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## Precarious Employment as Survival Strategy: An Emerging Reality in Zimbabwean Hotels

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### **Abstract:**

*The new modes of production and concomitant consumption patterns brought by new technology and globalization have introduced a reconfiguration of work practices, experiences and institutions that have transformed political and economic relations within and between nations. The current economic recession being experienced by Zimbabwe is not an isolated economic phenomenon but simply marks the new wave of change typifying the employment conditions world over. Numerous survival strategies adopted by most companies in Zimbabwe have rendered general corporate employment and in particular in the hotel industry chronically insecure and unstable. Employment in Zimbabwe has become precarious. Adopting the employment strain model the research revealed that hotels are adopting precarious working conditions in order to survive and ensure profitability. While such forms of employment appear manipulative on the part of the workers, employers have embraced them as a buffer inventory to insulate themselves against the negative effects of the new business reality in Zimbabwe. The research focused on three hotels based in Harare, capital city of Zimbabwe. Data was collected through interviews and questionnaires to 120 participants revealed the reality of precarious employment.*

**Keywords:** Precarious employment, hotel industry, survival strategy and Zimbabwe

### **1. Introduction**

Owing to the viability challenges that the country is currently facing most employers in Zimbabwe are resorting to labour casualisation (precarious employment). Generally, it is believed that the major cost driver in an organisation is the employee (Storey 1989) as explained by hard human resource management. Most employers strongly believe that the best cost cutting methods include retrenchments and contract termination. As a way to manage the ever-increasing cost that affect each the organisation's bottom line most employers in the Hotel industry are resorting to precarious employment through employing on contractual basis, casual basis and part time basis which therefore forms precarious employment. According to a study carried out by Ncube and Jerie (2012), and Ncube, Sibanda and Maunganidze (2013), Zimbabwean hotels were facing a serious challenge of competition from the growing fast food industry, resulting in low food covers, bar revenues and low occupants. This situation has resulted in hotels failing to generate enough revenue to cover operational costs. The African Economic Outlook (2014), suggests that Zimbabwe is seriously experiencing a structural regression, with the acceleration of deindustrialisation and informalisation of the economy. The above economic challenge has therefore posed a serious threat on the hotel industry which mainly relies on business from parastatals, private companies, and government departments and subsequently walks. Such challenges adversely affect the performance of hotels hence the need to cut costs and remain afloat through resorting to precarious employment.

#### *1.1. Background*

The economy of Zimbabwe has been challenged by an unsustainably high external debt and increased deindustrialization and informalization. The average GDP of 7.5% during the economic rebound of the period 2009-2012 has been decelerating with the estimated GDP for 2013 pegged at 3.7% from an estimate of 4.4% in 2012. Major drivers of such economic slowdown has been liquidity challenges, lack and high cost of capital, revenue underperformance, outdated technologies, infrastructure deficits, power shortages and a fragile global financial environment. Such economic slowdown emanating from sources of capital has witnessed a rise in the costs of running businesses in Zimbabwe (African Development Bank Group). The hotel industry has not been spared by this tsunami hence the fueling the adoption of precarious employment.

The hospitality industry in Zimbabwe has four major players among other small players. These four big giants are Rainbow Tourism Group, African Sun, Meikles Hotels and Cresta Hotels. The competition in this industry is very stiff and customer's choice is mainly driven based on the quality of service offered per each hotel. Other players in the industry who operate lodges and hotels also claim a part of the market share and in places like Harare such players are a threat to these big four players in the industry. The market share for the hotel groups are as follows Rainbow 22%, African Sun 35%, Meikles hotels 17% and Crested Hotels 12% (ZTA, 2010).

Business performance in the hospitality industry seemed promising and taking shape after the dollarization in the hospitality industry in Zimbabwe between the period 2009 to 2012. An unexpected trend however, was witnessed in the industry for the period 2013.

