, while integrating with issues such as the upskilling of workers (ILO, 2016: 20). This section investigates the quality of skills the immigrants acquired within the SRV. Seven participants reported learning skills on the job. For instance,

despite not having a licence, Rodney, Leroy and Methembe learnt how to drive a tractor on the farms. During the off-season, they are employed on the farms as tractor drivers. However, even though these immigrant workers achieved a degree of skills development, the quality of skills acquired will not make a drastic change to their standards of living or elevate them out of poverty. This skill was also not strictly transferable because these immigrants did not have a formal license and could not

lawfully work as a driver on other farms. Their employers had made no effort to pay for them to obtain a driver's license.

The on-the-job training that the immigrant workers acquired did not amount to any meaningful upskilling since they were still regarded as unskilled labour. However, within the jobs, there is some form of knowledge sharing and no skill development. When asked about training experiences on the farm, Seth (13/10/2020) reported: "They just teach you how to pick [citrus fruit]; it took a few hours." Likewise, Kudzai stated: "Yes, they teach you how to cut and pick up the fruits, [but] it doesn't take much time". Methembe (16/11/2020) also noted: "I am driving a forklift on-season and off-season. I will be doing spraying and a tractor driver; it didn't take too much time for me to learn."

Findings from this study hint that immigrant farmworkers within the citrus GVC learn new skills necessary for harvesting fruit, but none of the skillsets translated into a decent standard of living or higher wages. Interviewees tend to be trained to carry out simple, repetitive and (often) physically demanding tasks. The knowledge transfers experienced by my interviewees was limited to the essential requirement to do the (unskilled) job in question. The interviewees continue to work that requires unskilled work. Unskilled jobs tend to pay workers with poor wages.

The lack of meaningful upskilling of workers jobs at the at the bottom of the value chain is not unique to immigrant workers in the citrus GVC. Chan & Xue (2013:74) study on the China and Pakistan soccer ball GVC came to similar conclusions. This study found that due to the technological upgrading facilitated by the lead firms and experienced by producers in Pakistan, workers upskilled from producing hand stitched balls in their homes to using modern machinery to produce soccer balls (Chan & Xue, 2013:67). However, akin to immigrant workers in the SRV, this upskilling (learning how to use different types of machinery) did not translate in the employment opportunity Decent Work pillar to being realized by the workers at the bottom of the value chain. Chan & Xue (2013:68) states:

Workers themselves did not benefit at all from leaner production processes. They worked about sixty hours a week, and they now worked under greater pressure to fulfil larger quotas. With less overtime work, their take-home pay for the month decreased. In other words, higher productivity benefited the company, not the worker, who had to work faster within a shorter period and for an overall reduced income.

While it is the case that jobs are created from GVC as stated by Gereffi (2005:61), it is clear from these studies that the quality and skill development of the jobs at the bottom of the value chains are poor. Workers obtain minimal skill sets to facilitate production at the expense of their well-being. This can be seen with immigrant workers in the SRV being taught how to drive a tractor, without being assisted by the farm owner to get a license. Therefore, they are not legally recognized as tractor drivers', and are forced to use that skill set only on that farm. This can also be seen in Pakistan where workers learn how to use machinery at the expense of their income but at the benefit of the production process (Chan & Xue, 2013:68).

The reason why the above paragraph is the case in Pakistan and South Africa is because the Agri-food chain and Soccer ball chain are both buyer - driven GVC (Robin & Gore, 2018:10; Chan & Xue, 2013:68). As noted, lead firms demand goods from local producers to be at a high standard of quality but at lower prices, while forcing the local producers to shoulder the risk of market fluctuations (Robin & Gore, 2018:10; Chan & Xue, 2013:68). Consequently, local producers do not upskill workers in a meaningful way, but only upskill workers' to the degree that caters for production flexibility (Robin & Gore, 2018:10; Chan & Xue, 2013:68). Thus, hindering this pillar of Decent Work as unskilled workers tend to be paid low wages on the labour market. The following section shall explore the participants wage rates.

3.6.3 Wage Rates

As noted in section 4.3, economic opportunity is a key pull factor for emigrant labour. In general, the participants were grateful to have a source of income to fund their livelihoods. The interviewees sentiments were that even though the wages they received from the farms were poor, if they received some form of income, their standard of living has improved. Despite the many grievances concerning their working conditions, when migrant workers were asked whether they were satisfied with their jobs, all responded in the affirmative. For example, Leroy (5/11/2020) said: "Yes I am [satisfied] because it provides me with a source of income". Similarly, Kyle (5/11/2020) noted: "Farm work is hard work, but it is an income and I'm happy." Finally, Chipso (20/10/2020) replied: "Yes I am [satisfied]; it's a good job. I like that I have money".

All the immigrant workers whom I interviewed were frustrated that the 'better life' they had desired to achieve in South Africa had not been realised. Even though they received an income, it was not sufficient for them to purchase their basic utilities continuously, considering the remittances they sent back home and the cost of living in South Africa. The literature on

migrant labour in apartheid South Africa shows that employers did not pay migrant workers a family wage, but rather paid them a wage that was deemed 'sufficient' for the individual worker (Trimikliniotis, 2008). The assumption was that the migrant families were subsisting in their homelands (Trimikliniotis, 2008). Immigrant workers within the study were paid low individual wages akin to the apartheid era, as employers were reported to not consider their families at home or the remittances. The immigrants interviewed felt that they were underpaid and undervalued. When asked whether they were satisfied with their wages, Chipso (20/10/2020) responded: "No. Compared to the hard work I'm doing, that's not what it's supposed to be". Seth (13/10/2020) mirrored this sentiment: "Not at all. That's too much work for that little money. Your back will be so, so, so painful."

The frustration about wages among the interviewees was rooted in the fact that they were "just surviving" on their current income. The interviewees reported struggling to pay for their basic needs, which consisted of food, rent and remittances. Despite these frustrations, the research participants had no power to influence their wages (discussed below). When asked if they had ever attempted to negotiate their wages, Kudzai (27/11/2020) responded with frustration: "Those people [farm owners] don't listen. 'If you don't want to work, you can go' is what they will tell you". These findings are consistent with Dinbabo & Nyasulu's (2015:36) claim that migrant farmworkers' salaries cannot contribute to any form of wealth building. As Kudzai (27/11/2020) stated: "It's [wage] not even enough for everything. Now, I am barely surviving because I would like to save for the times, I do not have a job, but I can't".

