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Labour Turnover and Retention of Migrant Workers in Scottish Hospitality and Tourism

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To Mom: Thank you for always encouraging my education and my erratic global moves. ILYITMTYCES! To Grandma Aileen and Grandma Sonya: I'm sorry you couldn't see the end result of this, but thank you for supporting my future.

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1.0 Introduction

The hospitality and tourism industries have a large amount of labour turnover. The resulting labour gaps are often filled by migrant workers. Migrant workers have different reasons for entering the hospitality industry, but often have negative experiences that result in them leaving the job and creating further turnover. It is against this backdrop that this research seeks to add to the knowledge of the experiences of migrant workers in the hospitality workplace and explore reasons for labour turnover. This thesis looks specifically at migrant workers in the Scottish hospitality and tourism industries. It also compares those experiences to those of local workers.

The first section of this introduction defines the research problem in the context of the relevant literature. The second section describes the aim, objectives, and research questions of the research. The third section covers the research design and methodological approach. The final section describes the remaining chapters of the thesis.

1.1 Research problem

The hospitality and tourism industries have high turnover due to a combination of low wages, inconsistent, long, and antisocial work hours, low industry status, and lack of advancement opportunities (see, for example, Alberti and Danaj, 2017). Poor work conditions such as these can cause an impact on physical and mental health. The work has a low bar of entry despite the high degree of emotional and aesthetic labour required (see, for example, Wright et al., 2019). Local workers often do not want to work in the industry because of these factors, so employment gaps fall to different groups of workers, such as students and migrant workers (see, for example, Janta and Lugosi, 2022). This does not solve the problem, however, as there is high turnover in the hospitality industry among both locals and migrants (Haldorai et al., 2019).

Determining the cause of this turnover among the migrant worker population is difficult, as migrants are not a single homogenous group and have different motivations and goals. Migrants may want to build a permanent life in a new country, have a short-term experience to enhance their skills, seek opportunities to send remittances, or earn money to fund their leisurely travels. They could fall somewhere on a spectrum of these desires and simply want to experience a new country for a while, deciding whether or not they wanted to stay later (see, for example, Aasland and Tyldum, 2016; Piso, 2016).

While migrants are not a singular entity, much of the literature describes highly negative experiences for them in the workplace and in the community (see, for example, Alberti, 2014; Wright et al., 2019). Migrant workers are often nationally and ethnically stereotyped and may be segregated within the workplace. They can be offered positions well below their actual education level, work experience, and professional certifications. Language barriers, either actual or perceived due to accents, can limit their choices to the lowest positions with little opportunity for advancement. Businesses can assume they will work harder than locals and for lower wages. Instances of wage garnishing and theft are not uncommon.

When the United Kingdom (UK) was part of the European Union (EU), people from elsewhere in the EU could move to the UK and work without the restrictions, limitations, and expenses of obtaining a visa. With the vote for the UK to leave the EU in 2016, commonly known as Brexit, the position of migrant workers from the EU became more tenuous. Many people felt unwanted, even in relatively diverse workplaces, and migrants who had not made concrete plans about their long-term stays were faced with immediate decisions to make (see, for example, Gawlewicz and Sotkasiira, 2019). The actual implementation of Brexit was a slow process as the logistics were determined. Just before freedom of movement was slated to end, the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the world, shutting down tourism and hospitality almost entirely and encouraging many people living abroad to return to their home countries. There are no visa routes for 'low-skill' roles such as those in the service industry, so many of the migrant workers in hospitality who left the UK during the pandemic were not able to return.

This research focusses on the experiences of migrant workers in hospitality and tourism in Scotland at this particular moment in time: shortly after the COVID-19 lockdowns ended and Brexit was finally implemented. The hospitality job vacancies were still present but many of the migrants were not, leaving hospitality in a unique position as well. While migrant workers are unique individuals, this research hopes to find common factors in work experiences that lead to staying in or leaving the workplace. In looking at the experiences of migrant workers, the experiences of local workers are also viewed to compare the similarities and differences. The research also explores how Brexit and COVID-19, as well as the simultaneous cost of living crisis, impacted the experiences and choices of migrant workers and of workers in the hospitality industry at large.

1.2 Aim, objectives, and research questions

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of migrant workers in Scottish hospitality and tourism to understand causes of labour turnover and retention. In order to achieve this aim, this research has the following objectives: to explore the factors that impact the length of stay at a job; to investigate relationships between wages, developmental opportunities, workplace socialisation, and labour turnover; to compare the differences between the experiences migrant and local workers; and to understand any potential change in the perception of hospitality work after COVID-19.

The elements that impact length of stay at a job, discussed further in Section 5.0 Labour turnover, are well-covered in existing literature. This thesis adds to the literature in that elements are researched under very specific conditions. The literature usually states that there are periods of job scarcity where the employer has their pick of workers who are desperate for any job they can get, and periods where workers have more selection. Focus on worker retention seems to increase during those times where workers have more selection. This research was conducted and took advantage of an interesting time period: it was a period of economic instability, which would normally indicate a time where employers have their pick of highly-qualified workers in need of employment, but hospitality specifically found a dearth of applicants due to the simultaneous

pandemic and implementation of Brexit, changing the landscape for migrant workers in both a regulatory sense and for individual decision-making.

The relationship between wages, development opportunities, workplace socialisation, and labour turnover is also part of this literature on turnover: these are elements commonly brought up as reasons to leave a job (see, for example, Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). The reference here to literature from 2008 is not a coincidence: this was also a year of great economic turmoil, and the research itself was conducted just before the recession bubble popped, when employees were also at an advantage and employers were most concerned about retention. To this extent, this thesis suggests a Mooring Net model, described further in Section 1.3 Research design, specifically to address the relationship between these factors, as well as other factors identified in the literature as reasons for turnover or retention. The other factors in the Mooring Net model are important, but wages, development opportunities, and workplace socialisation are factors that a job can more directly impact.

There is extensive literature on the experiences of migrant workers as explored further in Section 2.0 Migration and the migrant worker experience, and it is less that there are gaps in this literature and more that there is an opportunity for more integration. By necessity, research often focusses on a specific group: the experiences of lifestyle migrants and refugees are vastly different bodies of work but both about migrants, but this makes sense because, as established, migrants are not a homogenous group. Local workers are also not a homogenous group, and both sets of workers share similar experiences in the hospitality industry. As described in Section 3.0 The hospitality industry, the work is low-paying, low-status, often unpleasant, and has inconsistent and inconvenient working hours. Migrant workers experience particular challenges as described in Section 2.0 Migration and the migrant worker experience. Of the migrant workers who take these jobs, many do so because that is the best opportunity available to them. For more affluent migrants, hospitality work can provide an income to support an extended holiday abroad, while migrants in more vulnerable positions find themselves stuck in with lateral moves to similar low-quality jobs. Local workers may find themselves in the same positions in hospitality without the migration-related vulnerability. Comparing the similarities and differences in the worker experiences looks at the work from another direction: are local workers and migrant workers more similar than the literature might suggest?

Hospitality, turnover in hospitality, and migrant workers in hospitality are all well-represented in existing literature, but several gaps exist. While hotels are covered extensively, attractions are rarely studied. Much of the existing research specifically on migrant workers in hospitality focusses on restaurants and hotels. This thesis explores the experiences of employees in restaurants and hotels as well as in visitor attractions. Employee experiences in hotels and restaurants serves as a comparison to existing research in these areas, while studying attractions contributes evidence to an under-represented area of research in the industry.

Likewise, there is an abundance of literature on migrants in the UK, yet much of the available literature on hospitality in the UK centres on venues in London, likely because of the numerous venues available and convenience of reaching said venues. Some of the research available does focus on Scotland (see, for example, Maxwell and MacLean, 2008), but this thesis

aims to broaden the available work. Hospitality and tourism make up a significant portion of the workforce in Scotland (VisitScotland.org, 2020), and the question of turnover is highly relevant to the country's needs after the ramifications of both Brexit and COVID-19. In addition, Scotland holds a relatively migrant-friendly view compared to England (see Gawlewicz and Sotkasiira, 2019 for the migrant perspective, and Minister for Independence, 2023 for the government perspective), so the migrant experience may differ. Specific research on the changes in perception of hospitality work after COVID-19 is growing. The existing literature on the many changes in hospitality work and the overall labour market are discussed in Section 4.0 Labour market upheaval. This thesis contributes to that developing body of research; while some of the results may overlap with other concurrent studies on the same topic, the specific context of this research adds to the overall realm of knowledge (see Ladkin et al., 2023).

This research is exploratory and the specific research questions are developed based on the mentioned gaps, adding an understanding of the experiences of the outlined group of workers as well as the management and policymakers involved with these workers. Given the established knowledge, this thesis suggests a research design that starts using a model design centred on the Mooring Net, to then add topics arising from the mentioned literature gaps, specifically migrant workers in Scotland, attractions work, the work environment after COVID-19 and Brexit, to explore differences and similarities. For the interview guide, see Section 12.0 Appendix.

1.3 . Research design

As described in Section 7.0 Methods, this research uses a multi-stakeholder interview approach. 32 interviews were conducted with workers, members of management, and stakeholders in the hospitality and tourism industries. The workers and manager participants worked in restaurants, hotels, bars, and attractions, and the policymakers worked alongside the industry and had often held frontline roles themselves.

The existing literature on migrant workers, hospitality, and migrant workers in hospitality use different methods to obtain data. Some researchers approach the subject with purely quantitative methods such as surveys to obtain an overview of a larger situation (see, for example, Shariff et al., 2019), and others use interviews of a smaller subset of subjects to capture a slice of life (see, for example, Iversen and Jacobsen, 2016). This research focusses on a smaller set of rich qualitative data through interviews to look at the nuance of turnover. The data is analysed through the Mooring Net model as described in Section 6.5 Mooring Net Model. This model was developed for this research through the lens of Push Pull Mooring Theory (see Haldorai et al., 2019), which expands on the basic concepts of push factors and pull factors to look at the mooring factors for individuals based on what they are able to do with what they have. The idea of mooring factors comes from literature on migration (see Moon, 1995), and for this thesis the determination of these mooring factors is inspired by the capability approach (see Robeyns, 2017), with the idea that people are likely to stay in place when they are able to do what they want with the resources they have available. The participants' views are examined through a further lens of critical realism and paradox theory to examine the difference between what they say is occurring, the sometimes different realities of what is actually occurring, and how those statements can overlap.

The research was initially intended to follow a multiple case study design with a one-year follow-up. Due to massive impact from the implementation of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, the staffing crisis in hospitality led to severe delays in the field work and the necessity to change strategies, as discussed further in Section 7.2 Field work. This unfortunately made follow-up research impossible within the time constraints of the research window.

1.4 Thesis summary

Sections 2 through 5 review the existing literature. Section 2.0 Migration and the migrant worker experience discusses migration in a broad sense, including common experiences and challenges. While there are many differences between migrant workers, this chapter explores the different motivations and experiences of migrants as described in previous research. Section 3.0 The hospitality industry provides an overview on hospitality and tourism, including the business model, the ideal worker, and the labour turnover issues facing the industry. Section 4.0 Labour market upheaval explores challenges created in the UK in recent years through the implementation of Brexit and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Section 5.0 Labour turnover examines the effects of turnover with an emphasis on turnover within the hospitality and how it relates to migrant workers.

Section 6.0 Developing a theoretical framework describes the theoretical framework of the research and segues the literature into the formulation of the methods. Section 7.0 Methods discusses the methods used to conduct the research as well as the methods used in similar research. Section 8.0 Findings details the results of the interviews. Section 9.0 Discussion explores the relationships between the theoretical framework and the interview analysis. Section 10.0 Conclusion summarises the research problem and the results of the research, and offers opportunities for future studies.

2.0 Migration and the migrant worker experience

This chapter discusses migration and the migrant worker experience. While every migrant worker is a distinct person with different experiences, there are some common themes in migrant experiences, especially as they pertain to migrants in the UK and specifically in Scotland. Despite this thesis' focus on Scotland, migration is examined in other counties, particularly English-speaking Western countries, as many of the experiences can be similar globally. Section 2.1 Migrant overview defines 'migrant' and other terms that appear in the literature regarding migration. Section 2.2 Moving for a better life discusses the reasons that people may migrate, whether by choice or by circumstance. Section 2.3 Choosing a country describes some of the factors migrants may consider when choosing a country in which to live. Section 2.4 Integrating in the host country describes the process of integration and the factors that encourage or inhibit integration. Section 2.5 Length of stay in the host country identifies some of the factors that might influence a short-term or long-term stay in the host country, including a desire for adventure or family obligations. Section 2.6 Migrants in the workplace discusses the many-faceted aspects of the workplace that migrants experience.

It is important to note that the experiences described in this section are a broad overview of migration, and are generally focussed in the years prior to 2020. Section 4.0 Labour market upheaval explains events in more recent years and the ways in which they impact these experiences.

2.1 Migrant overview

The terms 'migrant' and 'immigrant' are often used interchangeably in a colloquial sense, but the definitions of the terms differentiate based on intended length of stay. Merriam-Webster's dictionary (2021) defines 'to migrate' as 'to move from one country, place, or locality to another,' and 'to immigrate' as 'to enter and usually become established... especially: to come into a country of which one is not a native for permanent residence.' The UK government refers to a 'migrant' as anyone not born in UK, though that would technically include a number of UK nationals and citizens (Anderson, 2010).