Instead of recording an increase in occupancies and revenues most hotels in Harare witnessed a decline in occupancies in 2013. The closing occupancies for 2013 for the major hotels in Harare were as follows Jameson 52%, Cresta Lodge 50%, Cresta Oasis Hotel 57%, Holiday Inn 60%, Crowne Plaza 60%, Meikles 35% Rainbow Towers 50%, Bronte 72% and Ambassador Hotel 53%. The revpar were respectively as follows \$38, \$43, \$49, \$58,66,48, \$45, \$68 and \$34 (Cresta Hospitality marketing report,2013). For a few hotels groups the low occupancies were a result of the refurbishment going on at these properties however other could not fight rivalry competition as proponed by porters five forces.

From a background of such decline occupancies and decline in revenues, most hotels have been faced with the increasing need to cut down on costs of which staff overheads are one of the major costs. This has resulted in the frequent use of the term “Staff rationalization” in organizations. Staff rationalization is implemented primarily by firms experiencing difficult economic times (Gandolfi, 2006). Human resources executives across industry have been on the edge to suggest workforce flexibility strategies which give the organization a competitive edge and also be able to achieve the bottom line. In firms that are experiencing difficulties due to decreasing sales, rising costs, having to repay company debts and increasing competition is to cut the size of the organization, most often in the form of cutting employees (Ochieno 2013). Faced with such tough times, in such a scenario, consequently jobs are also not spared, vacant positions can be frozen and some jobs are eliminated totally, operations are closed and some functions are outsourced all this is made in an attempt to enhance the short-term cost efficiencies of the business.

Information from one of Zimbabwe’s largest trade union (ZCTU) revealed that the level of retrenchment in organizations has been increasing with 450 workers being retrenched weekly. Moreover, a survey carried out by National Social Security Authority (NSSA) also revealed that 711 companies in Harare went bust for the last half of 2011 to the first half of 2013. This was also adding to the same crisis in Bulawayo were more than 90 companies closed shop. (Mbiba,2014). Staff rationalization is carried out aiming at improving aspects of efficiency in organizations (Ochieno, 2013). At the center of rationalizing staff most hotels have resorted to precarious employment as an alternative to cover the deficiency. Owing to the fluctuations that are happening in the hotel industry the employers are resorting to the employment of contract workers, casual workers, outsourcing certain sections and subsequently using students from colleges and universities as cheap labour. Thus, the key reality emerging in Zimbabwean hotels is the adoption of precarious employment in totality.

### *1.2. Precarious Employment*

The term precarious employment to date has no totally acceptable definition hence variety of terms used, such as ‘insecure work’, ‘contingent work’ or ‘casual work’. Burgess and Campbell, (1998) suggests that precarious’ employment is employment that is low quality and that encompasses a range of factors that put workers at risk of injury, illness and/or poverty. The same view is upheld by Rodgers and Rodgers (1989) who suggest that there are risks ranging from low wages, low job security, limited control over workplace conditions, little protection from health and safety risks in the workplace and less opportunity for training and career progression for employees under precarious employment. Sandret (2000) notes that precariousness is what hampers and reduces margins of manoeuvre in the construction of the identity. The precariat is a new mass class emerging due to the intense globalization albeit the weakening state control on the labour market. Their labour was insecure and unstable, so that it is associated with casualization, informalization, agency labour, and part-time labour and self-employment (Standing 2014). The precariats are socially and economically cut off from the classic circuits of accumulation particularly the logic of collective bargaining and also not represented in class-based political processes traditionally associated with fixed workplaces (Standing, 2011). Munck (2013) argued that the term ‘precariat’ as currently deployed misunderstands the complexity of class making and remaking and is of dubious political purchase. The term can become a new political distraction if it not rigorously deconstructed and reconstructed. In Zimbabwe, the term precarious employment has not been fully utilised however “labour Casualization” which resembles precarious employment can be inferred in this paper.

Rodgers and Rodgers’ (1989) suggest that there are several dimensions to precariousness and different degrees of precariousness. The dimensions, or characteristics, of precarious jobs are as follows:

- ❖ Degree of certainty of continuing work – precarious jobs may have short time horizons, be of limited duration or have a high risk of termination,
- ❖ Aspect of control over work – the less the worker controls working conditions, wages or the pace of work the more insecure the work is,
- ❖ Protection – to what extent are workers protected, either by law or through collective organization, or through customary practice – against, for example, discrimination, unfair dismissal or unacceptable working practices,
- ❖ Low income – a somewhat more ambiguous aspect, low income jobs may be regarded as precarious if they are associated with poverty and insecure social insertion.