Immigrant farmworkers have little to no agency over their salary. Contributing factors to this lack of agency are the perceptions among the interviewees that they are constantly 'othered' and that statutory rights do not apply to them (due to their undocumented status). As a result, the migrants in my study felt discouraged from participating in any actions to improve their wage rates. When asked if they were aware of the minimum wage and if they thought that it applied to them, Seth (13/10/2020) responded: "Yes, but who do we [Zimbabweans] complain to? Even South Africans struggle to get minimum wage." Likewise, Kyle (5/11/2020) replied: "No. I'm sure it's [minimum wage] there, but I'm a foreigner. Those guys will just abuse me. They know I don't have a visa. Who will I complain to?", Kudzai (27/11/2020) said: "That [minimum wage] applies to South African citizens *mos* [Afrikaans word that implies that what has been said is well known or self-evident]". The belief that, since they are undocumented foreigners, they can be treated as second-class citizens discouraged the interviewees from participating in any attempts to engage in wage negotiations with their employers.

South Africa's national minimum wage for farmworkers was R18.68 per hour. In 2018, however, a strike broke out in the SRV's citrus industry when workers demanded a wage increase. Workers and employers settled for R20.00 an hour as the minimum wage rate for the following two years. This means the minimum wage rate in the SRV is higher than the national agriculture minimum wage, which may be a contributing factor to the perception that the Eastern Cape is a 'haven' (as discussed above). The immigrant workers whom I interviewed reported having no information about the minimum wage rate. However, when the interviewees were questioned if they received a minimum wage, the male experienced workers who had been working on the farms for a minimum of four years tended to receive the minimum wage. In contrast, the two female interviewees Chipso and Kudzai received R18.00 and R19.50 an hour, respectively. Younger casual male immigrant workers who have below four years of experience working on farms, reported being paid piece-rates instead of hourly pay. As Seth (13/10/2020) explained: "You are paid by target. A crate for orange is R68 and lemon R102".

Through a target-based payment system, work intensification takes place as it sometimes may take workers more effort, energy, and time to fill up a crate. Workers are then motivated to work harder and physically push their limits to get as many crates filled up as possible to earn a higher salary.

In the context of this study, the goal of this pillar of the Decent Work Agenda is to eliminate poverty among workers at the bottom of the value chain. Even though the living conditions of the interviewees improved by virtue of receiving a wage, their income did not take them out of poverty. Given the commitments such as food, rent, remittances, they merely earned enough to survive. Immigrant workers fail to improve these working conditions due to the power imbalance between farmworkers and employer to negotiate. The power imbalance is reflected in the lack of social dialogue (in the form of collective regulation of terms and conditions of employment) in the SRV's citrus industry. The absence of any collective regulation of terms and conditions of employment, combined with the strict and close management of daily work activities (through close supervision or piece-rates), means that the farmers are essentially free to construct most aspects of the employment relationship in whatever manner they wish. As a result, the immigrants find themselves in jobs with terms and conditions over which they have no say and, even if these violate statutory requirements, as their undocumented status precludes them from reporting such violations. The next section explores the (lack of) social dialogue on citrus farms in the SRV.

3.6.4 Social Dialogue

The social dialogue pillar of the Decent Work Agenda relates to information sharing, consultation and negotiation between the parties to the employment relationship (i.e., employees, trade unions, employers and government). The aim of this pillar is to increase the organisational involvement of all these parties in attempts to deal with grievances and disputes in the workplace. When examining the interviews, it became apparent that the migrant workers' voices were effectively silenced. Most of the participants reported that they could not approach managers or farm owners to discuss issues regarding the workplace. In a ECARP meeting discussion, Phila (12/11/ 2020) expressed this frustration as follows:

That's the truth [not being able to discuss problems with management]. People are scared to stand up to these white guys, these managers. We cannot complain. We are foreigners. We are following back of South Africans [If South Africans organize themselves against management, then Zimbabweans will do the same], but still they [South Africans] do nothing. They just complain. No one does nothing but just complain backstage. Even in our contracts, it says when you stay in a farmhouse, we are family. But if you have a kid and they reach 18 years, they must move out or he or she must work on the farm. There is also this issue of them saying they are providing us with a clinic, but if you go there, you [have to] clock out. Even if the doctor gives you some days off.

Phila also noted that farmworkers were fearful of discussing issues pertaining the workplace with the employer. When he was asked to explain why the immigrants were scared and felt victimized, Phila (12/11/2020) stated:

This is something hard to pinpoint. They [the managers] grumble in answers. English is not our first language and they make sure they throw it [English] at you. You do not throw it back. Just now there is a guy who left work and was fired because he was sick and did not come to work. The boss held a disciplinary hearing, and no one was on the workers side to consult. The bosses know no one is watching, and when the [farm] gate is closed, it's just them and the poor worker.

This quote expresses the voicelessness of the migrant workers whom I interviewed. This void in worker representation is also reflected in the fact that none of my research participants belonged to a trade union. This absence of collective interest representation is consistent with

the low trade union density in the South African agricultural sector (about five per cent) and studies of immigrant labour by scholars such as Ulicki & Crush (2007:168). Trade unions play a crucial role in enabling workers to collectively bargain to improve their terms and conditions of employment as well as to limit managerial excesses and unilateralism. The research participants believed that they had no right to join trade unions because of their undocumented status. When asked how they feel about having no institutional representatives, Blessing's (5/11/2020) response was: "Doesn't bother me. The Department of Labour is for South Africans. I am a Zimbabwean; they are not here for me. You know this *mos*".

This response demonstrates the feeling among migrant workers of being 'othered' as second-class citizens, as they fear being deported and carry the belief that the existing institutions will not 'listen to them'. Eight of the participants said that they have never seen a Department of Labour inspectors come to inspect the farm's working conditions. However, permanent workers such as Phila, Leroy, Nkosi and Rodney have witnessed some Department of Labour inspectors and gave a similar accounts of farm managers and/or owners' deliberate attempts at hiding the workers' true working conditions. As Phila (12/11/2020) explained:

People from the Department of Labour are useless. Last time these people came, the manager went into the bush and ran away. Ok, not ran away, but avoided them. Then he sent people he knows to speak with the labour inspectors and gave instructions to say everything is ok. Hiding the real situation on the ground. Even when they said they are cutting our salaries in half, you have no choice but to accept victimization. You look around and say: 'the borders are closed [due to Covid-19 lockdown regulations], I have no money'. You take what is there; it's not fair. They force us to sign. We agree with that, but we agree because we have no choice. So, I think employers need to know there are organizations such as ECARP ... to fight for us. Because here you become a victim the moment you get a job.