Technical definitions may allow for a neat precision of language or an understanding of legal circumstances, but the words can also have an emotional impact or cultural association. Anderson (2010) uses 'migrant' to refer to all workers instead of differentiating between long-term and temporary migration because 'immigrant' has pejorative connotations, and finds the additional benefit that 'migrant' refers to people who travel both into and out of the UK. Conversely, some people may see the term 'migrant' as dehumanising (BBC News, 2016). According to Favell (2008), 'migrant' and 'immigrant' may have technical definitions, but the different connotations of each word dictate which one people use. When he interviewed Europeans who were living in a country other than the one in which they were born, each person used a different term for themselves. Some understood that they fit the technical definition of a 'migrant' but were offended by the term given its negative connotation. Others thought 'migrant' to be a synonym of 'immigrant' and associated both terms with a permanent separation from their home. Some simply

did not feel like a migrant; they were just European. For people travelling between countries in the EU, there is also a practical benefit from resisting the 'immigrant' label, as it can result in a loss of benefits in the home country and higher taxes in the host country (Favell, 2008).

The negative connotation of 'migrant' noted by Favell (2008) and negative connotation of 'immigrant' noted by Anderson (2010) puts migration literature in an interesting position: if each term is seen as pejorative, which word can best describe the people who move from one country to another? There is some use of the term 'expatriate,' or its shorter and more common form 'expat,' to describe people living in other countries. Merriam-Webster (2021) defines an expatriate as 'a person who lives in a foreign country,' but the verb form of the word can also mean 'banish, exile' or 'to withdraw (oneself) from residence in or allegiance to one's native country,' adding an undernote of permanent severance. The colloquial meaning of 'expat' changes drastically from person to person, where it can mean specifically a person working legally in another country, a person moving for a lifestyle change, or simply an affluent 'lifestyle' migrant from a Western country (BBC News, 2016).

The colloquial use of 'expat' tends to be in a positive light in comparison to the negative connotations of 'migrant' and 'immigrant,' and while this could be due to the perceived affluence of the so-called expat, it could be argued that there is a pejorative connotation for both 'migrant' and 'immigrant' because of a growing negative sentiment toward migration and immigration as a whole. Each word can be seen as offensive because it marks the person it describes as one of the people whose existence is hotly contested in the media: they are a simultaneous economic relief and economic threat, depending on the tone of the news that day. Meanwhile, the use of the word 'expat' distances the subject from the topic of migration, making the expat something separate and apart from the migrant. This thesis does not intend a negative connotation toward either 'migrant' or 'immigrant,' but will use 'migrant' as short-hand for similar reasons to Anderson (2010): to refer to people who live in a country other than that of their birth for an unspecified period of time.

The difference between a migrant and a migrant worker is simply the administrative work behind them (Anderson, 2010). Migrants have diverse skill sets and educational backgrounds (Iversen and Jacobsen, 2016). It is impossible to view migrants as a single homogenous group because there is so much variation between different people from different places (Aasland and Tyldum, 2016; Janta et al., 2011a), and attempting to do so ignores differences of gender, race, and class (Bloch et al. 2014). Categorising the motivations of experiences of every migrant from every background is not possible, but by analysing the existing literature on migrants, it is possible for common themes to emerge.

2.2 Moving for a better life

People who migrate for work generally do so for better lives, either in terms of more money or a better lifestyle (BBC News, 2016). This could mean better lives for themselves, their families that come with them, or for family in their home location by way of remissions. It is important to note that 'better lives' in a new location does not necessarily mean that their lives were bad in their original location, but simply that the migration provides the option to improve one's circumstances

or the circumstances of their families. Migration can mean an international move, but it can also mean a move from a rural area to an urban one (or vice-versa) in the same country. Rural to urban moves are commonly selected because of employment opportunities, though rural areas with the potential for entrepreneurial expansion may also be attractive to migrants if they have good living conditions (Kalenjuk et al., 2020). This thesis focusses on migrants who moved internationally.

Favell (2008) suggests that there are two major kinds of migration: low-class migration where migrants are moving for jobs and upward mobility, and high-class migration where migrants are moving for fun and adventure. This does not acknowledge middle-class migration, which could be a combination of job opportunities and adventure. As an aside, this particular language could be argued to be somewhat classist. This thesis will instead use the terminology of low-skill and high-skill migration, discussed further in the hospitality context in Section 3.1 Characteristics and context. The idea of migrant class also does not address the frequent issue of deskilling that highly-skilled migrants face in the workforce, though that topic is discussed further in Section 2.6.1 Entry barriers. The idea of moving for a better life can be very different for migrants from more affluent class backgrounds (Holland and Martin, 2015), especially as they may be better able to take advantage of migration regulations (Alberti, 2014). For migrants with long-term aspirations, the upfront costs of moving can be worth it for the long-term benefits of a better life; for migrants with short-term aspirations, the move is often the adventure and the long-term settlement is unappealing and difficult (Favell, 2008).

Among the high-skill migrants, some may move for a lifestyle change. These may be referred to as 'lifestyle migrants' (Holland and Martin, 2015). Many want to live in a new country due to family changes such as moving out of a family home, relationship status shifts, or the arrival or departure of children (Favell, 2008; Holland and Martin, 2015; Iversen and Jacobsen, 2016). Some may simply want to live in a new environment where they could either better stand out or fit in (Favell, 2008), or in a beautiful environment from previous holidays (Holland and Martin, 2015; Iversen and Jacobsen, 2016). Some just want to travel (Favell, 2008; Holland and Martin, 2015). Others cited a desire to gain new language and job skills (Favell, 2008; Kalenjuk et al., 2020). Lifestyle migrants with some business aspirations may also be interested in being their own boss in a niche market that appeals to their interests, though this is less about the income than maintaining a lifestyle (Iversen and Jacobsen, 2016).

The idea of moving for a better life takes a much different tone when not coming from a place of affluence. There is a massive income disparity between workers in both the Global North and Global South. In the Global North the disparity is because the rich are getting richer, but in the Global South it is because the poor are getting poorer: large populations and job scarcity in the Global South allow for very low wages that make it appealing to migrate elsewhere (Smith, 2015). This can be seen as a mutually beneficial exchange. For example, New Zealand has a Recognised Seasonal Employer program where people from smaller Polynesian islands can come work on farms for the season. This is seen as a benefit because it helps the other islands financially while providing cheap labour for New Zealand (Smith, 2019).

The ability to help one's family or oneself from a difficult home country situation is a major factor for many migrants. For example, many of the Chinese workers in the UK interviewed by

Lawthom et al. (2015) were encouraged by their families to work abroad and work to send money home, either to pay off debt or to increase family status. Kikon and Karlsson's (2020) study focussed on a grooming centre in a region of India with a very recently violent history where rural workers were trained to become high-end service personnel. Many students joined the program just to get away and did not necessarily plan to return. They had to balance the desire to leave home and start a new, nicer life with the responsibility to take care of people back home.

2.3 Choosing a country

A migrant's level of education and income propensity can be major factors in determining migration locations (Kalenjuk et al., 2020). Work is one of the primary reasons cited for migration. This could be availability of work in the host country (Janta and Lugosi, 2022; Shariff et al., 2019), or fewer jobs available in the home country (Lulle et al., 2018), or a mixture of both. Many people also choose to migrate for their education (Guereno-Omil et al., 2019; Treuren et al., 2019). Being educated in another country has the additional appeal of being able to try life abroad with a set time limit to return home (Favell, 2008).

The availability of work is a major factor in the choice of a host country, but that choice can be restricted due to logistical reasons. For example, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada have some form of working holiday that allow migrants come to work on a temporary basis and perform low-skill work (Joppe, 2012). Migration can also include calculation for long-term planning, such as bringing family members with the end goal of permanent residency (Wright et al., 2019). The choice of a country is not always for logistical reasons, and lifestyle migrants might be interested in moving to places where they did seasonal work (Iversen and Jacobsen, 2016), locations with beautiful scenery (Shariff et al., 2019), or just proximity to local attractions (Holland and Martin, 2015).

Certain countries and cities are more popular locations for migration than others. London, Stockholm, and Amsterdam are major targets of EU migrant workers in hospitality for the job opportunities (Kalenjuk et al., 2020). The UK is often a desired location for immigration, sometimes for the country itself and sometimes simply for the opportunities it provides. London in particular is a major hub for European movement: there is a large international population with many available jobs (Favell, 2008). For some, temporary work in the UK provides the cash necessary to return home and start a business or purchase a home (Guereno-Omil et al., 2019). In addition, learning English is a frequently cited reason for migration, as discussed further in Section 3.3.3 Migrant workers in hospitality. But large, international destinations come with large, international price tags. London is extremely expensive and tough to live in, with competition for housing and schools. It is difficult to live there, but migrants will endure a poor quality of life in order to access the benefits of the community (Favell, 2008). The cost of living has dramatically increased since this 2008 finding from Favell, as discussed further in Section 4.5 Cost of living crisis, but the sentiment endures: London is still a particularly attractive target for migration and where the majority of new migrants to the UK go (Portes and Springford, 2023), despite the exorbitant cost.

2.4 Integrating in the host country

When migrants find themselves struggling in a new country, they try to find solutions to stay such as taking on additional jobs (Park, 2015). Migrants often have a lower standard of living in host communities compared to locals (Irimiás and Michalkó, 2016; Joppe, 2012; Liu et al., 2017), and this can affect their sense of wellbeing. While living in a safe neighbourhood with nice amenities can contribute to a higher standard of living, a sense of relative deprivation has a larger effect: if all the locals live in a nice neighbourhood and all the migrants live in a poor one, the perception of their own low status relative to the locals can lower the migrants' sense of wellbeing. Being surrounded by only other migrants can also lead to feelings of being othered (Liu et al., 2017).

Many of the migrants interviewed by Irimiás and Michalkó (2016) tended to have high expectations of their host countries that were not met: locals were not as friendly as expected, the migrants made less money than expected, and living and working conditions were poor. Their friends and families who had encouraged them to migrate left out the less glamourous aspects of their moves. This was the case in other studies as well. The domestic workers interviewed in Vahabi and Wong's (2017) study felt like they could not tell their families back home about their poor work conditions. Having a balanced portrayal of host country instead of a rosy one can help with adjustment (Irimiás and Michalkó, 2016).

Having a strong support network in a host country, especially a network of other people from the same country, can help with adjustment in the short term (Irimiás and Michalkó, 2016; Janta et al., 2011a; Piso, 2016). Migrants can also maintain social networks from their home countries and maintain cultural connections by visiting or hosting family and friends (Moufakkir, 2019). Many migrants encouraged friends and family to move as well (Janta et al., 2011a). Social networks can be crucial to getting established in a new city (Favell, 2008). The emotional support is important for a migrant's sense of wellbeing, and migrants with lower wellbeing may have trouble building social networks and adjusting to their host cities (Liu et al., 2017).

Workplace relationships can also provide support in early parts of migration (Lugosi et al., 2016). Migrants can pursue strategic workplace interactions like networking, but can also have regular social interactions with their co-workers. The bonds they form can be strong or weak, and can provide emotional support and help form sense of identity. Networking at work does not necessarily mean friendship outside of work, and the act of networking is work in and of itself (Lugosi et al., 2016). Piso (2016) found that migrant socialization tended to be almost exclusively with other migrants from their workplaces in rural areas where there were less opportunities to communicate with the outside world; when workers were unable to transport themselves for leisure, they found leisure at work.

It is suggested that it can be easier for migrant workers to adjust to a new country when they have communication with locals (Choi et al., 2017). Positive relationships between migrants and locals can improve feelings of self-worth. (Shen and Huang, 2012). Cities that are less international can be hard to integrate into since so much depends on established social networks, so many people form social networks with other international residents (Favell, 2008). Feelings of

otherness can be even more intense for migrant in working-class areas outside of big, multicultural cities (Luthra, 2020). The diversity in the UK made the migrants interviewed by Irimiás and Michalkó (2016) feel more hopeful about being accepted, but they had trouble making friends with British people. Janta et al. (2011b) similarly found that Polish migrants were more likely to be friends with other migrants than with British people. The people in each of these studies were able to make friends with other migrants, but not the with those who had the nationality of the host country. Some migrants experience distrust, stereotypes, and an air of superiority from locals (Goethals, 2019), and migrants may even face open hostility if their cultures or skin colour differ strongly from the locals in the host country (Turner, 2010). While it is recognised that it can be good for the wellbeing of migrants to have a relationship with compatriots, it can sometimes cause tension with their own integration. Janta et al. (2011a) noted that the migrants in their study with the best wellbeing were the ones who integrated into the community, keeping some culture and language but also adopting new culture and language. These multicultural migrants experienced less stress than segregated migrants as they were able to maintain their own culture and learn values from multiple other cultures.