Hartley (1999, 134) perceives job insecurity as a perceptual phenomenon resulting from “a process of cognitive appraisal of the uncertainty existing for the organization and the employee” or the individual’s interpretation and evaluation of external signs regarding the continuity of the job or the organization. The same views are upheld by Ashford, Lee, Bobko (1989) who contents that more broadly, job insecurity may be thought of as a multidimensional construct, including the subjectively perceived likelihood of involuntary job loss and the fear of loss of other valued features of the job a situation typifying the current nature of employment in Zimbabwe Hotels. In general, temporary employment includes all forms of non-permanent contracts, such as fixed-term, project specific, on-call, and temporary-help agency jobs. One can consider temporary workers to be in an objective state of job insecurity.

Temporary workers also report having less information about their work environment and receiving less training for performing their tasks, are seldom represented in health and safety committees, and have less access to safety equipment (Goudswaard, De Nanteuil 2000)

Precarious work is a means for employers to shift risks and responsibilities on to workers Rodgers and Rodgers' (1989). The two authors went on to suggest that although a precarious job can have many faces, it is usually defined by uncertainty as to the duration of employment, multiple possible employers or a disguised or ambiguous employment relationship, a lack of access to social protection and benefits usually associated with employment, low pay, and substantial legal and practical obstacles to joining a trade union and bargaining collectively, a situation unfolding in Zimbabwean Hotels. Workers on temporary contracts of various durations, as identified by Section 12 (1) and (3) of the Labour Act Cap (28.01) may benefit from a job in the short term, but live with uncertainty as to whether their contract will be extended. Temporary contracts often also provide a lower wage, and do not always confer the same benefits, which often accrue with time and are directly linked to the length and status of the employment relationship. The result is a condition in which workers cannot plan for their future, and lack the security of certain forms of social protection.

Rodgers and Rodgers' (1989) contents that another core aspect of precarious work is the lack of clarity as to the identity of the employer. Weak legislative frameworks and impotent enforcement mechanisms create a situation in which workers in triangular or disguised employment relationships have virtually no means of protecting their rights. Precarious work is also characterized by insufficient or even a total absence of trade union rights. Access to collective bargaining rights and weak legislative frameworks present an important legislative challenge to precarious workers and trade unions alike. As described later in this report, laws in some countries forbid workers employed through a third party from joining unions of permanent workers.

### *1.3. Precarious Employment in Zimbabwe (Casualization)*

As alluded to above precarious employment in Zimbabwe is referred to as labour Casualization. Muchichwa and Matombo (2006) view labour Casualization as the replacement of permanent or standard employment with temporary, short term or renewable contracts. The same views are upheld by Chiutsi (2013) who defines casualization of labour as the reduction in full time employment and their replacement with workers who are called in as needed on casual basis. Muchichwa and Matombo (2006) further contents that labour casualization involves the spread of working conditions, insecurity, irregular working hours, low wages and the absence of standard employment benefits. For Zimbabwe, precarious employment is regulated by the Labour Act Cap (28.01). In terms of Section 12 (1) of the Labour Act Chapter 28:01, every person working for another and receiving remuneration in return is deemed to be under a contract of employment i.e., not merely contract employees.

The Labour Act provides for various types of contracts, namely:

- (a) Casual/seasonal work.
- (b) Fixed term contracts.
- (c) Permanent contracts/contract that does not specify date of termination or expiration.

under Section 12 (3) of the Labour Act Chapter 28:01, casual work is defined as work for which an employee is engaged by an employer for not more than a total of six weeks in any four consecutive months. Owing to the deregulation of the labour market and the adoption of neo liberal policies in the country most employers have resorted to the adoption of precarious employment as a way for business survival. The recent Zimbabwe Supreme Court ruling in Zuva Petroleum (Pvt) Ltd vs Don Nyamande and Another SC 43/15 has demonstrated chronic rights insecurity in which the State in response to capital interests have systematically taken rights from its own citizens.