These sentiments are mirrored by Leroy's (5/11/2020) response: "Those people come and just go straight to the boss's office. They don't inspect. Those people are very useless." Likewise, Seth (13/10/2020) noted:

Yes, they come but they don't talk to us. They talk to the bosses. The bosses select a few workers – his favourites – to speak to these people [the inspectors]. But really, they do nothing ... [The bosses do this so that] we do not tell them [the inspectors] about the nonsense they [the bosses] put us through.

Farm owners sabotage communication between workers and Department of Labour inspectors, thereby undermining the chances of social dialogue. Consequently, the failure for immigrant workers to access labour inspectors' results in labour violations from being unheard. Labour inspectors ideally are meant to interact with workers to investigate if the working conditions are in line with the labour laws. Immigrants' inability to have the opportunity to discuss issues pertaining to the workplace to the Department of Labour contributes to immigrants being 'voiceless,' thus weakening the social dialogue structure. Uniquely, the undocumented immigrant farmworkers I interviewed perceive themselves to be 'othered' within the host country. These participants felt that due to them not having a work permit they could not access Labour institutions to represent them.

This perception is rooted in the fact that, even if these immigrant workers managed to communicate with labour inspectors, they would likely lose their jobs and be deported since most of the respondents were undocumented. "For immigrants it is citizenship status which most overwhelmingly affects their life chances (Munck *et al.*, 2011:255)." Undocumented immigrant farmworkers social dialogue being hindered within the SRV, is consistent with the migrant literature in case studies such as Jinnah (2017). In Jinnah's (2017: 47) study consisting of 134 Zimbabweans working on Musina farms. The majority of Zimbabwean immigrants from this study acknowledged that expressing their grievances to employers is detrimental to their livelihoods as farm owners would dismiss them from their jobs (Jinnah, 2017: 55). It would appear farm owners benefit from employing undocumented labour, as they can partake in unfair labour practices, with little to no resistance from undocumented immigrant labour.

There was no indication from the interviewees to suggest that any social dialogue occurred on the citrus farms where they worked. Social dialogue or 'voice' is an essential mechanism to achieve Decent Work. This pillar of the Decent Work Agenda seemed to be the most underdeveloped of the four pillars, with no evidence of any meaningful or on-going social dialogue involving migrant workers in the SRV's citrus industry. Immigrants feel alienated by labour institutions that are created to promote social dialogue such as Trade Unions. The immigrant workers' rights are continuously threatened on the SRV farms. The following section discusses the promotion of workers' rights pillar of the Decent Work Agenda on citrus farms in the SRV.

3.6.5 Promotion of Workers' Rights

This strategic pillar of the Decent Work Agenda focuses on the recognition of workers' rights. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and International Labour Organization conventions stipulate that protecting workers' rights is a universal principle (ILO, 2006). It covers all workers inclusive of citizens, foreigners, formal or informal employees. This principle is echoed in section 23 of the South African Constitution, which states that "everyone has a right to fair labour practices" (emphasis added).

During an ECARP group meeting with Zimbabwean farm workers, immigrant workers shared a strong desire to have more training about their rights as they were largely oblivious to them. Importantly, the participants noted that they experienced the same workers' rights violations that local farm workers did. Local and foreign workers human rights being violated may present an opportunity for both group of workers to collectively unite under one umbrella to organize towards Decent Work.

In terms of sections 34 and 34A of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), employers may not deduct monies from workers' salaries unless the workers agree in writing or the deductions are made in accordance with a collective agreement. The interviewees reported inconsistent wage payments that they alleged were due to unlawful deductions. For example, 'disciplinary fines' were issued against some of the workers and then deducted from their wages. These fines were not scheduled, and the amount deducted depended solely on the supervisor's mood at the time. Chipso (20/10/2020) described the disciplinary procedure and highlighted the highly individualistic (and therefore prone to arbitrariness) style of managerial control on the citrus farm where she works as follows: "They just give you warnings sometimes and [a] disciplinary hearing or sometimes they will give you a fine. [It depends on] whatever the manager is feeling like on that day."

Unpredictable and inconsistent fines equate to unpredictable wages. This had a detrimental effect on the immigrants whom I interviewed because it undermined their ability to buy basic necessities. The farm supervisors' disciplinary penalties were described as "ridiculous". Kudzai (27/11/2020), for example, noted: "if you didn't cut fruit with a scissors and used your hands, they would send you home to sleep". This meant the worker had to stay away from the workplace, without pay, for "one day or two days. The owner of the farm will tell you. The supervisor will send you to the owner's office" (Kudzai, 27/11/2020).

The suppression of immigrants working rights by managers reflect the vast disparities in power between farmers and immigrant farmworkers. The absence of collective labour relations bolstered by authoritarian and low-trust styles of management disarms immigrant's capability to advocate for their working rights, seeing that the majority of interviewees had no work visas', thus when an employer breaches a labour law or a contractual agreement. Immigrant workers cannot take their copy of the contract to conflict resolution structures such as the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. This is because if they went to report farm owners, they are at risk of being deported. Hence, the fate of undocumented migrants is largely left to the mercy of their employers and supervisors.

The findings above on SRV farms is consistent with Bloch's (2008) study consisting of 500 Zimbabweans living in South Africa. Bloch (2008) illustrated that undocumented immigrant workers rights were aggressively more violated relative to local workers and documented immigrants. Undocumented immigrant workers were paid less and took on more overtime working hours (Bloch, 2008:12). Akin to the interviewee's responses in the SRV, undocumented immigrants' experienced unlawful deductions (Bloch, 2008:11). Rutherford and Addison (2007:627) study also concluded that undocumented Zimbabwean immigrants, "felt that employers took advantage of their desperation and the fact that their legality was unclear." It is apparent that undocumented immigrants commonly experience continuous working rights violations.