2.5 Length of stay in the host country

Migrants might change their aspirations over time (MacKenzie and Forde, 2009), especially as they develop ties to their host country. Many of the migrants interviewed by Favell (2008) only planned on staying in their host country for a few months or a year, and found themselves in the same country for years. Relationships, both romantic and platonic, can be a major factor in staying in one place (Favell, 2008). Trąbka and Pustulka (2020) define migrants according to their social anchors in their host country, classifying them as highly anchored 'bumblebees,' somewhat anchored 'honeybees,' or unanchored 'butterflies.' Guereno-Omil et al. (2019) outline other systems of classifying migrants according to long-term career aspirations, financial goals, or attachment to home and host countries. Based on these classifications, not every migrant wants to be integrated into society or settle permanently (Favell, 2008). Migrants might want to specifically work in temporary jobs to increase their skills and then move on (Baxter-Reid, 2016). For some migrants moving within Europe, there is no intent to settle anywhere in particular; being mobile is the point (Favell, 2008). Living in a host country close to home means an easy trip back home, and migrants may maintain their medical appointments back in their home country (Piso, 2016). One might describe these social anchors as 'mooring factors,' which are discussed further in Section 6.3 Mooring.

Some migrants may feel ambivalent about settling long term, and simply want to enjoy life while they are in their host country. Of the migrant workers in Norway interviewed by Kalenjuk et al. (2020), some were open to staying in Norway and some just wanted short-term money to move home or elsewhere, but all mentioned wanting to bring over their partners to live with them, at least in the short term. Raising children can be a major factor for determining long-term residency in a new country. Even for those migrants who relish the opportunity to travel at will, having children changes the idea of eternal mobility: they need structure, stability, and social network support, and moving children around forever is not feasible (Favell, 2008). Migrants in

the UK reported that having children made them want to set down long-term roots (Guereno-Omil et al., 2019), especially given the positive reputation of the UK's welfare state (Trąbka and Pustulka, 2020).

Indeed, more generally the question of returning to one's home country becomes more complicated the longer a migrant has been away. Learning and adopting a new culture can change one's view on the culture in their home country. The Chinese migrant workers interviewed by Moufakkir (2019) had acclimated to British culture to the extent that they had a negative reaction to standard behaviour from their home culture. European migrants interviewed by Favell (2008) felt that moving to another country for a while fundamentally changed the way one views one's relationship with one's country and oneself. Some stated that it can be addictive to move from place to place, and others said they no longer felt like they belonged anywhere: no matter the length of stay in their host country, they were still viewed as a foreigner. Moufakkir (2019) describes this as a liminal experience: being between two places, both a part of and apart from each.

2.6 Migrants in the workplace

While migrants are not a homogenous entity, they can have many shared experiences in the workplace. Unfortunately, these shared experiences can be negative in nature. This section focusses broadly on migrant experiences in the workplace, with additional emphasis on hospitality workplaces and workplaces within the UK. Section 2.6.1 Entry barriers looks at the challenges migrants face when entering the workforce, and why many end up in hospitality roles despite having credentials and experience in other industries. Section 2.6.2 Social networks examines how migrants use their social networks to find work and learn about workplace standards, as well as the way in which social networks can sometimes form ethnic enclaves in the workplace. Section 2.6.3 Entrapment discusses the ways in which migrants can find themselves stuck in a job that they no longer want because of vulnerable circumstances. Section 2.6.4 Mistreatment explores some of the ways in which migrants are mistreated in the workplace, the spectrum of this mistreatment, and their feelings of being replaceable. Section 2.6.5 Migrant agency discusses the choices migrants have in their work (or lack thereof), and emphasises that they are not simply victims of their circumstances. Section 2.6.6 Institutional settings describes the government regulations and enforcement (or lack thereof) that perpetuate unacceptable working conditions.

2.6.1 Entry barriers

Migrants have historically tended to have low-skill jobs despite having higher education and qualifications than locals, as not all credentials have the same value (Anderson, 2010; Resolution Foundation, 2020; Trąbka and Pustulka, 2020). Migrants' educations, skills, and credentials are often not recognised in their host countries (Joppe, 2012; McDowell et al., 2007), even when those same credentials may have qualified the migrant for a work visa (Treuren et al., 2019). Some migrant workers interviewed by Alberti (2014) said that UK employers ignored their work experience entirely. Employers may hire people based on how easy or cheap they will be to train, not how educated they are (Turner, 2010). At times, even when the previous education would be recognized, migrants did not disclose it. For example, chefs in rural Norway interviewed by

Kalenjuk et al. (2020) said it was easier to get work if they did not disclose higher education because employers would assume they wanted more money for their qualifications. This restriction to low-skill jobs has changed somewhat in the UK post-Brexit because of new visa regulations, as described further in Section 4.3 Brexit.

Many migrant workers have skill sets that far exceed the job responsibilities they have in the hospitality industry. In a study of hotel workers in Norway, Aasland and Tyldum (2016) found that while migrant workers and native Norwegians held similar low-skill positions, the migrants from the EU had a much higher proportion of higher education, including degrees and specialist certifications. Sometimes this can be intentionally leveraged for short-term benefits, as in the case of a study of migrant kitchen workers by McDowell et al. (2007) where many workers left highly-skilled jobs back home to pursue higher-paying jobs in the UK and learn English.

This strategic use of low-skill jobs is not the case for all migrants. Migrant hospitality workers interviewed by Alberti (2014) were generally overqualified for hospitality work and had little experience in hospitality prior to migration. This situation puts them at a disadvantage when looking for other work (Janta and Lugosi, 2022), and migrants are frequently frustrated by not using the full extent of their skills (Piso, 2016). Deskilling can be cited as the reason for migrants' low job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2016). While job competition theory posits that more education means more employment opportunities, this often does not work for migrants (Turner, 2010). A study by Guereno-Omil et al. (2019) followed Polish migrants in Northeast England. Half of the respondents were highly educated, but very few held high-skill positions. Some accepted with this de-skilling as a trade-off to be in the UK, while others expressed frustration because their qualifications from back home were not recognised. With that said, it is hard to recognise the person's skills if they are at a strong disadvantage, such as missing language skills.

Language barriers in a workplace can make the environment tense (Janta et al., 2012). English was the only language allowed in front of guests in the hotel studied by McDowell et al. (2007), but native languages were used to have private conversations in plain sight. There was a perception by English-speaking workers that Polish housekeeping staff were forming cliques by only speaking Polish around each other. Speaking native languages is generally not meant to be exclusionary, but simply a side effect of trying to learn. A safe space to fail prompts many migrants to take roles where they do not have to speak a lot but will have to actively listen, like kitchens (Janta et al., 2012).

Language fluency is a major factor in the skill level of jobs migrants can do (Aasland and Tyldum, 2016; Goethals, 2019). Many migrants expressed frustration with their language skills being perceived as fluent back home but not in their host country (Irimiás and Michalkó, 2016; Piso, 2016), or in being fluent but having an accent that marked them as 'Other' (Favell, 2008; Treuren et al., 2019). Migrants with lower language skills can be offered the lowest paid, least desired, or most dangerous jobs (Irimiás and Michalkó, 2016), while migrants with higher language skills have better jobs (Janta et al., 2012; Lugosi et al., 2016). Migrants still need income and will take jobs they can get (Treuren et al., 2019). The lower language skills can lead to many migrants taking low-skill jobs, such as those in hospitality, to improve their English, even if they are overqualified (Filimonau and Mika, 2017; Guereno-Omil et al., 2019). Simply having a job is

not sufficient for the wellbeing of workers, and workers who are able to use their skills in the workplace feel like their work is more meaningful (Kalleberg, 2011). Some migrants found that learning English led to better jobs in the UK (Lugosi et al., 2016) as well as better jobs when they returned to their home countries (Janta et al., 2012). Migrants in a study by Guereno-Omil et al. (2019) found low-pay, low-status jobs that were below their qualifications at first. This allowed them to build their English skills, which would help them find better jobs and move quickly up the career ladder. A similar study by Lulle et al. (2018) interviewed migrants who took a low-skill job in the UK in order to learn English and qualify for better positions. The migrants interviewed by Aasland and Tyldum (2016) who were working in a hotel said that higher-paying and more prestigious front of house jobs were more commonly given to people with higher language skills, and the lower-prestige back of house jobs were given to people with fewer language skills.

2.6.2 Social networks

While developing social networks can help with stress and loneliness in a new country, as discussed in Section 2.4 Integrating in the host country, these relationships can also provide migrants with potential job opportunities (Liu et al., 2017). Migrants commonly find work through social networks (Alberti, 2014; Bloch et al. 2015; Lugosi et al., 2016). While migrants with more work experience may look toward formal job finding processes (Treuren et al., 2019), many migrants can have a harder time finding formal employment and are often unable to obtain job security (Anderson, 2010; Urzi, 2015).

Aasland and Tyldum (2016) state that these social networks form a good entry point but are unlikely to lead to better jobs. Conversely, Bloch et al. (2015) argue that social networks can be used to help find jobs that pay better. Supporting the latter viewpoint, new Chinese migrants in Lawthom et al.'s (2015) study asked other Chinese people where they might be able to find work. They were often employed in restaurants at whatever rate of pay was offered, and only learned if they were being underpaid once they built their own social networks. They regularly changed jobs when they heard about an opportunity with a better rate of pay. Migrant social networks could also be used by employers who might ask their favoured employees to tell family and friends about job openings (McDowell et al., 2007; Piso, 2016).

The idea of migrants living together in the same home or neighbourhood was discussed in Section 2.4 Integrating in the host country, but this same formation of enclaves can occur in the workplace. Due to exclusion and marginalisation, migrants can be associated with low-skill jobs (Irimiás and Michalkó, 2016; Park, 2015). When migrants are associated with low-skill work, they can form ethnic enclaves as a form of solidarity, which makes it harder to integrate into the community (Bloch et al. 2015; Turner, 2010). Ethnic enclaves can be important for migrants who do not have English language skills since they can form support networks and work without learning a new language, but they can then end up trapped in the enclave because they do not gain any English language skills (Janta et al., 2012; Lugosi et al., 2016). Working briefly in an ethnic enclave can help migrants build up local job experience to find other jobs or potentially open their own businesses (Bloch et al. 2015).

The way migrants are treated in the workplace can greatly influence their integration. Adults spend most of their time in the workplace, and their experiences of a country are often based on their treatment at work (Luthra, 2020; Urzi, 2015). Even working alongside other migrants who are not co-ethnics can broaden the overall experience for a migrant worker (Lugosi et al., 2016). There is a common theme in the literature of segregation within the workplace (Janta et al., 2012; McDowell et al., 2007; Turner, 2010). Sometimes workplaces can be divided physically as well as socially, such as with back of house and front of house roles (Lugosi et al., 2016). This can also be a deliberate choice by management to put migrant workers in less desirable roles away from local employees (Janta and Lugosi, 2022). Aasland and Tyldum (2016) noted higher clusters of certain ethnicities in certain hotels in their study, likely due to intentional segregation: while locals were present in every type of work, they tended to make up the bulk of jobs in reception and management and rarely held unstable jobs like migrant workers had (Aasland and Tyldum, 2016). Even if this segregation is unintentional, the management is responsible for it happening, and workplaces need to pay attention in order to ensure work groups are ethnically diverse and opportunities are equal (Lugosi et al., 2016).

2.6.3 Entrapment

Migrants with lower skill levels may take jobs with poor work conditions with the intention to stay there for a short time and build up their skills (Aasland and Tyldum, 2016; Alberti, 2014), as workers with more skills are more sought after (Kalleberg, 2011). The assumption these workers make is that it is easier to endure poor conditions when they are considered temporary (Aasland and Tyldum, 2016; Baxter-Reid, 2016). Those 'temporary' conditions often stretch out for much longer than expected, and the workers may end up trapped in those lower-level jobs (Alberti and Danaj, 2017; Shen and Huang, 2012; Turner, 2010).

Moving to a new job does not necessarily mean moving to a better job, and many migrants experience lateral moves (Alberti, 2014; Rydzik et al., 2017). Not having the opportunity to advance may be a great inhibitor for people who no longer want a temporary work situation (Kalleberg, 2011), including those who have finished their education. There are limited paths for advancement in low-skill work (Baxter-Reid, 2016; Shen and Huang, 2012), and those promotions can be restricted by skin colour, language skills, and class (Anderson, 2010; Choi et al., 2017; McDowell et al., 2007). For example, migrant workers interviewed by MacKenzie and Forde (2009) generally had short-term aspirations at the company because there was no progression available, with the exception of a minor bump to a lead position. People knew they would have to leave if they wanted something more.

Even those who are able to move ahead slightly may not make much progress. Bloch et al. (2015) detailed a case study of an undocumented migrant who used a combination of intermediaries and work networks to increase kitchen skills and pay in different jobs over the course of 10 years, but due to lack of legal status knew he would always be limited in job title and income. A case study by Rydzik et al. (2017) focussed on a migrant worker with a Master's degree in economics who ended up working in reception roles in hotels. Her extensive previous

experience was overlooked and she had no route to management: every change in employer meant another minimum wage role at the reception desk.

2.6.4 Mistreatment

Migrant workers are often mistreated in the workplace (Wright et al., 2019), and that mistreatment can begin the moment they arrive in their host country. In some places where migrant workers are encouraged to come and fill employment gaps, frequently with the promise of professional development in return, these promises are often not delivered and the employers instead come to rely on cheap migrant labour (Joppe, 2012).