### *1.4. The Adoption of neo Liberal Policies*

ESAP saw a fundamental restructuring of the Zimbabwean state, economy and society, with the welfarist economic policies of the 1980s swiftly replaced by a neoliberal package of trade liberalization, deregulation and public sector restructuring, including large cuts to the health and education budgets (McCandless 2011). The regime's enforcement of ESAP reflected the synthesis of authoritarianism and neo-liberalism within the state, leading to below-par growth, high unemployment and soaring poverty rates (Alexander 2001). The keenly felt impacts of ESAP upon workers and their families led the 1990s to become 'a decade of unprecedented industrial and social action' (Bond and Saunders 2005, Matombo and Sachikonye 2010). Labour movement activism during the 1990s represented the full fruition of the two key trends noted in civil society opposition in the 1980s: the connection between labour and other civil society groups, and the growth of governance concerns in labour's agenda alongside traditional socio-economic issues. Together, these trends reflect the key characteristics of Social Movement Unionism (SMU) (Moody 1997).

### *1.5. Theoretical Framework and Methodology*

The research is theoretically guided by Lewchuk and Clarke M, de Wolff (2008) employment model. They suggests that the employment strain model describes employment arrangements characterized by a combination of (a) employment relationship uncertainty, or uncertainty over work schedules and the continuity, terms, and conditions of future employment; (b) employment relationship effort, or effort in finding and keeping employment or balancing the demands of multiple jobs; and (c) poor employment relationship support, support from formal organizations such as unions, from co-workers, and from friends and family. Employment strain, as well as the strain resulting from the separate dimensions, is related to several health indicators. Other multidimensional empirical approaches drawing from Rodgers's study of precarious employment defined as jobs of limited duration with limited protection from labor-market uncertainties and unacceptable treatment at work, low wages, and limited worker control over factors such as wages and working hours.

The research adopted a survey research design. This was selected owing to its continuing popularity to its versatility, efficiency, and generalizability. Surveys are efficient in that many variables can be measured without substantially increasing the time or cost. Survey data can be collected from many people at relatively low cost and relatively quickly. The researcher designed survey questionnaire which was distributed to 120 participants representing 3 hotel groups. Interviews were also carried out with 20 respondents from the 120 who represented senior management. Interviews were also done on non-managerial respondents who were categorized as 40 contract workers, 40 casuals and 20 permanent workers.

## 2. Findings and Discussions

### 2.1. Forces behind the Adoption of Precarious Employment in Zimbabwean Hotels

Through a self-administered questionnaire to 20 managerial respondents the researcher sought to find out the major reasons for the increase in precarious employment in the 3 hotels that were identified.

Cutting costs was identified by 9 managerial respondents as one of the major drivers of precarious employment in Zimbabwean hotels. Respondents identified that costs in the hotel industry are increasing owing to low occupancies and pilferage. Thus, the researcher established that as a way to manage cost associated with full employment such as transport, housing medical aid, pension and other cost employers adopt precarious employment. Rodgers and Rodgers (1989) suggest that one of the major reasons for the use of precarious employment is to avoid the designation of an individual as an employee. Employees may have legal or regulatory rights that impose costs on employers (including specific terms and conditions of employment and rights to employment protection such as restrictions on lay-off or redundancy). The level of these costs will influence the extent to which employers may seek to avoid employees' status. Whatman *et al.* (1999) supports the above view by suggesting that precarious working arrangements reduce overtime and other costs of permanent employment such as holiday pay, and to reduce labour costs and risks by using such employment arrangements as three-month trial periods and temporary contracts. Sixty (60) respondents from casual employees who participated indicated that they did not get transport allowance and housing allowances.