All my research participants reported that a payment to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) was deducted from their salary every month. While employers are legally obliged to deduct UIF contributions from the wages of most employees in South Africa, deducting such payments from the wages of undocumented migrants (who cannot belong to the UIF) begs the question: where are these monies going? Are employers pocketing the funds? Nkosi, who had been contributing to the UIF for years, reported that, when he asked ECARP to check his UIF status on the system, it was found that the UIF number he was provided does not exist. In fact, undocumented immigrant labourers have no right to access the UIF. It therefore seems as if the money deducted from the immigrants' wages for UIF is daylight robbery. Phila (12/11/2020) expressed in frustration:

Everything is new to me. For example, like corona [Covid-19 pandemic] and UIF programme. We, as Zimbabweans, are supposed to be included in that programme because we have been contributing, but we have been excluded. In fact, the company

said they can't afford to pay us our full salaries. So, they cut it into half. Then they said: 'government was chipping in with UIF money, so we will give you something'. But we didn't get it. In fact, the people₂ who managed to get it just today₂ attended a meeting with the company requesting for that money back for some reason [that] I don't understand.

The immigrant workers I interviewed appeared to have no way to understand the deductions that were made from their wages. They were only informed verbally about the deductions, which implies that these workers did not receive payslips as legally required by the BCEA. As Chipso (20/10/2020) reported:

Sometimes it [his wage] differs because of the hours you work. Sometimes there is overtime or sometimes, when it is raining, there is no work. Sometimes, if the farmer is late or transporting you to an area, you clock out.

Unlawful deductions on immigrant workers is not unique to the SRV. Studies on Musina farms carried out by Jinnah (2017:54) showed 43 out of the 134 respondents were victims of continuous illegal deductions carried out by the employer.

Besides the unlawful and unexplained deductions, the payment system for undocumented migrants in the SRV is directly tied to time spent on the job. In contrast to the long working hours highlighted in case studies, such as that by Bolt (2013), the workers I interviewed reported that they work, on average, eight hours days as legally stipulated. The Zimbabwean immigrants in my study reported working overtime, which was regarded as an opportunity to earn additional money. The workers reported being paid in accordance with the statutory provisions (in the BCEA) for overtime and for public holidays. For instance, when asked whether he got paid for working on weekends or public holidays, Seth (13/10/2020) responded: "Yes, they pay double the daily rate."

This finding contrasts with those from the case studies in Limpopo, where migrant workers were often not properly compensated for working on weekends or public holidays (see Rutherford & Addison, 2007). The migrants whom I interviewed did not regard these times as 'rest days', but rather as a chance to earn more money to alleviate their desperate situation. While the migrants were compensated as per the stipulations in the BCEA pertaining to overtime work and work on public holidays, this achievement was undermined by the seemingly unlawful and random deductions, which resulted in workers not getting the full pay that they were entitled to. The reason why immigrant workers were paid for overtime in the SRV, unlike in the Limpopo (see Rutherford & Addison, 2007), is likely because tomato farms

in Limpopo produce largely for the local/ regional market. In contrast, the SRV citrus farms produce for the international market. Farming products for the international market comes with more stringent regulations and inspections from lead firms of the value chain (Robin & Gore, 2018). Lead firms attempt to impose labour regulations to avoid consumer back lash from the global north that would follow news of workers not being paid for overtime work. Consequently, farm owners may pay the required overtime labour but reduce the labour cost by unlawful deductions.

When asked if he received any paid leave, Kyle (5/11/2020) responded: “Yes, but that guy [the supervisor] said: ‘if you didn’t take leave days, you get the money. So, no one takes the leave days.” In addition, the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), along with the BCEA, imposes a legal obligation on employers to provide employees with the necessary protective measures for any job-related health risks. However, some of the migrant workers, who reported receiving protective clothing, were (unlawfully) compelled to pay for it out of their wages. As Chipso (20/10/2020) complained:

They give it [protective clothing] to you and take it from your monies. You don’t even know if they put a mark-up. I’m telling you, the price I paid for my boots is not the price they paid for it.

All the interviewees were discontented with the health services the farm owners provided. They were not assisted with work-related injuries. Those who were injured while doing their job were instructed to clock out and make their way to the clinic. The principle of ‘no work, no pay’ was a constant phrase amongst the interviewees. When asked if he had ever been injured or ill while at work and, if so, to outline the procedure, Kudzai (27/11/2020) responded: “If you fall sick, just go to the clinic and clock out ... [Even if you have a doctor’s note], they can’t pay you for being at home” Likewise, Seth (13/10/2020) responded: “There is no first aid, just a clinic. And if you fall sick, [it is] no work, no pay.”

Farm owners provide little support for farmworkers’ wellbeing. The OHSA stipulates that any injuries sustained on duty need to be compensated by the employer. All interviewees reported that this law was not in practice on the farms they were working on. As Siya (23/11/2020) said: “You hurt yourself at work, my friend, you just knock off and go to the clinic. But you are expected to be back at work the next day.” Phila (12/11/2020) added: “Why do I need to sign a leave form if I’m sick now? I am wary of going to the doctor.” Unlike documented immigrants and local farm workers, the OHSA does not cover immigrant workers without a

working visa. This impacts undocumented immigrants adversely, as they cannot report their employers without the risk of being deported.

In terms of OHSA, employers have a legal obligation to make sure the workplace is a safe, clean environment with no health hazards. The migrant workers who participated in my research gave mixed reviews when asked if they would consider their work environment safe and hygienic. Some workers reported unsanitary toilet that are often not functional. As Siya (23/11/2020) put it: “The toilets are not maintained and are dirty. If you are pissing, you better off in the bush”. Other responses describing the workplace were divergent. For instance, Nkosi (1/10/2020) stated: “Yes, we have access to clean water. It’s a clean place.”

The responses of migrant workers reporting a clean and safe working environment are inconsistent with the findings of other studies of migrant workers in South African agriculture. The Grootplaas farms bathrooms are “urine-stained roofless rooms” (Bolt, 2013:11). The hygiene risk is worsened by rat-infested sites on the farms (Bolt, 2013: 12). In the Northern Cape on vineyard farms, 81 of 142 women interviewed in Devereux (2019:393) study, reported to have no access to washing facilities. While 115 out of 201 interviewees in the Western Cape reported not having any access to a toilet in the workplace (Devereux, 2019:393).