Many migrants experienced issues with wage theft. They might be paid incorrectly (Alberti, 2014) or not at all (Urzi, 2015), paid below the minimum wage (French, 2018), encouraged to work extra hours without pay (Goethals, 2019), or have deductions for things like insurance contributions that they did not actually have to pay (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). In particularly egregious examples in studies by both MacKenzie and Ford (2009) and Vahabi and Wong (2017), employers 'loaned out' migrant workers to other employers at a premium and pocketed the extra money themselves. The Resolution Foundation (2020) found that approximately 15% of hospitality staff surveyed between 2015 and 2019, including both migrants and locals, reported not receiving a payslip. The study also acknowledges that the actual number could be larger given the underrepresentation of certain vulnerable groups. With already low hours and wages, migrants can easily find themselves experiencing in-work poverty (Pradella and Cillo, 2015).

Racism, harassment, and discrimination are commonly experienced by migrant workers in the workplace (Alberti, 2014; Baxter-Reid, 2016; Blazek, 2015). Many migrants described a feeling of having their dignity denied (Urzi, 2015). Migrants interviewed by Goethals (2019) said they had expected to be treated well at work and were not; they were psychologically mistreated and not even respected as people. Many described experiencing microaggressions, and expressed frustration that they could not report those things since they were small and not explicit. Migrants in a Norwegian hotel interviewed by Aasland and Tyldum (2016) were more likely to be harassed by customers or discriminated against by supervisors in the workplace, especially non-white migrants. All of the migrant workers interviewed by Baxter-Reid (2016), in a study looking at hotel workers and bus drivers, experienced racism. The hotel housekeeping manager employed majority migrant workers but also openly discussed her disdain for their strain on the benefits system. The bus drivers said the dispatch office would pretend not to understand their accents and deny them overtime explicitly for being migrants. Migrant bus drivers were given the worst shifts and routes.

Even in countries that are not primary targets for migration, there is still trouble with discrimination. Blazek's (2015) study of migrant workers in Slovakia found that there was different treatment of visible migrants (e.g., Chinese people, who looked physically different from the locals and might not speak Slovak well) and less visible migrants (e.g., Ukrainian people, who looked physically similar to locals and spoke Slovak well). Ukrainians reported less hate crime than more visible migrants, which was in line with the Slovakian government's position on

migration: avoiding multiculturalism and obtaining migrants from similar backgrounds was stated as a preference (Blazek, 2015).

The dismissal of racism and microaggressions creates a negative work environment where that behaviour is seen as normal (Goethals, 2019). This view can extend to the migrant workers themselves. Many of the migrant factory workers interviewed by MacKenzie and Forde (2009) said the work was better than what they'd expected, despite the exploitative management they experienced: the money was good, the work was not too hard, and while their treatment was poor, they had expected that treatment.

The poor work conditions experienced by migrants can lead to declining health (Alberti and Danaj, 2017; McDowell et al., 2007). People in good jobs are generally healthier and have a higher quality of life, while bad jobs can lead to poor physical and mental health (Kalleberg, 2011). Vahabi and Wong (2017, p. 2) discussed the 'healthy immigrant effect': a migrant may have good health upon arrival in a new country but declining health as time goes on. Many of the domestic workers in their study in Canada had this effect due to poor living conditions, unsafe work environments, and a constant fear of deportation. The workers reported being sick often and having declining health. The housekeeping staff interviewed by McDowell et al. (2007) talked about how cleaning was hard on their bodies and exposed them to chemicals. Kikon and Karlsson (2020) found that the unpredictable schedules in hospitality led to physical stress, including sleep problems and menstrual disruption. The participants interviewed by Goethals (2019) experienced physical deterioration, such as chronic back pain, from their housekeeping jobs, which constantly increased the pressure to work faster and perform more tasks. They felt that they would be punished if they were seen as unhealthy or old, especially if they were women.

When migrants are overqualified for the positions they work in, there is a relationship of higher incidences of poor health, lower self-confidence, and lower job satisfaction and engagement, and these instances can be even higher if the migrant perceives their inequality and deprivation (Treuren et al., 2019). The migrant workers interviewed by Goethals (2019) reported poor mental health as well as lower self-esteem and overall wellbeing, and said that their work did not care about their mental health. The workers in the Vahabi and Wong (2017) study also reported many signs of poor mental health, including extreme stress and crying at night, as well as loneliness, and depression and grief from family separation. They never shared these conditions with their families; they were ashamed of their work conditions, but were mostly worried that their family would worry about them.

Employers base their labour supply on what they can get, and labour supply conforms to the needs of the employer, at least initially (Baxter-Reid, 2016). While other studies such as those by MacKenzie and Ford (2009) or Wright et al. (2019) found that employers chose workers based on stereotypes about ethnicities, employers in a study by Rolfe (2017) said they just hired the best people available; local workers simply did not want the jobs since they were difficult, had limited advancement opportunities, and did not pay well. While this may be taken with a grain of salt, there is a prevailing theme among employers who hire migrants that their employment strategy is an act of altruism and not a cost-saving measure.

Migrant-owned businesses can also be the source of migrant worker exploitation. A revealing 2014 study by Bloch and McKay followed Chinese, Bangladeshi, and Turkish ethnic enclave business owners in London. The owners wanted hard-working, reliable workers who were looking to excel in their roles. When looking for workers, they often hired co-ethnics. Part of this was due to logistics of common languages and knowledge of traditional recipes, but often it was due to pre-conceived notions that their co-ethnics were superior workers. There was also the issue of low pay and long hours: they needed workers that would accept such conditions, and fellow migrants might see their own exploitation as helping the owners in return for hiring them.

2.6.4.1 Replaceable

Change in the workplace often preceded a feeling of being replaceable. The workers interviewed by Baxter-Reid (2016) and Goethals (2019) were afraid of speaking up about poor work conditions as they could simply be replaced by someone who did not complain. This fear of being replaced was not unfounded, as in the example of employers in MacKenzie and Forde's (2009) study who openly admitted to firing any migrants who they found to complain. When new management took over a hotel in a case study by Alberti and Danaj (2017), there were cuts in benefits and many workers were replaced with temp workers. There was low morale among permanent staff, both local and migrant, and a wide fear of being disposable. Some workers said they felt pressured to stay late, sometimes unpaid, or they would be replaced by someone else.

The most vulnerable workers may be tied to a single employer. It can be hard to argue for job improvements when one's residence in a country is tied to one's job, and there are plenty of people to hire as replacements (Anderson, 2010; Pradella and Cillo, 2015). Being able to move on from a bad job depends on a migrant's support network, class, education, gender, race, and legal employment status (Alberti, 2014). Migrant workers can be compliant because they are afraid of deportation or losing future job prospects, so they accept poor wages and working conditions and work long hours (Smith, 2019; Wright et al., 2019). Migrant workers on visas interviewed by Alberti and Danaj (2017) were more compliant because they depended on their employer, either to continue their visa or not to report any missteps such as working in excess of the allotted hours. Migrant workers interviewed by Vahabi and Wong (2017) were aware of their rights, but they were afraid of fighting back against poor conditions and losing their jobs and their paths to permanent residency. It is beneficial for employers when workers' visas are tied to them because the workers can be controlled by the employer and essentially cannot leave (Wright et al., 2019). O'Connor and Harvey (2023) argue that it would be more equitable for migrants who are issued skilled work visas to be able to have the same right to decent work as UK citizens, including the ability to change employers: after all, they were issued a visa for their skill to complete a certain task, so why should that task be tied to a specific employer and increase migrant vulnerability? As it happens, even in locations like New Zealand that already allow migrant workers to change employers, it is difficult in practice and might make it hard to find work later; Smith (2019) found that migrant workers there stayed quiet about poor working conditions until they had a new, safe employer. Strauss (2015) calls this 'unfree' work: it is not slavery, but by specifically tying migration status to employment, the migrant is tied to a certain job and is not free to work elsewhere.

When migrants have the ability to safely speak up about their conditions, their workplace conditions can improve. Compared to other industries in Australia, hospitality employees on skilled visas were more likely to talk about problems at work, as they had more protections and more information about worker's rights (Wright et al., 2019). Similarly, Rydzik et al. (2017) provided a case study of a Polish migrant who moved to the UK. She initially put up with bad working conditions and denial of her holiday rights because she did not know better, but later realised she was being treated unfairly. She was once unfairly dismissed without pay, but fought back and was ultimately paid. She only felt comfortable speaking up because she had advanced English skills and knew her rights.

2.6.4.2 Spectrum of exploitation

This thesis defines worker exploitation as the use of one's labour without fair compensation or working conditions. There is a spectrum of exploitation: there is not simply forced labour or good work conditions, but a range of poor conditions a worker can experience (Delaney and Tate, 2015; Urzi, 2015). While laws focusing on anti-trafficking and exploitation often focus on the extremes (Strauss, 2015), mild and extreme exploitation can feed into each other (Delaney and Tate, 2015). Exploitative conditions are not necessarily forced, but make environments in which labour can be forced (French, 2018). Vulnerable people are more likely to be in forced labour situations, and migrant workers are one of those vulnerable populations (Balch, 2013). Anderson (2010) says the term 'vulnerable' makes the migrant sound like a victim, while 'precarity' talks about insecure employment and extends beyond employment into personal life: an inability to plan for the future. Migrants experience additional vulnerability and precarity based on race, gender, legal status, and class (Janta and Lugosi, 2022). Of note, while asylum seekers, refugees, and undocumented migrants in highly precarious situations are not an insignificant portion of the overall migrant population in the UK, they have particular challenges that are outside the scope of this thesis.

Migrant women have a particular burden. Domestic work, both paid and unpaid, is disproportionately done by women (Strauss, 2015). Women are expected to do a majority of housework and caring, so they may have fewer options for work (Robeyns, 2017). Employment and income can vary for women since they are responsible for the bulk of family and child care, and they may depend on their partners (Guereno-Omil et al., 2019). Employers tend to see migrant women as flexible and willing to take work others do not want (Bloch et al., 2014), so migrant women end up with low-paying and low-skilled jobs, often in hospitality (Rydzik et al., 2017). Supporting this, the women interviewed by Guereno-Omil et al. (2019) expressed having a more difficult time finding a job than the men in the same study. This can lead to especially high levels of deskilling among migrant women (Rydzik et al., 2017), even in cases where migrant women have higher levels of education than migrant men (Shariff et al., 2019) Women are frequently given highly gendered roles like reception or housekeeping (Rydzik et al., 2017). Even locations like kitchens have predominately male staff because of gendered hiring practices (Kalenjuk et al., 2020).

Women can be hired for their assumed capacity to perform emotional labour (Steinberg and Figart, 1999). This was the case for women at the hotel studied by McDowell et al. (2007), who were placed in their job roles by expectations of their gender roles. They worked almost exclusively in reception and housekeeping, and male management were called in for any situation requiring authority. The manager of housekeeping preferred young women without dependents, and specified that she wanted her workers to look 'docile and relatively asexual' (McDowell et al., 2007, p. 18).

The colour of a migrant's skin can also have a major impact on their treatment in their host country. Migrants from EU8 countries are generally white, which puts them at an advantage in the UK: they are unlikely to be visually targeted for discrimination (Favell, 2008; McDowell et al., 2007) and less likely to attract attention from the authorities for minor legal issues such as failing to register (Guereno-Omil et al., 2019). Despite this advantage, they can still experience discrimination and poor work conditions (Rydzik et al., 2017), especially if they have poor language skills (Alberti, 2014). The experience of racism is mixed; some Polish migrants interviewed by Filimonau and Mika (2017) reported experiencing it daily, and some reported never experiencing it at all. There is also sometimes racism from new white EU8 workers toward co-workers of colour. One Hungarian man in a study by McDowell et al. (2007) spoke of how Indians in his workplace were allowed to do the same job as him with no training, not realising that the Indians he spoke of were all highly educated and in a management training programme.

Diversity was present at the hotel studied by McDowell et al. (2007), but it was problematic. The manager said guests expressed discomfort when the front desk staff was not European, and especially if they were note white. Non-white workers were stereotyped by management and there were no Black people employed at the hotel at all. Whiteness was a major factor in interpersonal relations, and every single manager at the hotel studied by McDowell et al. (2007) had white skin.

2.6.5 Migrant agency

Migrant workers are not passive and unresistant: they have agency and make conscious choices (Baxter-Reid, 2016). Governments have migration policies that affect migrants, and migrants have agency when they interact with those policies (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). People can seek out conditions that they know are exploitative because the exploitation is seen as a better option to previous conditions (Smith, 2019).

The relationship between migrant workers and their employers can be complicated. An illustrative example is from Smith (2019), who expected the relationship between migrant agricultural workers from Vanuatu and their New Zealand employers to be fraught, but the workers had a positive view of their employment despite the exploitation since they depended on that same seasonal labour to survive back home. Smith acknowledged that their reliance on the work might have coloured their feelings about their relationships more positively but argued that to deny their own viewpoint would be to deny them dignity.

Smith (2019) discusses the different uses of the terms 'dependent' and 'independent.' In the Global West, 'dependent' is commonly used as a term for a person who is reliant on government welfare, while 'independent' describes someone who works for money. Even in exploitative conditions, many people prefer the 'independence' of exchanging labour for money than the 'dependence' of relying on someone else. In the case of migrant workers and the industries to employ them, there is discussion about which party is more dependent on the other; some say the migrants receive the bigger boost since they can take money home and spend it elsewhere, and some say the businesses receive the bigger boost because they exploit the cheap labour. Smith (2019) posits that the case of migrant workers is one of interdependence: industries depend on migrant workers, and the migrant workers depend on industries for labour.