Competitive pressure was also identified by 8 managerial respondents as one of the reasons for precarious employment. They explained that competition for survival was one resulting in precarious employment. To survive competition the respondents indicated the need to improve service delivery through offering best rooms and other hotel specs. This was viewed as difficult to achieve with a huge payroll bill hence employing casuals or contract workers. This was also linked to the need to address competition by addressing fluctuation in business. Seven (7) respondents reiterated that hotel business was characterized by peak and low moments, hence the need to hire more contracts that are easy to terminate in when business is low. Houseman (2000) found that the reasons most commonly given for using flexible staffing arrangements were the traditional reasons of minimizing costs and accommodating fluctuations in business. In Zimbabwean legislation terminating a contract of employment require a notice to the employee which can be paid in cash hence most employers prefer contracts than permanent workers whose termination amount to retrenchment. Thus, Zimbabwean hotels have faced an increase in competitive pressure that has led to greater product demand uncertainty, which in turn impacts on their employment choices.

Interesting to note was the fact that 6 respondents and other 5 respondents identified flexible working arrangements and improved technology as two combined reasons for precarious employment. These 11 respondents were of the view that flexible working arrangements such as numerical flexibility, functional flexibility and financial flexibility are key contributors of precarious employment. On numerical flexibility, they explained that the fluctuations in business with contract and casual employees they are able to adjust the numbers to match business, with functional flexibility the respondents identified the ability to redeploy and multi-skill the contract workers such they fit in any job as available, on financial they explained the Contract workers are given National Employment Council negotiated wages only a situation that can be improved with permanent workers. According to the (OECD), flexibility may be understood as the ability of systems, organizations and individuals to adapt to change by adopting new structures or new modes of behaviour. This was supported by Houseman, (2000). Workers in flexible staffing arrangements typically are not covered by regulations governing benefits, and they generally do not receive key benefits offered to standard workers. Brosnan and Walsh's (1996) findings are similar and indicate that non-standard forms of employment create opportunities for employers, particularly in the new service industries. Non-standard employment allows labour deployment to be tailored to times of peak demand and times of fluctuating demand, and allows employers to avoid training costs.

The above argument was also supported by Whatman *et al* (1999) who found in their case studies that employers were utilising this type of labour to increase their operational flexibility when faced with uncertain workflows and operating environments. The flexibility agreed to in contractual arrangements meant that it was common for casual staff to bargain weekly and sometimes daily over hours of work, a situation that was also identified by managerial respondents who participated in the study. Five (5) respondents reiterated that the hotels were using casual and temporary contract arrangements to reduce overtime and other costs of permanent employment such as holiday pay, and to reduce labour costs and risks by using such employment arrangements as three-month trial periods and temporary contracts. Flexible forms of employment globally expanded as a consequence of the dramatic changes that characterized capitalist economies during the last three decades of the twentieth century. Governments pursuing flexibility relaxed labor-market regulations, limited social security benefits, modified collective bargaining regulations while favouring the individualization of employment relations, and deregulated the contractual employment relationship Standing G. 1999. Private and public organizations downsized, restructured, outsourced parts of the productive process, resorted more to temporary workers, and dismantled internal labor markets (Grimshaw D, Ward KG, Rubery J, Beynon H. 2001)

The same views were echoed by Gomes and Pouget (2008) who reiterated the significance of technology on flexibility. They suggested that technological changes were complemented by institutional changes towards freer trade, flexible exchange rates and global capital mobility. This increased not only the possibilities for companies to use the new global distribution of labour, but also reduced government's ability to pursue a national economic policy geared towards protecting its citizens against social dumping, as well as its ability to tax capital. The abandonment of macroeconomic policies geared to achieving full employment was also central. Henceforth, it was determined that macroeconomic activism on the part of governments could only lead to inflation, and that the only way to achieve full-employment was through deregulating labour markets and making work "more flexible". From a neoliberal perspective, the precarisation of employment is not an accidental by product; on the contrary, it is the alleged solution to the employment problem hence supporting the neo-liberal policies that were identified by the respondents. Third, the economic downturn leads to downsizing and restructuring, as employers respond to falling demands or seek to realign cost pressures (44, increases outsourcing services, and generates temporary jobs even in the previously protected public sector Cazes (2009) Gomes and Pouget (2008) went on to suggest that contrary to neoliberal doctrine, precarious work is not the inevitable consequence of globalization; it is the outcome of deliberate policies to use the opportunities of globalization to change the rules of the game. Institutional changes and new technological opportunities went hand in hand to create and impose the new economic model. Global capital mobility, global sourcing and comparatively easy options for relocation meant that the "successes" of lowering labour costs in one country transferred the structural pressures of the world market onto others. Downsizing, and the associated intensification of work that has accompanied it, may have led to a decline in labour hoarding, therefore temporary workers may fill the gap. jobs requiring little firm-specific capital may have become more common (Australian Labour Market Research, 2001).