As noted in section 1.4, due to COVID-19, the researcher could not physically see the farms for himself as interviews were conducted telephonically. However, the researcher got the sense from additional probing that the migrant workers, who reported that their working environment was clean and safe, had low expectations of a hygienic and safe workplace. For example, Phila (12/11/2020) agreed that the conditions, which the Zimbabwean migrants are willing to accept as ‘Decent Work’, are too low due to the fatalism that is generated by their powerlessness and precarious circumstances:

They don’t believe that they victimized anymore; they are willing victims. Like how the Labour Department is told everything is ok when everything not ok. Like now, the farmer has houses but forces workers to pay rent, and rent is not negotiable. So, here you pay R300, then pay another rent in the location as your family not allowed to stay on the farm. visitors are only allowed to be there four days. Even if it’s your wife, she stays three days and goes. So, they [the migrants] just accept the situation and become willing victims.

Perhaps pockets of clean workplaces that differ from what is usually described in the immigrant workers farm literature such as Bolt (2013:12), (as noted in the above paragraphs) can exist and contribute to the Eastern Cape as a 'safe-haven', as noted above. The clean pockets of working conditions in the SRV relative to the Limpopo areas, is due to the insertion of these citrus farms into the global citrus value chain unlike tomato farms in Limpopo. There is a strong emphasis from consumers from the global north on safety and hygiene (Robin & Gore, 2018). Supermarkets enforce phytosanitary requirements backed up by stringent and on-going inspections on South African producers that need to be adhered to in order to export citrus produce (Robin & Gore, 2018). Thus, even though some farm owners adhere to these hygiene protocols, they 'cut corners' on cost where they can, for example hiring undocumented immigrant workers.

Immigrant workers operate in precarious working conditions, and migrant farmworkers have not realised Decent Work by this standard. While workers receive their right to a minimum wage, overtime and public holiday pay-outs on paper, this right is continuously violated due to unlawful deductions impeding Decent Work. Farm owners appear to be the biggest hinderance preventing migrant workers from fully realising this pillar of Decent Work. This is because farm owners take advantage of the fragility of immigrants' citizenship for their own gain. The following section shall discuss the social protection pillar of Decent Work.

3.6.6 Social Protection

The social protection pillar of the Decent Work Agenda speaks to the support society provides for individuals to achieve a basic living standard and access to their basic needs. This pillar speaks to my research participants' exposure to risks that negatively impact their well-being, such as illness, retrenchment, or natural disasters. This pillar highlights the protection of workers from social, economic, and physical hazards.

Undocumented immigrants are disqualified from accessing any social welfare schemes that the South African government offers. Social grant schemes, such as child welfare, pension, or disability grants, are a source of support protecting people from socio-economic hazards. Migrant farmworkers are at a disadvantage relative to local farmworkers who have governmental support that provides some form of cushion for their low living standards. Migrant workers are left to fend for themselves, which expressed itself in their living conditions.

All participants, except one, reported staying within a Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) house. On average, workers paid R600 rent a month for these houses, that are located in areas that are described to be impoverished. RDP houses are provided for free by the government to support low-income South African families. Undocumented migrant workers, by contrast, are forced to illegally rent RDP houses, as it is unlawful to rent out such houses. The living conditions in these rented RDP houses were characterised by overcrowding. As Methembe (16/11/2020) reported: “I stay with my wife and two kids. There is also another Zimbabwean and his wife renting the side of the other room. We squash in there”.

The participants gave mixed response when questioned about the RDP houses, they lived in. Some participants were happy with the standards of the RDP houses while others were not satisfied with their living conditions. Migrant workers with positive views appeared to be just grateful to have a roof over their heads. While those who were unsatisfied felt their households were deteriorating. As Chipso (20/10/2020) noted: “I am not happy with that house, but its affordable. I have been asking them to fix the house for many years now, that roof needs attention”.

While poor-quality housing is not uncommon for migrant farmworkers in the agriculture sector, studies show that workers stayed in overcrowded and poorly maintained housing. Immigrant workers, especially those who are undocumented, lack the power to force farm owners to maintain their houses (Bolt, 2013; Addison, 2014). In this case, the interviewees were in the same predicament: powerless to enforce maintenance on landlords as renting RDP houses is unlawful. In addition, it was not even clear at whom they should direct their complaints.

When asked what things he wished to add to his household that he could not currently afford, Kudzai (27/11/2020) responded: “Furniture! Because right now I have low-quality furniture [and a] two-plate stove. I have no oven, no warmer”.

Relative to local farm workers, migrant farmworkers failure to access welfare programmes such as RDP housing has a domino effect on their living conditions. In addition to the above participants complain about the public service in the areas they live in. As Seth (13/10/2020) put it: “The community is dirty; there is rubbish everywhere. It’s a dirty community, the sewage is spilling”.

The neighbourhoods are described to be unsanitary breeding grounds for various illnesses. Participants were asked if they have a structure that resembles a community board that they can complain to about improving public service such as the local municipality? According to

Kyle (5/11/2020): “We’re foreigners. They don’t even want to hear us say anything. We just keep quiet.”

This response is a common thread amongst the participants, and it expresses their frustration from the lack of social community support due to feeling “othered” because of their nationality. Ironically, participants expressed they felt “othered”, but when asked if they feel like their communities are xenophobic, the participants said no. Seth (13/10/2020) stated:

Not xenophobia *per se* but these South Africans don’t want as here they really don’t. They say we are taking jobs - really do not want us here. You can feel it when you are shopping in supermarkets or anything really, but I wouldn’t call it Xenophobia.

As Leroy (5/11/2020) noted: “No [xenophobia] but those people sometimes they like us, sometimes they don’t want us here because we take their jobs. This is not our home they want us out of here.”

The interviewees feeling excluded within their community was a repeated chorus throughout the research when describing their living conditions. As a result, they fear accessing support, even with institutions designed to protect citizens, such as the police force, because it may lead to their deportation. This is consistent with Trimikliniotis’s (2008) argument that migrant workers continuously feeling excluded is common in post-apartheid South Africa. Undocumented migrant workers receive little, if any, societal support to assist them in achieving their basic needs. This pillar of Decent Work has not been realized by migrant farmworkers within the SRV.