While they are often in exploitative conditions, knowingly or unknowingly, migrants may still try to enforce an element of control over their situations. Migrants interviewed by McDowell et al. (2007) reported their resistance to poor employment conditions in small acts: extending breaks, humour with co-workers, or stealing small items. Other migrants may simply stop working as hard. Baxter-Reid (2016) calls this the effort bargain: work contracts say how much a worker earns and that they are to be controlled by the employer, but there are flexibilities in how much effort a worker expends. Baranes and Brown (2023) refer to it as institutional adjustment: adjusting one's behaviour to the circumstances at hand. As discussed further in Section 5.5.1 The ideal worker, employers found that there was a time limit on the high work ethic of migrants, and that limit came when migrant workers adjusted the amount of effort they expended to the benefits they received.

Some migrants exert control through their ability to leave a poor job: migrants may be viewed as disposable by organisations, but the migrants can also view the organisations as disposable. Alberti (2014) looked at the assumptions that migrants are in insecure employment because of their uncertain migration status, agency work, and unattractive employers. She found that many migrants left jobs because they were not attached to them and said that employers' assumptions that migrants are willing to work under poor conditions are likely not as straightforward as that. She found that some migrant workers used temporary work strategically to increase their skills, build social networks, and make themselves more attractive to other international work. They were not always available for antisocial hours like their employers assumed. This view from both workers and employers that the other was temporary was not restricted to migrants, as discussed further in Section 5.1 Turnover in hospitality.

Delaney and Tate (2015) argue that portraying exploited workers as helpless victims does not help them in the long run: they still need a place to work, and what will help them most is having a better workplace. Union membership can grant workers the power to change work conditions and transform bad jobs into good jobs (Kalleberg, 2011). However, migrants often work in industries without much union representation and have little access to unions (Alberti and Danaj, 2017; MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). One such industry is hospitality, as described further in Section 3.2.2 Workplace conditions. The amount of migrants who take low-skill jobs to get by in a country might also contribute to their lack of participation. Unions tend to focus on unity through identification with an occupation, but if migrants are simply working in that profession temporarily

and do not have that identification, they will not be appealed to in that manner (Alberti, 2014). Migrants may also be afraid to join a union, as they might be perceived as troublesome and lose their job (Goethals, 2019) or could be subject to their employers' wishes if they want to stay in the country (Anderson, 2010).

This lack of union participation by migrants follows a larger trend in the UK. According to Pradella and Cillo (2015), as the number of unions declined, the overall working conditions declined along with them. The number of unions to protect vulnerable workers increased in the late 2000s, but the ones in the UK did not have leadership reflecting the actual vulnerable people. The unions pursued a 'rights of ALL workers' message to limit the divide between local and migrant workers, but it ended up pushing migrant and minority ethnic issues to the side. Even in industries with unions, there is rarely an urge among migrant workers to go on strike because so many leave the jobs quickly (McDowell et al., 2007).

2.6.6 Institutional settings

Migrants are affected by policies both in the workplace and in the government (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). In some countries with poor treatment of migrant workers, especially those working irregularly, there is usually less attention paid to the exploitation/punishment of the employers than there is to migrants being there in the first place (Joppe, 2012). Migrant workers are vulnerable, but that vulnerability is due to their government status and lack of protections (MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). If the official government response were proactive rather than reactive, it would be easier to directly combat exploitation (Ewart-James and Wilkins, 2015).

Even when regulation is passed, it often does not go far enough. Goethals (2019, p. 294) defines human rights as 'the right to equal consideration and treatment; the right to life, survival and subsistence; freedom through autonomy and non-coercion; safety for self-preservation; free speech and association for self-protection; equal opportunity and procedural due process; and privacy.' Reports on human rights rely on businesses reporting their compliance, and do not talk directly to the workers affected (Goethals, 2019). Relying on self-regulation is very convenient for industries that use cheap, flexible labour. Companies generally do the 'bare minimum' (Phillips, 2015, p. 19) needed to comply and only act when consumers are loudly displeased, and then generally do the bare minimum to calm the masses. Alternately, the companies embrace the extra compliance and pass the extra cost to workers.

The UK has laws on forced labour that are primarily focussed on human trafficking (Balch, 2013). Poor labour practices in general that do not fall under the umbrella of trafficking are often overlooked. Businesses are very rarely looked into if not reported; the agencies that look into reports are underfunded, so the businesses rarely get looked into even if they are reported. Many businesses are invested in keeping the government away from the details of their operations, and the government wants to appear to be 'business-friendly' (Balch, 2013, p. 94). In a Resolution Foundation (2020) survey of workers in the UK, there was little difference in labour market violations between migrants and locals, but irregular migrants or ones with poor language skills may not participate in official surveys, which explains discrepancy between this and other migrant

worker studies. Labour complaints about conditions are usually brought forward by workers, but workers may not complain if they are worried about immigration.

Migrants may have trouble getting the same worker rights as locals (Goethals, 2019; Wright et al., 2019). They do not always know their rights (Balch, 2013; French, 2018) and the outreach programs to help them learn their rights are generally underfunded (Balch, 2013). Some migrants may not recognise their mistreatment as human rights violations. Goethals' (2019) study of migrant workers in the hospitality industry in London and Oxford found that migrant workers may not think of their poor conditions as a human rights violation because the language is high-handed, and they are afraid to speak up in case they lose their jobs. They need education as well as someone to speak up on their behalf. When human rights were explicitly explained to the participants, they recognised their mistreatment. Even when workers do know their rights, they may not be able to report violations. There is a hotline in the UK for workers to call to report exploitation, but according to Ewart-James and Wilkins (2015), they rarely do: the most vulnerable people often do not know about the hotline or are unable to call due to isolation.

2.7 Conclusion

There is no single reason for migration as there is no single type of migrant. Some may leave their home countries in search of new life experiences and exploration, and others may be forced to leave for their personal safety or to improve the circumstances of themselves or their families. Common reasons migrants choose the UK include job and educational opportunities, as well as the ability to support family either through remissions or providing a landing point in a new country. Their length of stay in a host country depends on their personal goals, how they feel about life in their home countries, and their quality of life in the host country. Some migrants have comfortable living situations, while others find themselves in horrid conditions. Migrants may have trouble with integration, especially if their home country's culture is very different from that of their host country, but their wellbeing is significantly improved if they manage to form social connections.

Moving for work is common, but work is not always easy to find. There are often entry barriers to employment, including lack of recognition of past education and work history, language barriers, and discrimination. Migrants may find themselves working in so-called 'low-skill' jobs, where their need for work will outweigh low pay and poor working conditions that cause local workers to shy away. They may additionally be placed in undesirable roles or segregated with other migrants, facing a double dose of discrimination in the host country and in the workplace. While some migrants may intend to only use these jobs as a stepping stone while they form a foundation in the country, others will find themselves in the same field for years. The government bodies in the host countries may claim to look into these matters, but in truth only the most explicit of exploitation is even reported, let alone amended. With all this said, migrants are not simply helpless victims of their circumstances. They have agency, and with the right tools they may be enabled to improve their situation, or perhaps extricate themselves from the situation entirely.

The bulk of the literature in this chapter has focussed on general migration prior to 2020, but major changes occurred with the simultaneous COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of the Brexit policy, both covered in Section 4.0 Labour market upheaval, that had further impact on UK migration specifically. While mention of hospitality employment has been made in relation to migration in this chapter, the following chapter will discuss the industry in more detail.

3.0 The hospitality industry

As noted in the introduction, the term 'hospitality' covers a wide umbrella of different job types, and there are different interpretations of the term both within the industry and colloquially. Section 3.1 Characteristics and context defines the term 'hospitality' as it is used in this thesis and then discusses some of the similarities between different businesses in the industry. Section 3.2 The nature of hospitality work describes the general working hours, the use of temporary workers, the conditions in the workplace, and the costs of doing business. Section 3.3 The hospitality worker discusses some of the common experiences of workers in hospitality, including the low entry barriers to join the workforce, emotional and aesthetic labour performed in the roles, and some specific circumstances of migrant workers in hospitality, including the potential for language skill development. While there have certainly been technological and societal changes over the years, many aspects of the industry have remained static over the decades, often to its detriment. This section describes the hospitality industry as a whole largely before the events of 2020, which are covered in Section 4.0 Labour market upheaval.

3.1 Characteristics and context

The colloquial use of the term 'hospitality' in the USA encompasses food service venues, hotels, and tourism venues. According to UKHospitality (2021), the hospitality industry includes hotels, restaurants, bars, attractions, leisure activities, events, and the suppliers related to those industries. Meanwhile, the OECD (2021) defines the tourism industry as inclusive of hotels, restaurants, bars, transport, travel agencies, recreation, and country-specific retail. Much of the literature on migrant workers in 'hospitality' focusses directly on hotels and restaurants, or does not specify workplaces but infers hotels and restaurants through references to kitchens and housekeeping (see, for example, Kim et al., 2016; Treuren et al., 2019). Given the disparity in definitions, this thesis uses the term 'hospitality' as shorthand for the various industries that cater to directly providing a pleasant experience for the guest. While these are different businesses, they have many overlapping similarities in terms of flexible work hours, difficult workplace conditions, and high turnover, and they all hire groups of people that will accept lower pay, including migrant workers. Literature on hospitality, and hospitality workers, often use the terms 'front of house' and 'back of house' to describe the types of work performed. These terms are related to theatrical productions, where 'front of house' roles, such as actors, interact with the audience and 'back of house' roles, such as stage managers, ensure the mechanics of the production without being seen. In hospitality, front of house roles would include roles like receptionists and servers, while back of house roles would encompass cleaning staff and kitchen workers.

Hospitality had the highest overall employment growth in the UK at the end of the 21st century (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). As of 2008, hospitality employed over 200,000 people in Scotland, approximately 8% of the workforce (Maxwell and MacLean, 2008). This decreased to 182,000 in 2009, presumably due to the recession, and fluctuated throughout the years before returning to 217,000 in 2019 (VisitScotland.org, 2020). As of 2019, the number of food and accommodation businesses in Scotland totalled over 17,500, with 41% located in cities, primarily

Edinburgh and Glasgow, and 8% in the Highlands (Statistics.gov.scot, 2022). While tourism boomed in 2019, accommodation rates were higher in cities than rural areas (VisitScotland.org, 2020), implying that not only were hospitality venues more numerous in urban areas, but were also visited more frequently. Events of 2020 reduced these numbers, of course, as covered in Section 4.0 Labour market upheaval. A large amount of the UK hospitality workforce prior to 2020 was composed of migrant workers (Alberti, 2014; Filimonau and Mika, 2017), and the officially reported number is likely lower than the actual number given the presence of undocumented and irregular workers (Janta and Lugosi, 2022). There is a shortage of workers in hospitality, and the industry has historically filled its labour gaps through migrants (French, 2018; Kim et al., 2016), as well as with students (Rolfe, 2017; Warhurst and Nickson, 2007), women, minorities, and young people not in full-time education (Ferris et al., 2018).

The literature on hospitality, as well as the literature on the kind of work migrants do, frequently differentiates types of work as 'high-skill' and 'low-skill.' High-skill work generally describes that which needs advanced education or certifications, while low-skill work describes jobs with few entry barriers that are accessible to a larger number of people. One might also describe these jobs as 'good jobs' or 'bad jobs,' though the elements that make a job good or bad are highly variable from person to person and job to job, as discussed further in Section 5.4 Elements of a good job. This thesis uses the 'high-skill' and 'low-skill' terminology to describe these types of jobs in order to remain consistent with the literature. Despite this use, it can be argued that 'low-skill' work is not actually devoid of skill, but in fact reliant on skills that are undervalued, especially regarding emotional and aesthetic labour.

3.2 The nature of hospitality work

While every business has its own model of operation, there are many similarities in the ways that hospitality venues operate. This section discusses the typical hours of operation for hospitality workers, the use of temporary agencies, workplace conditions, and the costs associated with operating a hospitality venue.

3.2.1 Hours

The literature on hospitality work often focusses on the hours worked. Hospitality involves working long hours, irregular hours (Alberti, 2014; McDowell et al., 2007), and flexible hours due to seasonal and temporary work (Baum et al., 2020; Yaduma et al., 2015). Since hospitality is generally of a seasonal nature, workers' hours are flexed to minimise labour costs. Tourism is dependent on seasonal labour (Kalenjuk et al., 2020). Due to the benefits of flexibility, there has been a massive growth in zero-hour contracts, self-employment, and temporary contracts (Rolfe, 2017).

In addition to temporary workers, many hospitality businesses make use of zero-hour contracts, especially since the economic recession in 2008 (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). Zero-hour contracts do not guarantee a set number of hours for a worker, so they can be required to work as many or as few hours as the employer requires (French, 2018). Workers experience a lack of job

security through the use of zero-hour contracts (Goethals, 2019; Wright et al., 2019), and recently-arrived migrants are more than twice as likely to be on zero-hour contracts than locals (Resolution Foundation, 2020). These contracts may be more common in more vulnerable populations. In the example of a survey of Norwegian hotels by Aasland and Tyldum (2016), 98% of respondents had a work contract that stipulated working hours, and of the 2% who did not, the majority were migrants.