## 2.2. Consequences

Eighty (80) respondents representing contract and casual employees who participated in the study indicated that they were not happy with the nature of their employment. They mainly cited job insecurity as a serious problem since their contracts were easy to terminate. Twenty (20) managers indicated that contract employees were more than permanent employees in their hotels and to them this was the normal set up. This is in line with the views of Dörre (2006) who suggested that the normalization of precarious work is already showing its deeply damaging impacts on society at large. The author went on to suggest that in general, it leaves workers and communities in unstable and insecure situations, disrupting their life planning options. These were also the views of 40 contract workers who indicated that they felt vulnerable and exposed since their contracts could be terminated with the changes in business fluctuations.

Dörre (2006) pointed out that precarious workers are found to suffer a higher rate of occupational safety and health issues. Such impacts fortify gender divisions and worsen the already precarious situation of migrant workers. The general condition of fear and insecurity also dissuade workers from joining trade unions, leaving them even more vulnerable to precarious work arrangements. Precarious work arrangements are also associated with poor health conditions. Workers on temporary or agency contracts are often exposed to hazardous work environments, stressful psychosocial working conditions, increased workload and disproportional travel time between multiple jobs at multiple sites. Benach and Muntaner (2007). The precarious nature of the employment relationship itself can cause precarious workers to experience poor emotional and mental health. As job insecurity increases and social benefits decrease, workers face increasing pressure to accept job offers that put their health and safety at risk

Twenty (20) managerial respondents indicated that precarious employment affects both workers and their families who normally suffer during periods of low business after the termination of contracts. Buchholz, Hofacker, Mills, Blossfeld, Kurz Hofmeister (2009) supported the above findings by suggesting that precarious work affects individuals outside the world of work since it creates insecurity and leads to increases in inequality and poverty. Uncertainty about the future of employment and earnings affects a range of family decisions from whether to start a family, enroll in higher education, or attend training courses. In short, precarious work adversely affects society as a whole. Thirty (38) casuals indicated that their lives in the hotel industry was not perfect since they lacked job security hence affecting their ability to plan. This was also supported by 20 permanent employees who indicated that the hotel business was fluctuating and as such contract workers are at the mercy of the employer hence adversely affecting them. Buchholz, Hofacker, Mills, Blossfeld, Kurz Hofmeister (2009), employment precariousness is a social determinant that affects the health of workers, families, and communities. Its recent popularity has been spearheaded by three main developments: the surge in "flexible employment" and its associated erosion of workers' employment and working conditions since the mid-1970s.

Dörre (2006) equally contends that precarious work deprives people of the stability required to take long-term decisions and plan their lives. Temporary workers in particular find themselves unable to plan to get married, have children, or purchase homes because of the uncertain continuity of their contracts, and usually low wages. The same views were echoed by 7 male respondents who indicated that they were not able to marry since they were not yet stable. They indicated that what they are earning as casual employees who are employed for few hours or days they cannot manage a family. They indicated that they could only marry after securing long term contracts or permanent employment. Dörre (2006) further pointed out that studies show that the longing for a "coherent life plan" is especially high among temporary agency workers and fixed term workers. Thus, in Zimbabwean hotels precarious jobs have left a young generation hard pressed to see a bright future.

Bohle, Quinlan, Kennedy and Wilson (2004) pointed out that, flexibility at the workplace often means less regular and less reliable working hours, often determined at very short notice. Casual workers seem to be disproportionately affected. Owing to the adoption of such flexible conditions most casual are cut short as business slumps. Even contract workers on 1 month contract, 2 months or 3 months' contract can be easily terminated on notice. Findings suggest that in all groups casuals were easy to terminate since they just needed 24 hours' notice.