In the SRV’s citrus industry, the four pillars of Decent Work have not been realized for undocumented migrant workers. To understand why the pillars of Decent Work are underdeveloped within the SRV, one must contextualize the SRV within the buyer driven GVC.

3.7 BUYER-DRIVEN VALUE CHAINS AND DECENT WORK

Scholars such as Lund & Nicholson (2004) argue that the GVC analysis helps identify the stakeholders that impact workers’ rights, entitlements, and living conditions to assess if decent work has been achieved. A major weakness of the ILO’s decent work tool is its failure to use GVC analysis to understand whether decent work is being achieved, especially at the ‘bottom’ of the chain. Rossi (2013) uses the GVC framework as a conceptual tool to assess whether integrating into a global market could translate into social upgrading. Large, multi-national

retailers (supermarkets) are the gatekeepers to the international fruit market (Robin & Gore, 2018). This creates a power imbalance in the Agri- value chain whereby producers such as SRV enter the citrus GVC on unfavourable terms (Robin & Gore, 2018:10).

The power imbalance stems from (among other reasons) local producers not receiving long term contractual agreements to guarantee long term business relationships with the lead firms (Robin & Gore, 2018:11). As noted and worth emphasizing, supermarkets demand high-quality products at low cost, thereby placing financial pressure on producers within the SRV (Robin & Gore, 2018:11). The unequal power relations between lead Supermarkets and producers within the SRV is fueled from the fact that there is a large number of citrus producers globally competing through low prices for citrus orders from the elite supermarkets (Robin & Gore, 2018 :11). If SRV producers refuse to adhere to the demands and price points of lead firms of the chain, then lead firms will just opt to trade with other citrus producers that will abide to their demands (Robin & Gore, 2018:12). The lead firms' intense price-based competition, combined with their stringent Phyto-sanitary requirements and the rising costs of inputs, places producers in a cost-profit squeeze. Consequently, producers adopt flexible labour practices to lessen overhead cost (Robin & Gore, 2018).

Chan & Xue (2013:68) demonstrated the power imbalance and its consequences mentioned above, between lead firms and local producers in their study on the buyer-driven soccer ball value chain. Companies such as Apple outsource production from China where they can implement a price squeeze on local producers (Chan & Xue, 2013:68). Some producers in China struggle to maintain profits due to the rising cost of raw materials and unfavourable exchange rates (Chinese yuan) (Chan & Xue, 2013:68). Consequently, producers adopted 'low-road' strategies where in some cases workers' salaries would decrease annually. Local producers have little to no negotiation power to reject the price offer Apple is willing to pay for their products. Chan & Xue (2013:69) documents these accounts:

In 2009, a supplier was finally able to negotiate a higher price with a buyer, but after a few months he offered to reduce the price due to fear of losing the order. A general manager in 2008 sold a ball at US\$2.00 to an American retailer, but in 2009 the same ball was sold at US\$1.60.

The Chan & Xue (2013) study and interviewees within the SRV illustrate, producers in GVCs are often reluctant to provide the funds necessary for skills development or the achievement of Decent Work (Robin & Gore, 2018). Therefore, more support from the lead firms is needed to

facilitate a 'trickle-down' of knowledge; skill set and wealth. GVCs create employment but, for the sake of remaining 'globally competitive', the types of employment that are created are mostly precarious (Robin & Gore, 2018:12). This dissertation's findings illustrate that, for local producers to adapt to the pressures exerted on them by the lead firms, they adopted 'low-road' strategies. Farmers in the SRV secured undocumented migrant labourers (in particular) as a source of low wage 'flexible' labour through processes such as casualization and externalization. Since these immigrants had no access to any institutional or organisational mechanism capable of challenging authoritarian relations on the citrus farms, there were few meaningful constraints on farm managers' power in the workplace.

While it is important to highlight the role buyer-driven value chains play in hindering Decent Work for farmworkers at the bottom of the citrus GVC. It is essential to highlight that local producers are not just passive victims to the international market but have some degree of choice when deciding how to deal with the market pressures. There is truth that can be found in Bosok's (2002) argument that farmers employing immigrant workers do it not just as a 'structural necessity', but farmers consciously hire immigrant workers for their own profit maximization interests. Undocumented Zimbabweans are hired as unfree labour as they cannot move around the labour market without a work permit (Bloch, 2008:6). Farm owners intentionally choose to hire flexible immigrant labour, as they can dismiss and hire at will, in order to adapt to the volatility of the international market (Robin & Gore, 2018:10). Farm producers choose to hire immigrant workers as they have the perception that immigrants have a strong work ethic; are loyal and willing to accept overtime work (Kruss *et al.*, 2016:100).

The precariousness of jobs at the bottom of the GVC is largely a product of capitalism's inherent drive to increase profits through the domination and exploitation of labour. As a result, workers at the bottom of the value chain are systematically trapped in a cycle of poverty (Chan & Xue, 2013). Producers in the citrus value chain (like those in agricultural value chains generally) aim to maximize their share of the wealth created in the GVC. However, some farm owners have not experienced any noteworthy economic upgrading and are struggling to compete globally (Robin & Gore, 2018). These farm owners are forced to reduce input costs but have few options other than reducing labour costs in this regard. As a result, the prevailing power relations in the citrus value chain are largely inimical to the achievement of decent work. The assumption that economic upgrading invariably translates into meaningful social upgrading has proven not to be the case in the SRV's citrus farms.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the findings from the interviewees on the SRV citrus farms. Due to the nature of fruit buyer- driven value chains farm owners experience a ‘cost-profit’ squeeze from lead firms. Consequently, farm owners hire immigrant workers in order to adapt to the international market. A large portion of the study consisted of undocumented immigrant workers, who because of their fragile citizenship were at the mercy of the farm owners. This is largely because they could not report farm owners’ multiple violations against labour laws without facing the risk of being deported. Deportation thus plays a crucial controlling mechanism for farm owners over immigrants within the SRV. Immigrants to some degree face unique challenges from local farm workers such as the need to send remittances, fear of deportation and the feeling of being ‘othered.’