Time poverty can be an important aspect for establishing the quality of a job (Kalleberg, 2011), and the lack of quality time outside of work can firmly establish hospitality as a bad job. The unpredictable schedules and long, non-standard hours can seriously impact a person's life outside work (Kikon and Karlsson, 2020). It is hard to socialise when work hours are long, irregular, or change frequently, which can make it especially difficult for a migrant working these hours to integrate with the host country (Anderson, 2010; Lugosi et al., 2016). In a bizarre silver lining, this imbalance can create better relationships between co-workers; service workers often bond with one another due to weird work hours and difficult guests (Choi et al., 2017). This increased relationship between co-workers does not necessarily make up for a lack of exterior social life.

With that said, it should be recognised that not all workers dislike the flexible work arrangement. Temporary contracts and part-time hours can be a bad sign if they are due to cost-cutting measures but can be a good sign in countries with robust welfare systems where people are taking time for family (Kalleberg, 2011). Some workers interviewed by Alberti (2014) preferred flexible work because they had family care duties. The lifestyle migrants described in Section 2.2 Moving for a better life might be attracted to hospitality *because* it is part-time and seasonal, so they can travel with money and time for fun (Holland and Martin, 2015; Janta and Lugosi, 2022). Tourism and hospitality are attractive to lifestyle migrants because it is easy to get a job, and the traditional problems in the workplace are easier to overlook when a migrant just wants a little money and a few hours to supplement a holiday (Holland and Martin, 2015). The key point here is the direction of the flexibility: if the hours are flexible for both the worker and the business, both are at an advantage. When they are only flexible for the business, only the business benefits from the arrangement.

Some employers pay workers based on the amount of work done instead of hours worked (French, 2018). This could lead to an expectation of overworking, but some workers preferred this style of payment. In the hotel observed by McDowell et al. (2007), housekeeping staff were expected to clean 16 rooms per day with 20 to 30 minutes allotted per room, keeping the same pay rate and expected rate of completion even with particularly disgusting rooms that took over an hour to clean. In a study of migrant farmworkers in New Zealand, Smith (2019) found that the workers had different preferences regarding being paid in this manner. Some migrants preferred being paid by piece and worked especially hard in order to maximise their profits, and some workers preferred to pace themselves and get paid hourly.

3.2.2 Workplace conditions

Hospitality workplaces can have comparable conditions worldwide. Similar jobs can have equivalent work conditions, and globalisation means that these conditions can, over time, equalise among related industries (Kalleberg, 2011). The hospitality industry typically has low pay (Alberti and Danaj, 2017; Yaduma et al., 2015). This pay may not seem low to migrants, at least initially; many of the workers surveyed by Shariff et al. (2019) stated that part of their attraction to the industry was the high wages.

Hospitality generally has poor work conditions (Alberti, 2014; Janta and Lugosi, 2022; Treuren et al., 2019) and sometimes unsafe environments (Haldorai et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2019). Some work environments may be safe and pleasant, but other places will skirt regulations as much as they can (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Ewart-James and Wilkins (2015) argue that the difficulty in prosecuting the truly unsafe businesses is that it looks like, officially speaking, the hospitality sector does not have any problems since there is no data; there is no licensing authority for hospitality agencies in the UK. There was some success in raising awareness of exploitation to major hotel brands surrounding the 2012 London Olympics as brands were conscious of their perception in the spotlight. Outside of major occurrences like that, the shame only goes so far.

The work is not intellectually stimulating (Janta et al., 2011b) and there is low autonomy (McDowell et al., 2007). Hospitality is known for having fewer benefits and for 'humiliation and meaningless work' (Goethals, 2019, p. 289). Some jobs have scripts they require workers to follow with customers, and while this can help a worker detach emotionally from a situation, it also removes their autonomy (Steinberg and Figart, 1999). Having autonomy in tasks, pace, and schedule can make workers take pleasure in their work, while having no control can be stressful (Kalleberg, 2011). Given that a large portion of the workforce is employed on a part-time basis, it may be unsurprising that many hospitality workers do not receive benefits from their workplaces. The Resolution Foundation (2020) found that approximately 15% of the hospitality staff in the UK that they surveyed from 2015 to 2019 said they had no paid holidays. To be clear, this is not a legally sanctioned practice. The Foundation theorised that the lack of paid holidays for migrants in hospitality might be due to migrants not knowing that they are entitled to paid leave, but since there were a similar amount of local workers in the survey with the same response, it does not appear to be from ignorance alone.

Hospitality has low levels of unionisation (Baum et al., 2020; Ioannou, 2024). Hospitality leaders talk about how vital a flexible labour force is, and say that workers themselves want that flexibility, but union intervention, though rare, disproves this notion (French, 2018). The low union participation in hospitality seems to be a global phenomenon. Aasland and Tyldum (2016) found low levels of unionisation in Norwegian hotels overall, but slightly higher levels of unionisation among longer-term migrant workers. The researchers posit that this may have been due to higher dissatisfaction, or that maybe people closer to home were more aware of their rights and did not feel the need to join a union. This is an interesting contrast to the general literature on migrant workers, such as that noted in Section 2.6.5 Migrant agency, which demonstrates that migrant workers often have low union participation. The participants in the research by Ioannou (2024)

simply accepted the poor working conditions they had and did not want to pay union dues as they assumed nothing would be done. Of note, the participants in that study were not migrants.

3.2.3 Industry perception

Hospitality as a whole is often seen as a low-status industry by the general public (Iversen and Jacobsen, 2016; Shariff et al., 2019). Some hospitality industry employers want it to be viewed as a great place to start a career, but very low public perception hurts that (Ewart-James and Wilkins, 2015). Hospitality's poor reputation can make it difficult to recruit high-quality local workers (Wright et al., 2019). The industry can be seen as unattractive because of its low pay, antisocial hours (Rowley and Purcell, 2001), lack of job security (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008), poor treatment of workers, or simply the idea of servitude (Maxwell and MacLean, 2008). Some people leave the hospitality industry entirely because they have had such bad experiences (Rowley and Purcell, 2001).

The low pay and poor hours in hospitality mean that the people hired tend not to have a lot of other options (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). They still need a job even if it means poor treatment (Ioannou, 2024). The low pay typical of hospitality can encourage turnover, especially when other industries pay more for a similar level of work (Deery, 2008; Mohsin et al., 2022). In the UK, hospitality is not seen as a career that people aspire to in school, and British workers do not want to work in hospitality (McDowell et al., 2007). This poor public perception extends overseas as well, as Shariff et al. (2019) found in their study that Malaysian locals do not want to take hospitality because of the low status and poor working conditions. Even the affluent lifestyle migrants in the hospitality field interviewed by Holland and Martin (2015) still expressed disdain toward the very work they performed. One migrant firmly expressed that it was a job they would not otherwise want. Others stressed that it was just a means to fund their lifestyle, not a career.

Working in hospitality may not necessarily be seen as a low-status job if one owns the business. Iversen and Jacobsen (2016) interviewed several lifestyle migrants who started their own tourism businesses in rural Norway. The appeal of tourism was often due to transforming hobbies into a business or having previous experience in the field. Other lifestyle migrants interviewed by Holland and Martin (2015) mentioned opening their own businesses to have the flexibility to do exactly what they wanted to do when they wanted to do it. The migrants who opened hospitality and tourism businesses in each study expressed a deep sense of personal satisfaction. A key component in these narratives is the choice offered by existing affluence: instead of having to work in a poor environment in order to survive, these migrants could choose another route.

The low status is not an absolute deterrent. Hospitality employment's low status and income are worth the quality of life upgrade for affluent lifestyle migrants (Iversen and Jacobsen, 2016). Compared to working in a small farming town, hospitality can seem glamorous and respectable (Kikon and Karlsson, 2020). For workers outside of these extremes, effort put toward improving employment conditions and benefits in hospitality makes the industry look like a more favourable career choice (Joppe, 2012). In short, hospitality is often viewed as a bad job to have, but efforts could be made to turn it into a good job. Section 5.4 Elements of a good job describes these factors in more detail.

3.2.4 Recruitment

With the conditions described in Section 3.2.2 Workplace conditions, it may come as no surprise that hospitality venues have recruitment challenges. Rural companies have an especially hard time attracting workers (Maxwell and MacLean, 2008), but urban areas have difficulties as well. Hospitality sometimes hires through formal job boards, but more commonly relies on informal recruitment through social networks (Treuren et al., 2019) and word of mouth (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007).

One apparently obvious answer to this dilemma might be hospitality schools, but these do not necessarily lead to skilled jobs for skilled workers. People who go to hospitality school expect higher positions than entry-level ones, but employers generally do not want to hire people without experience, frustrating both employers and graduates (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Retention can be higher among people with professional training in the tourism industry (Deery, 2008), but people who graduate with hospitality certifications can also get higher-paying roles in other industries (Rowley and Purcell, 2001).

Some hospitality venues use third-party agencies and temporary workers (French, 2018; Wright et al., 2019). Temporary workers may be used strategically, constantly finding the next source to exploit, or as a stop-gap for labour shortages (Baxter-Reid, 2016). This can create a sense of manufactured insecurity. Using a lot of temporary workers can make things harder on full-time workers, who are 'lucky' to have their full-time jobs despite increased pressure to work more and a potential downgrade in benefits, because they too could be downgraded to temporary status (Kalleberg, 2011).

3.2.5 Costs in hospitality

Much of the literature focusses on hospitality's use of hard Human Resource Management (HRM) as a cost strategy (Alberti, 2014; Baxter-Reid, 2016). A hard HRM strategy involves seeing labour as a cost that should be kept as low as possible through any means necessary, including flexible work (Baxter-Reid, 2016). This strategy relies on low pay and long hours, resulting in cheap, disposable labour. MacKenzie and Forde (2009) refer to this approach as a low road approach, but the elements are the same: low pay, hard work, and disposable employees. For example, the employers studied by Baxter-Reid (2016) used hard HRM strategies including using zero-hour contracts, specifically employing migrant workers because they were seen as cheap and malleable, and even laying off the full workforce periodically. Any marginalised group was suitable for these positions, and the focus had shifted from the previous target of women to the more current target of migrant workers. MacKenzie and Forde (2009) also bring attention to the use of soft HRM strategies like business case and resource-based views that rationalise hiring vulnerable groups in order to promote diversity, and warn that those strategies can be used as a mask when the true target is cutting costs through hiring those groups.

Companies have trouble being competitive on price when they do not take advantage of labour (French, 2018). Because the 'product' cannot be reserved for later, flexing labour hours is the best way for venues like hotels to save money (Yaduma et al., 2015). While having extra staff

on hand would help with workload and avoid issues with understaffing if someone calls out, the costs can be off-putting. One employer interviewed by Rowley and Purcell (2001) declared that he would rather overwork himself and his entire staff instead of hiring more people to reduce the strain. In an interesting contrast, a study by Yaduma et al. (2015) showed a negative effect on finances when higher-paid hourly staff were brought in to cover lower-paying jobs, but this does not seem to account for salaried management covering these roles themselves as often occurs in venues like hotels. Labour costs are generally the highest expenditure in hospitality and most employers will consider anything other than raising wages unless they absolutely must (Rowley and Purcell, 2001).

3.3 The hospitality worker

There is no one type of hospitality workers, but there are similarities faced by workers in the hospitality industry. The work has low entry barriers, which may be required by people without previous work experience or by migrants who have international experience that is not recognised in their host country. Some hospitality work includes difficult physical labour, but the less physically-taxing jobs often require intense emotional and aesthetic labour. Additionally, migrant workers in hospitality may have unique experiences and challenges compared to local workers. This section will describe the general requirements of hospitality workers.

3.3.1 Low entry barriers

As mentioned in Section 2.6.1 Entry barriers, migrants take jobs with low bars of entry, and hospitality work fits that description (Janta and Lugosi, 2022; Shariff et al., 2019). Hospitality uses a lot of migrant workers for low-skilled work in order to save money. Employers may choose people with few other options for the least appealing jobs (Aasland and Tyldum, 2016). Migrants often do not have a choice other than hospitality roles if they do not have the education or the skills for other roles. Treuren et al. (2019) call this a refuge job: a job that is available regardless of one's skills or education. Then again, sometimes hospitality is an intentional choice. The migrants surveyed by Shariff et al. (2019) deliberately sought out work in tourism and hospitality to gain new experiences, to work with their friends, to gain workplace incentives, or to avoid strict policies in more formal workplaces.

While migrants may find themselves in many different types of low-skill or undesired positions, hospitality is a major employer of these migrants. For example, Treuren et al. (2019) studied deskilling in migrant workers in Australia. The researchers found that there were more skill discounted migrants in hospitality than in agriculture, electricity, mining, and transport combined. They theorised that this was less likely to be because certifications were not recognised, and more likely to be because the migrants did not have enough work experience either local or abroad to be able to obtain a job that used their existing skillset.