Mansel and Heitmeyer (2010) suggests that the precarious nature of contracts leave young people excluded from benefits systems, either because they have not been contributing for long enough or because the systems are based on voluntary contributions. The risk of losing financial independence and having to rely on lower social welfare payouts can lead to further social exclusion. From the views that were reiterated by 5 participants the researcher managed to conclude that in Zimbabwean hotels there is a new form of precarious employment which embraces the use of students from hotel school, colleges and universities. Apart from relying on casual workers and contract workers virtually all hotels are cutting costs through employing students who do not get salaries but only a small incentive if they are lucky. Most managers throughout indicated that they are using students mainly in service areas such as the front office, switch board, restaurant, kitchens, bars, housekeeping and offices. Through using students on work related learning hotels are cutting huge labour costs.

Precarious work also threatens trade union membership. Out of the 100 non-managerial respondents who participated in the research only 16 permanent workers were members of Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU). Eighty (84) participants indicated that they were not members of a trade union since their tenure of employment was not guaranteed. They indicated that there was no incentive to join a trade union for 3 months. Chronic job insecurity and instability due to 'casualisation' has made class no longer credible basis for social and political action with the coming of a stronger version of individualization (Beck 1992). Trade unions have become a zombie category (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002): *that is, dead in terms of progressive social and political urgency, but somehow still alive in organizational forms* (in Upchurch & Mathers 2012, p.268). Mansel and Heitmeyer (2010) suggest that precarious workers are by definition in an unstable position, so that even if they are being exploited, few feel confident enough to organize and bargain collectively at the risk of losing their jobs. This was pointed out by 40 casual employees who disclosed that as casuals they felt they were not part and parcel of the organisation since they were called as and when need arise. They indicated that they were summoned to save on cock tail parties, huge conferences, weddings, dinners and other huge functions. Thus, precarious work has significantly weakened the platform on which society currently stands. A feeling of powerlessness and fear of demanding change discourage people from participating in trade unions and community organizations and institutions. When placed in context of a greater economic crisis and a state's response to this crisis with austerity measures and rolling back of social rights, it is no wonder that there is increasing social unrest throughout the world. However, while not yet a class-for-itself, it is the new dangerous class, a force for transformation, rejecting both labourist social democracy and neoliberalism. (Standing 2011; 2014). The precariat has a consciousness of loss and status frustration, but part is atavistic, prone to populism, while others are progressive. Although this division has so far blocked it from becoming a class-for-itself, it is moving from its primitive rebel phase, and in the world's city squares is setting a new progressive agenda.

### 3. Summary

The research findings suggest that precarious employment is rampant in Zimbabwean Hotels. The fragility state of the country renders it possible for business to confirm workers permanent hence the adoption of precarious employment. Occupancies are very low in these hotels hence the need to higher more casuals who are need as and when business prospers. Contract workers are also utilised effectively since they are easy to terminate. Precarious employment in Zimbabwean hotels has been adopted as a cost cutting measure. It is effectively used to boost revenues and sustain in the dwindling business. On the other hand, casual workers and contract workers are facing serious job insecurity, poor working conditions, and unfair treatment and denied basic worker rights.

#### 3.1. Recommendations

Based on the identified challenges precarious workers are facing it will be good for employers to provide equal conditions for all employees in the hotels such that they feel to be part and parcel of the organization. Again, the paper recommends that the labour legislation in Zimbabwe be reviewed with the view to protect precarious worker's interests. This helps them to equally have a voice at the workplace and improve their working conditions. The paper also suggests that employers should proceed and confirm contract workers whose jobs will be of a permanent nature. The government should ensure that there is a massive regulation covering precarious workers. So far, they just have a small section that deals with precarious employment. Trade unions should deepen their nets to embrace and represent also the needs of employees in precarious situations. Lastly employers should review their policies and also recognize employees in precarious employment as a way to harness effective service delivery.

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