Consequently, the Decent Work Agenda has not been achieved on the SRV farms. The weakest pillar being social dialogue, this is no surprise considering that majority of the sample size had no working visas as noted. Undocumented immigrants are often silenced and have no access to institutions that promote collective action. The employment opportunity pillar was hindered as the jobs that were created had no long-term security and failed to upskill workers, while providing inconsistent wages. Zimbabweans in the SRV reported to receive no societal support and did not experience the social protection pillar of Decent Work. Lastly social promotion of workers’ rights was non-existent as workers’ rights were continuously violated by farm owners. These findings are developed more fully in the concluding chapter of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general overview and conclusion to the dissertation. The general overview of the dissertation shall be achieved by examining if the dissertation's pre-set how the thesis's primary goal has been answered. Furthermore, the chapter will illustrate how the secondary objectives were achieved by exploring all four pillars of decent work while drawing the thesis into a conclusion.

4.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary research goal was to investigate whether Zimbabwean immigrant farmworkers, who are employed on citrus farms in the SRV in the Eastern Cape, live and work in 'decent' conditions. This goal was achieved by exploring the four pillars of Decent work, as noted above. Immigrant workers within the SRV do not live and work in 'decent' conditions. Understanding why 'decent' conditions had not been achieved was framed by the theoretical framework of the GVC analysis. The GVC context illustrates the power imbalance between lead firms and local producers. Farm owners are placed under a constant cost-profit squeeze in the buyer-driven citrus value chain.

Consequently, farm owners opt to employ flexible labour to respond to the demands of the international market. This is done by hiring documented and undocumented Zimbabwean immigrant labour (mainly through labour brokers). This is because immigrant (especially undocumented) workers are in a desperate position and likely to accept low wages, unpaid overtime, and health hazardous working environments. Therefore, in answering the research question, Zimbabwean immigrant workers do not work and live in decent conditions within the SRV.

4.3 SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The secondary objectives of this dissertation involve five subgoals. This section explores these subgoals, starting with understanding the general dynamics of the citrus value chain and the South African citrus industry. This dissertation briefly examined the general citrus fruit value chain and then focused on South Africa's integration into the citrus value chain. The citrus fruit value chain refers to the production of citrus fruit from its raw product until its final product ready for consumption. The citrus fruit industry has one of the largest fruit processing industries globally, with its leading producers in China, Mexico, Spain, Brazil, Mediterranean countries, and South Africa. The South African citrus fruit industry is export-oriented and firmly integrated into the citrus GVC. Citrus farm producers opt to trade on international markets because the price per ton of citrus fruit on international markets surpasses those on local markets. Citrus fruit demand stems from its health benefits and many uses such as essential oils, slug replant, cooking and health benefits (to name a few). The contents of the literature review successfully explored the citrus value chain and achieved this goal.

The secondary research goal was to explore the push and pull factors of immigrant labour employment in the agriculture sector in South Africa. This objective was answered by drawing on the push and pull factors of migration for immigrant labour in the agriculture sector through existing literature, coupled with the interviewee's responses from SRV citrus farms. The two main factors for Zimbabweans to emigrate into South Africa consist of political, human rights violations and Zimbabweans' economic collapse. However, within this study, immigrants within the SRV primary push factors are the lack of economic opportunities that made living in Zimbabwe unbearable. Interviewees within Zimbabwe struggled to afford basic utilities such as water, electricity and, in some cases, food. Pull factors into the agriculture sector consist of sending remittances, as this is a livelihood survival strategy for many Zimbabwean households. Remittances appeared to be the primary pull factor for the interviewees; however, it was coupled with South Africa having a stable currency, job opportunities and higher salaries. Interviewees had unique, decisive pull factors to emigrate into the Eastern Cape. They perceived the Eastern Cape as a haven due to the lack of police presence and better agricultural working and living conditions relative to the Limpopo border areas. This dissertation achieved this secondary goal.

The third goal that was successfully answered was to assess the benefits and challenges that (especially undocumented) immigrant farmworkers experience working in the citrus value

chain. Immigrants in the SRV citrus farms perceived working within the value chain as beneficial for two main reasons. The first is that they have access to an economic opportunity that they would not have had in Zimbabwe. The simple presence of income made a significant change in bettering their lives for themselves. Secondly, the ability to have a source of income, not only for themselves, but to support their family's livelihood through remittances was considered to be beneficial by the participants. However, the challenges within the citrus value chain tended to outweigh the benefits – but they are “willing victims.” Immigrants constantly felt “othered” and excluded on farms and within the host country in general. Secondly, immigrants tended to lack work permits due to lack of information, resources, or skill sets to qualify. Immigrants work under constant fear of deportation as farm owners weaponize their fragile citizenship against immigrant workers to accept precarious working conditions that do not meet the Decent Work Agenda criteria.

In addition to the above, the dissertation set out to examine the working conditions of permanent, seasonal and casual immigrant farmworkers to assess whether the various ‘pillars’ of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda have been realised. In general, regardless of the permanent, seasonal and casual position of employment, immigrant farmworkers at the bottom of the value chain generally did not experience Decent Work. The Employment of opportunities pillar has not been realised. Most immigrants received a minimum wage, but this progress was hindered by inconsistent wage pay-outs due to unlawful wage deductions. All women from this study were paid below minimum wage. Immigrant workers were inadequately upskilled within these jobs. Immigrants’ employment tended to not have long term security and was stained by lack of employment contracts or insufficiently detailed employment contracts. Secondly, the Social Dialogue pillar was the weakest out of the four pillars and was not realised. Immigrant workers in this study were mostly undocumented and had no access to labour institutions or collective bargaining structures. Immigrants who dared to express their grievances towards their working conditions were threatened to be fired.

Thirdly, the Promotion of Workers Rights pillar faced continuous attrition from farm owners. South African labour laws were repeatedly violated on the SRV citrus farms ranging from lack of contracts, unlawful deductions; unlawful dismissal; health-hazard environments and fake UIF deductions. Undocumented immigrant workers are unable to report these workers’ rights violations without the risk of being deported. Consequently, immigrants are largely at the mercy of the farm owners. This pillar of Decent Work has not been realised by farmworkers.