Deskilling is not necessarily always the case with workers in hospitality. Workers at some hotels have stable and skilled work, and some have unstable and unskilled work (Aasland and Tyldum, 2016). There are many young people, students, and recent graduates in hospitality

(Wright et al., 2019). Treuren et al. (2019) found that more non-skill discounted employees working in hospitality in Australia were studying compared to other industries. Migrant students in Norway can work up to 20 hours a week, as in the UK, and both local and migrant students make up a sizeable population of hotel workers in Norway (Aasland and Tyldum, 2016). Many migrants choose to work in hospitality and gain skills to improve future employment opportunities (Kalenjuk et al., 2020; Treuren et al., 2019). Working in hospitality can create a road in to both the working world and social networks. In addition, work skills can increase, and a stable job in any industry can create a foothold for moving to the country for a longer period of time if desired (Janta and Lugosi, 2022). Of interest, the university students working in these hospitality roles are not described as deskilled in the literature in the same manner as university graduates; one might wonder what changes occur in the week of graduation that transforms a worker from unskilled to deskilled.

3.3.2 Emotional and aesthetic labour

Hospitality requires a high degree of soft skills (Irimiás and Michalkó, 2016). Wright et al. (2019) define soft skills as looking and acting a part, inclusive of emotional labour and teamwork: in general, a perception of being middle-class. Warhurst and Nickson (2007) refer to aesthetic labour, the employment of workers who look and sound the right way. Steinberg and Figart (1999) refer to emotional labour, which can be described as the production or hiding of emotions in order to evoke the desired emotions in others, or as dealing with the emotions of others through modifying one's own emotions. Kikon and Karlsson (2020) argue that soft skills are not about a physical product, but a creation of an atmosphere of care and feeling good, which is important in a market where people pay to be cared for. Warhurst and Nickson (2007) mention that this desire for a middle-class perception of workers can put people at a disadvantage if they did not grow up in environments that reinforced those skills.

Migrants with the right appearance can benefit in customer interaction jobs (Lugosi et al., 2016). Worker aesthetic can be important to establishing a brand, and employers may favour workers that are pleasant and attractive in order to generate a positive association with the brand and encourage repeat business (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007). In the Norwegian hotel studied by Aasland and Tyldum (2016), personal appearance was a factor in getting front of house jobs. Similarly, the human resource department at the hotel researched by McDowell et al. (2007) said they hired for capability for aesthetic labour, specifically mentioning personal style and a talent for interacting with people.

In service jobs, personal interaction is part of the product (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007). There is a sort of performativity in hospitality where a worker may act according to one's gender or race in order to fulfil the role of caring for the guest that one is expected to perform (McDowell et al., 2007). Migrants who are of a different ethnic appearance than the predominant ethnicity of the host country may be perceived as exotic, which can be a benefit for a hospitality business cultivating an international aesthetic but detrimental to the worker in daily life (Kikon and Karlsson, 2020).

It is a prevalent idea that emotional and aesthetic labour are inherent skills (Kikon and Karlsson, 2020; McDowell et al., 2007). While hard skills, or technical knowledge of a tool or procedure, can be important in some aspects of the industry, soft skills are often seen as more important in hospitality, since hard skills can more easily be trained (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007; Wright et al., 2019). Steinberg and Figart (1999) mention that there is an expectation in some jobs that women will be nurturing and caring in a way that their male counterparts are not required to be, and this can be expected of them as a woman, not as a person experienced with emotional labour. The front desk at a hotel studied by McDowell et al. (2007) only hired people who were naturally good at guest interaction; as one manager interviewed in the study noted, 'if you haven't got it, then you can't learn it' (McDowell et al., 2007, p. 12).

While this thought is common, it is not universal. Kikon and Karlsson (2020) completed an ethnographic study on a soft skills training centre in India that groomed rural students for careers in high-end hospitality and tourism. The centre taught the students posture, how to talk, how to walk, how to clean and groom themselves, how to dress, how to put on makeup, how to read body language, how to behave in an interview, and basically how to appear to be middle-class and pleasant. Hospitality positions were vastly preferable to the local farming work and the programme was highly successful. The amount of people being trained for hospitality changed public perceptions of people from the local area from violent and rude to well-mannered and polite.

While this training centre was privately run, the Indian government was also planning to launch similar skill programmes (Kikon and Karlsson, 2020). Other governments were also considering training soft skills. In Ireland, there were difficulties with front-line migrant workers not receiving adequate hospitality training to maintain the vision of the Irish as welcoming and friendly. In response, the government created classes to help multicultural migrants understand the idea of Irish hospitality, though they still prefer long-term labour to be staffed by locals (Joppe, 2012). Many of the workers in a study by Warhurst and Nickson (2007) had some soft skills training, primarily in clothing, grooming, and body language, despite being hired by their employers primarily for their soft skills.

Steinberg and Figart (1999) urge that emotional labour is real work that impacts profit. Some jobs are described as having a lower skill level, either due to technological advances or gendered devaluation, but they frequently have high skill levels needed in communication and human relations and are generally not compensated accordingly. High-class hospitality work may be physically easier than factory or farm work, but it can be much more difficult emotionally (Kikon and Karlsson, 2020). Emotional management is needed in service jobs (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007), and it is very hard to maintain emotional labour over prolonged periods of time (Wright et al., 2019). The workers interviewed by Shen and Huang (2012) reported emotional exhaustion from being 'on' too much. They sometimes suffered from burnout, leading to turnover and major psychological effects. The workers interviewed by McDowell et al. (2007) in their hotel workplace discussed the difficulties of emotional and aesthetic labour. One front desk staff member expressed always having to be 'on' for guests and wanting to scream because it was not acceptable for her emotions to be visible. There was a more pleasant atmosphere in the kitchens, where the workers were not visible to guests and thus could chat casually with their co-workers

without having to be ‘on.’ The workers studied by Kikon and Karlsson (2020) had been through a very unique trauma of coming from a war-torn area, and they found it very difficult to balance the hospitality mask with internal emotional trouble. Some of the former students did not get full-time jobs after their time in the training centre because they had developed drinking problems to deal with the stress of hospitality.

Of interest, much of the discussion of the integration of technology into the hospitality industry centres around emotional and aesthetic labour. Yaduma et al. (2015) and Smith (2015) both argue that advances in technology were not leading to labour being replaced by machines outright, but instead finding ways to replace existing labour with cheaper labour behind the scenes. Mullen (2022) notes that while concierge may not be as prevalent in high-end hotels as they once were due to the availability of online booking, they are still present because guests still long for a personal connection and recommendations. It could be stated either that this proves the former argument as the personal element is still necessary, or that it disproves the former argument as fewer personnel are now needed overall and thus some labour has been replaced. While the rise in AI did not begin until after this field work was complete, there is also the question about its impact on hospitality, as learning language models are able to simperingly acquiesce to even the most troublesome guest without the pesky trouble of human emotions. Of course, businesses that are quick to eschew the human element might also lose the element of human common sense, such as the case of Taco Bell losing its entire AI ordering system after a customer asked it for 18,000 waters (McCallum, 2025). It could be hoped that this highlights the very specific, highly-valued and difficult soft skill of saying ‘no’ with grace.

3.3.3 Migrant workers in hospitality

Prior to 2020, there has historically been a strong dependence on migrants in the UK and Ireland, especially in rural areas with lower applicant pools, and smaller hospitality businesses sometimes form a reliance on migrant labour (Piso, 2016). The wages migrant workers will accept can also greatly influence their continued hiring focus. A hotel study by Yaduma et al. (2015) mentioned that other studies on migrants and ROI are inconsistent about the positive or negative effects, but found that migrant labour and female labour were cheaper.

There are differing feelings about migrants in tourism specifically. The way tourists experience a place is partially due to their imaginations and the marketing of that place (Moufakkir, 2019; Shariff et al., 2019). This can cause a complication when large amounts of hospitality jobs are held by migrants: tourists do not interact with 'real locals' (Janta and Lugosi, 2022, p. 3), and the marketing of a destination as a local experience is questioned. Board members of the Scottish Tourism Forum expressed fears that employing large amounts of migrant workers could undercut the authentic Scottish experience of a tourist destination (Maxwell and MacLean, 2008). On the other hand, there is a marketing benefit of large migrant populations: migrant entrepreneurs open new types of businesses, and both the new businesses and the migrant presence can make the destination seen as more international and cosmopolitan (Janta and Lugosi, 2022).

Ethnic segregation can be common in hospitality roles, as mentioned in Section 2.6.2 Social networks, ostensibly often because of language barriers. Working in tourism and hospitality

can help migrants gain and improve language skills (Janta et al., 2011a; Lugosi et al., 2016). According to Janta et al. (2012), tourism employment gives context to language learning. When work environments are supportive to people learning English, migrants have a more positive experience. The acquisition of language skills does not always work out in the way migrants hope. Where migrants have foreign language skills, these can be extremely valuable in tourism (Ferris et al., 2018).

3.4 Conclusion

The types of businesses that fall under the umbrella of hospitality may vary, but they share many features such as seasonal and holiday hours, low pay, a separation between front of house and back of house operations, a reliance on lean staffing practices, and a requirement for emotional and aesthetic labour. Typical features of the jobs include working long, antisocial hours in unpredictable shifts, often in unpleasant environments. The work is generally seen as undesirable unless it is as an alternative to more gruelling manual labour or if one is starting one's own business in the industry.

There are also positive aspects of hospitality work. There is a high level of personal interaction which may appeal to those who enjoy meeting new people, the non-standard hours may be appealing to people like students or carers who may not be able to work traditional hours, and once the day is over there is generally no work to bring home unless one is in management. Migrants and locals both may be drawn to jobs in the industry for low entry barriers, but they can also be enticed by the idea of international travel and job connections. There is the potential for language skill development and different kinds of job experience. Some migrants feel trapped in the same position and like they have no options, but others choose to stay because they are treated well. While there are certainly exceptions, the owners of hospitality businesses are generally not evil capitalist masterminds setting out to exploit vulnerable workers: they operate within the rules of the industry, and the rules of the industry are flawed. In the best examples, workers are given the tools and training they need, their success is rewarded and encouraged, and they are able to move upward. Workplaces that take these issues into account may find the answer to their troubles with recruitment and retention.

These conditions as described were the state of the hospitality industry prior to the events of 2020. With new conditions, the hospitality industry was forced to introduce massive changes. Previous changes in workforce availability sometimes allowed for an improvement in work conditions for those in hospitality. The next chapter discusses the double upheavals of Brexit and COVID-19 and how they impacted the operations of the hospitality industry.

4.0 Labour market upheaval: Brexit, COVID-19, and the cost of living

In 2016, the residents of the UK voted in a referendum to leave the EU. This referendum was known as 'Brexit,' a portmanteau of 'British' and 'exit.' At the end of 2019, the COVID-19 virus appeared and developed into a global pandemic in early 2020. This was followed by a cost of living crisis. This chapter will explore the formation of the EU, the events leading up to Brexit, and the consequences of the vote. It will also discuss the timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the UK.

Section 4.1 EU creation and expansion details the beginnings of the European Union, including its original purposes and how it grew over the years. Section 4.2 Migration in the UK discusses the history of migration in the UK, the status of UK migration at the time of this research, and the visa system. Section 4.3 Brexit chronicles the events leading to Brexit, the feelings of locals and migrants around the vote, and how it affected the working world of the UK. Section 4.4 Pandemic describes the timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically its impact on Scottish hospitality. Section 4.5 Cost of living crisis discusses the rapid increase in the cost of living in the UK and how it impacted businesses, workers, and consumers. Section 4.6 Moving forward explains some of the steps taken to progress after these incidents of upheaval.

4.1 EU Creation and expansion

According to Favell (2008), the creation of the EU was inspired by the cooperation of USA as a nation instead of separate states: a single economy with no borders and easy, frequent mobility. Freedom of movement would equalise the labour market; if a country had surplus workers, they could go to another country with surplus work. The country who sent the workers benefitted financially when they come back to grow their own businesses, and the country who received the workers benefitted from the work they provided. Freedom of movement theoretically meant that Europeans could not just move freely, but would be treated fairly and equally as a citizen of Europe.

The Treaty of Rome in 1957 brought together Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, allowing for free movement of goods and people (EUR-Lex, 2017). The EU began in 1992 as a collective of fourteen countries including the UK. In 2004, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta joined the EU, collectively known as the EU8 accession countries. Croatia joined in 2013, and the EU2 made up of Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2014 (Resolution Foundation, 2020).

Expansion of the EU increased the amount of available workers in countries that attracted migrants, and the EU made it harder to get into Europe for non-EU migrants (Pradella and Cillo, 2015). The British government significantly underestimated the number of EU8 migrants after accession and more migrants entered the UK than expected (Anderson, 2010). Wary from the experience with EU8 accession, the UK government added some restrictions for EU2 accession, and EU2 migrants initially had work limitations (Lulle et al., 2018).

Even migrants from the EU with freedom of movement could still be subject to precarious work situations (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). After EU8 accession, there was additional competition for jobs between locals and migrants (Guereno-Omil et al., 2019), and EU8 migrants often ended up in low-skill jobs (Baxter-Reid, 2016). Migrants from new accession countries had the right to work and generally had similar skin colours and religions, but they had language barriers and credential barriers (Turner, 2010). Accession in 2004 led to many UK employers thinking of EU8 workers as good sources of dependable labour (Baxter-Reid, 2016). Rolfe (2017) noted that EU migrants greatly increased in the UK after EU8 accession, largely in low income sectors. Before the accession, low-skill jobs did not have as many foreign workers, but after accession jobs with the most foreign workers were mostly low-skill. In same time period, the UK labour market increased zero-hour contracts, agency employment, and self-employment.