The Social protection pillar of Decent Work examined in this dissertation simultaneously answers the dissertation's last goal. To examine the living conditions of permanent, seasonal and casual immigrant farmworkers by assessing whether the social protection pillar of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda has been realised. Immigrant workers from this study live in impoverished areas. However, unlike documented and local workers within these areas, undocumented immigrant workers are disqualified from accessing any social welfare schemes that the South African government provides to these areas, such as children grants. Immigrant workers reported to be living in unsanitary locations. The immigrant farmworkers often felt "othered" by their communities. The Social protection pillar of Decent Work has not been realized by immigrant workers. Immigrant Zimbabwean farmworkers working on the SRV citrus farms do not live or work in 'decent' conditions.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A. Biography

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) What nationality are you?
- 3) What is your current marital status? Are you married or single?
- 4) Please describe the geographical area where you grew up in?
(describe the house you grew up in? Is it a clean area? What type of energy or fuel do you use for lighting and cooking in your house? Would you say the geographical area back home is better than where you reside in now?)
- 5) Describe your educational background and the highest level of education?
- 6) At what age did you start working, and what influenced your decision to look for employment?
Describe your employment history before your current job now?
- 8) What made you work in South Africa and Eastern Cape farms instead of farms closer to the border?
Do you feel it is safe in Eastern Cape? Are there better employment opportunities or working conditions? (low workers)
- 9) What are the main products that are processed in your workplace and where are they sold?
- 10) Why did you leave Zimbabwe? What attracted you to South Africa?
- 11) Do you have a work visa?
Why did you apply for this visa? Why did you not apply for refugee status?

B. Work and Employment

- 12) Describe your current job position?
Are you permanent, casual, or seasonal? If Seasonal, how many times have you come back? How do you earn a living while not working waiting for the next season? How long have you been working here? Do you know or have an estimate of how many workers work within the farm? How many of those are do you think are Zimbabweans? How many of those do you think
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are permanent, casual, or seasonal? Would you say the turnover rate of the farm is low, acceptable, too high?

15) Do you have a written contract for your job? If so, what does it say?

14) How would you describe your relationship with the farmer?

Do you frequently see him or interact with him? Do you have access to him if you want to ask or express anything to him about the farms?

16) Have you received any training at your current job?

What is training? Please describe it. How long is it?

17) Please describe your working hours during the week

How many hours do you work a day? Are you given any breaks during the day?

Do you usually work on weekends or public holidays? Do you get paid for that?

18) Do you have any leave days such as maternity leave?

(The migrant literature indicates that men don't help in raising children on farms? Have you experienced that, and how does that impact your day to day life?)

19) How do you get to and from work and do you pay for your own transport?

Does the transport fee come from your wages as a deduction? Did you consent to this deduction?

20) How are workers monitored or controlled at the workplace?

What are the disciplinary measures against workers? Are disciplinary measures put when someone is not 'productive' and fail to reach a target? Have you ever received one, and for what?

21) Discuss the main challenges that you face while executing your daily tasks at the workplace?

22) Would you describe your environment as a safe and hygienic place with access to water, toilets clean and danger free with safety clothing from the employer?

To what degree does the organisation organise some work medical services or first aid? Have you been injured or fallen sick while at work? How did the manager deal with it?

23) Have you heard of or seen any labour inspectors from the Department of Labour at your workplace?

Or trade union representatives? If so, do you feel like they have helped you in any way? If not, why do you think that so? Do you ever get to interact with these representatives?

24) How do salaries work, do you get paid an hourly rate, target-based, piece rate and how much do you get paid?

Are you happy with the payment system? If not, what are your complaints? Have you raised them with the manager/farmer? If not, why not? If so, what was their response to your complaint? How are you planning to deal with these issues? What deductions are made by the employers from your wages? Is your pay consistent every month? Has your income increased ever since you started working for the organisation? Are workers allowed to discuss wage increases with the boss?

25) With your expenses and income do you feel like with your current income you can save money for the future, for example, by getting life or health insurance or a pension?

26) Have you heard of the minimum wage that is set in your sector by the government, and do you believe that applies to you as a foreigner?

Are you happy about it? What should the minimum wage rate be? Should the minimum wage be a basic hourly rate or earnings rate? For how many hours of work in a week should the minimum wage apply? How much do you think you need to be able to survive and support your family?

27) What employment benefits do you receive from your employer?

Do you believe there is room for growth in your organisation, such as skill development or promotion or education? Do you think you are guaranteed long-term employment in the workplace?

28) Would you say that you are satisfied and happy with your job? Why?

C. Relations among Migrant Workers

29) How was the journey coming to work at this farm from Zimbabwe, did you know anyone and did those people play a role in getting you a job here?

30) What is the relationship between workers and supervisors and managers? *What nationality are the supervisors? Is your manager a foreigner, and what role does he play on the farm? Does he still play a role on the farm after working hours?*

30) The literature suggests that typically Zimbabweans are hired through a process characterised by favouritism, corruption whereby workers do favours for managers to gain an advantage in the workplace, have you experienced this?

When being hired at the farm at what point did, you interact with the farm owner, and how did that interaction go? The literature also said workers who have been here longer or stay on the farms having privileges on the farm have you experienced this? Lastly, it mentions women are sexually taken advantage of by providing sexual favours in exchange for work-related privileges, have you experienced this?

D. Social Dialogue

31) What issues do you have at the workplace

32) Do workers have any representatives at the workplace? To express their issues with the workplace?

Is there any other way that workers raise their grievances outside of the workplace?

34) What would you say are the main challenges in your workplace?

Whom do you report to? Have you ever experienced what you feel is human rights or worker rights violation? If you had a trade union, what issues would you like them to fight for on your behalf?

35) Has there ever been a strike at your workplace since you started working there?

E. Social Promotion

36) Please describe where you currently reside touching on what type of energy or fuel do you use for lighting and cooking in your house?

Do you rent and how much is your rent? How many people live with you and please describe your relationships with them? How many people depend on your salary? Do you send money or food back home? How much? How often? What are some of the things that you wish to add to your household that you currently cannot afford?

37) What is the primary source of water for your household? Are you happy with the quality of water that you get there?

38) Describe the state of service delivery in your area?

Do you have something that resembles a community board that can complain to the local municipality about improvement in public service?

39) Would you say your life has improved ever since you started working where you are

working? Why?

40) Have your rights outside the workplace ever been violated? If so, have you reported it to the police? If not, why not?

41) Have you ever been deported? What are your experiences with government agencies (like Home Affairs, the military, and police) as a foreigner?

42) Have you experienced xenophobia? How would you describe the relations between foreign and local workers on the citrus farms?

43) What are your future plans?

Short term? And long term?