4.2 Migration in the UK

Migration has been supplying labour to the UK since the mid-1900s, starting with roles in manufacturing (Rolfe, 2017), and there has been a massive demand for migrant labour in low-skill work since that time (Baxter-Reid, 2016). More people left the UK than entered it until the 1990s, when immigration rose quickly after the formation of the EU (Resolution Foundation, 2020). There were sharp rises in migration again after EU8 and EU2 accession, with record high migration in 2015. Migrants from the EU mostly came to the UK to work, but migrants from the rest of the world tended to come to the UK to study or for family (Resolution Foundation, 2020). London has the largest amount of migrants, but there was also a large increase in migrants in towns further north after EU8 and EU2 accession (Alberti and Danaj, 2017; O'Connor and Harvey, 2023).

Freedom of movement in EU was supposed to increase access to new and better jobs, but while more jobs were created, they were mostly low-skill, and only regulation has improved them (MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). At the same time, there was a correlation in migration growth, the use of temps, and worsening work environments in the UK (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). The UK economy was strong in the early 2000s, and was less weak in the 2010s than some other countries after the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, so it continued to draw migration (Resolution Foundation, 2020).

The Resolution Foundation (2020) reports that migrant workers accounted for 60% of job growth between 1996 and 2019. UK employment also grew in this time, including among disadvantaged people. Approximately 11% of employment in Scotland as of 2020 was held by migrants, which was less than London but more than Wales and most of England.

There were significant reductions to immigration prior to Brexit (French, 2018). The Resolution Foundation (2020) notes that after the 2016 referendum, far fewer EU migrants came to look for work that did not already have a job lined up. At the time of their study, the number of EU migrants moving to the UK had dropped sharply and more people were leaving; the number of EU8 migrants in the UK made for a negative outflow in total. While 2019 showed record high migration, that number was largely composed of international students.

4.2.1 Visas

Visas control not only who is allowed into the country but also how long they can stay (Anderson, 2010). While there were many different types of visas available in the past, this section focusses on the two most recent systems. The UK implemented the Tier System, also called the Points-Based System, in 2008 (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). The implementation of the points-based immigration system after 2008 was meant to keep non-EU migration down: it no longer allowed for low-skilled migration, and students from outside the EU were restricted (Baxter-Reid, 2016). Tier 1 visas provided routes for entrepreneurs and investors with existing capital, and Tier 2 visas allowed workers who were sponsored by their UK-based employers. A Tier 3 visa for low-skill work was created, but never implemented given the amount of migration from EU accession countries (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). Tier 4 visas were for students, and Tier 5 visas were for temporary work. There were also niche visas for domestic workers and temporary agricultural workers (Anderson, 2010; Strauss, 2015).

There were limitations for workers whose visas were tied to their employers. Workers on Tier 2 visas were at the mercy of their employer, as they would need to vacate the country within 60 days if their employment was terminated (Anderson, 2010). Employers could use threat of deportation as a tool for control (Resolution Foundation, 2020). Even some of the literature that is not explicitly pro-migration, such as the study by O'Connor and Harvey (2023), notes the excessive nature of this restriction: if migrants have proven their ability to perform the work for one employer, surely they are able to perform the work for another employer without a separate visa. Students, one of the major sources of work in the hospitality industry, were limited to 20 hours of work a week on the Tier 4 visa, with the exception of school holiday periods in which they could work up to 40 hours (Anderson, 2010).

Confusingly, the new visa system is also referred to as the Points-Based System (Gov.uk, 2020). The visas on the new system are very similar to the former visas, though they are named according to their purpose instead of a tier number (e.g., Skilled Worker Visa instead of Tier 2, or Student Visa instead of Tier 4). Some of the new routes are very similar to those on the older Points-Based System. The Resolution Foundation (2020) states that most of the differences relate to costs for migrants and employers. There are no paths open directly for low-skill workers.

Sponsorship has limitations for employers. As of 2022 when the field work portion of this research began, worker sponsorship required a medium or large employer to pay a license fee of £1,476 every four years, £199 for a worker certificate if they were from outside of the EU, and an immigration skills charge of £1,000 per year that the worker was employed (Gov.uk, 2022). Small employers pay considerably less, but the fees are still high enough in both cases to make an employer think twice about hiring from outside the UK. Beyond the price, the employer must also anticipate their worker needs in advance, keep track of deadlines to meet, and complete tedious paperwork (Anderson, 2010).

While the availability of dependent visas technically allows certain migrants to bring their families, this does not necessarily mean that they are able to do so; the migrant shoulders the additional costs for bringing family members, which can add up quickly when children are

involved. Migrants are also unable to access government welfare benefits that assist local families. These restrictions make migration more accessible to people who are relatively affluent or do not intend on bringing their families. Some migrants are unable to bring their families at all, such as migrants on student visas studying anything below the postgraduate level. This is likely by design: Anderson (2010) argues that it is advantageous for the workforce to have migrant workers without family restrictions who can work long hours when necessary. Meyer and Bridgen (2022) agree with the assessment that single migrants are the target for these visas, and further contend that any migrants with children and without a high income are at the risk of becoming impoverished without the same access to child-related benefits that locals receive.

Prior to Brexit, EU nationals did not need visas to live and work in the UK, and the implementation of Brexit meant that those EU nationals living in the UK needed to figure out their paperwork. EU nationals who already lived in the UK when Brexit began could apply for pre-settled or settled status depending on their length of time in the country, but no newcomers could apply, and anyone who did not apply and continued to live in the UK without status could be eligible for deportation (Ferris et al., 2018).

The UK left the EU in January 2020, but January 2021 marked the beginning of post-Brexit travel restrictions, with the application deadline for pre-settled and settled status being June 30 2021 (Resolution Foundation, 2020). It is important to note that restrictions changed once again in 2024, though this will be discussed further in Section 9.0 Discussion as the changes occurred outside of the context of the field work of this thesis.

4.3 Brexit

Favell (2008) described a common feeling among his interview participants that the UK and Europe were separate despite being joined. The participants referred to ‘London’ and ‘Europe’ frequently as separate entities. While this study was long before Brexit, it demonstrates a feeling of separation that had been prevalent for a long time: even in a unified EU, there was a feeling that the UK was already apart, as demonstrated by an increase of nationalist sentiment and anti-movement policies in the early 2000s (Favell, 2008).

Immigration was a key part of Brexit (Luthra, 2020). The phrase 'British jobs for British workers' was popularised by Gordon Brown as prime minister in 2007, but the idea of British jobs being 'taken' by migrants was also a talking point in the 1930s, then in reference to Jews fleeing persecution (Shabi, 2017). Racial tension existed long before Brexit, but the Leave vote exacerbated the situation (Trąbka and Pustulka, 2020). EU migrants other than the Irish were not allowed to vote in the referendum, which was especially upsetting to EU migrants since the vote was essentially about them (Lulle et al., 2018). Many EU migrants felt angry, sad, and hurt: Brexit felt like a very personal statement that they were no longer wanted in the UK (Lulle et al., 2018; Trąbka and Pustulka, 2020). There was more open hostility toward migrants (Ferris et al., 2018) and a rise in hate crimes directly following the Brexit vote (Gawlewicz and Sotkasiira, 2019; Luthra, 2020).

The location of migrants may have something to do with their perception of anti-migrant hostility. Migrants in Scotland interviewed by Gawlewicz and Sotkasiira (2019) said they felt very welcome, and the researchers noted that Scotland's vote to remain in the EU may have lessened the perceived hostility. Even in multicultural London that voted to remain, migrants interviewed by Lulle et al. (2018) felt othered by British people. Other studies around this time showed that some migrants felt as if Brexit did not apply to them, either because they did not intend on living in the UK forever or because they had established a network and felt secure (Gawlewicz and Sotkasiira, 2019; Trąbka and Pustulka, 2020). Brexit made EU migrants face the question of how long they intended to stay. Some migrants who had not previously considered this were suddenly faced with the somewhat urgent decision of whether or not they wanted to root their families in the UK (Lulle et al., 2018; Luthra, 2020).

Proponents of migration argue that their skills are necessary for society to function (Janta and Lugosi, 2022). Migration is useful for the economy, particularly in certain sectors (Ferris et al., 2018), and migrants can drive the creation and expansion of new markets (Kalenjuk et al., 2020). Prior to Brexit, there were a large amount of migrant workers in the UK (Anderson, 2010), particularly in sectors like hospitality (Alberti and Danaj, 2017; Turner, 2010). Most of the growth in UK hospitality pre-Brexit was due to migrant workers from the EU (Portes and Springford, 2023). At the time of the migration study by Treuren et al. (2019), migrants were approximately 60% of the London hospitality workforce. The Resolution Foundation (2020) reports that in 2019, recently arrived EU migrants were one and a half times more likely to work in hotels and accommodation than established migrants, and four times more likely to work there than locals. Section 2.6.5 Migrant agency describes the interdependence of migrant workers and their employers: while it can be easy to see migrants as wholly dependent on their employers, the employers are equally dependent on migrant workers, especially in seasonal roles. With so much of the UK workforce depending on migrant labour, what would happen when the labour supply stopped?

Migration was, in fact, substantially higher in 2022 than it was before Brexit (Portes and Springford, 2023). This was due to an increase in refugees from Ukraine and Hong Kong, but there was also a significant increase in skilled work visas. This is to be expected to some extent at first; skilled workers from the EU would now need a visa to work in multi-national companies in the UK, and the companies who could afford it would now issue a visa to these workers. The fact that it continued past the initial year is of interest. Strangely, Portes and Springford (2023) suggest that employers might have taken advantage of the lower salary thresholds for migrants post-Brexit to begin bringing in labour from outside the UK where they had not done so previously, but this ignores the costs associated with visa sponsorship.

In a logistical sense, Brexit made the experience of EU workers closer to that of people from outside the UK as they were now subject to immigration red tape. For example, many university staff interviewed by Luthra (2020) did not qualify for settled status because they spent long amounts of time outside the country, and often had not considered the documentation needed for immigration because they were not 'immigrants' before. Academia stood to suffer from the ending of free movement, making the UK a less desirable location of study for international

students. Luthra's study focussed specifically on the impact on academia, but that impact also extends outward to other industries that depend on student labour, such as hospitality. A further study found that international enrolment throughout the UK did indeed drop after Brexit, with significantly fewer applications from EU countries (Amuedo-Dorantes and Romiti, 2021). The biggest change in applications were from EU countries with weaker economies, and the authors suggest that this may have been tied to the difficulty in obtaining student loans and challenges in remaining in the UK after studies were completed. Compare this with another prediction that the fall in the value of the pound sterling would make it cheaper to study in the UK but not as profitable to work there (Resolution Foundation, 2020). Instead, the difficulty in procuring loans in addition to the challenges with long-term work seem to have dissuaded EU students from applying. Of interest, the lower applications were consistent among UK regions whether or not they voted for Brexit (Amuedo-Dorantes and Romiti, 2021), so perhaps the perception of being unwelcoming was not as strong a factor as originally thought.

The impact on hospitality went beyond labour. Ferris et al. (2018) predicted that local consumers might not spend as much on leisure in anticipation of a downturn in the economy but that holidays within the UK might increase if Brexit lowered the strength of the pound sterling. In reality, while international tourism was down by the end of 2022 compared to the same time period in 2019, overall spending was increased (VisitBritain, 2022). This drop in numbers could be attributed more to pandemic recovery than to Brexit. The value of the pound sterling did fall, but not a catastrophic amount; instead, the increase in spending could be related to the overall increase in the prices of goods and services. As for local holidays, Brexit combined with the factors noted in Section 4.4 Pandemic and Section 4.5 Cost of living crisis to make luxury spending, such as hospitality, unappealing for a large numbers of UK households (Watts, 2022).

4.4 Pandemic

The COVID-19 virus began at the end of 2019 and reached global pandemic level in early 2020. The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (2021) provided a thorough timeline of the pandemic with a particular focus on its impacts on Scotland. The first positive case of COVID-19 was recorded in Scotland on 1 March 2020. The first UK lockdown was announced for 24 March: all schools, restaurants, pubs, and social venues were to close other than delivery. Lockdown restrictions alternated in severity until 19 July 2021, with businesses closing and reopening with various restrictions each time. Some of the restrictions particular to hospitality, beyond whether or not businesses were allowed to be open at all, included the use of face masks and social distancing, curfews for both businesses and the general public, and restrictions on serving alcohol. This lengthy timeline of repeated openings and closures was difficult for hospitality businesses to keep up with and for customers to follow.

According to Baum et al. (2020), businesses that were unable to move fully online but were allowed to remain open adapted as much as possible to accommodate new sanitation and social distancing requirements. The food delivery business thrived, but it was not as profitable as in-restaurant dining and delivery itself often relied on low-paid gig workers. Throughout the pandemic, the Scottish government provided multiple instances of financial relief to various

industries, including hospitality and tourism (The Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2021). This relief included loans, grants, and subsidised discount campaigns like 'Eat Out to Help Out.' In June 2021, £12 million in funding was made available for businesses, including hospitality, in areas that still had restrictions.

The International Labour Organisation (2021) estimates that the pandemic caused a global loss of 114 million jobs in 2020. Job losses were higher among women and younger workers. Jobs in the service sector were hit particularly hard, with a 20% global employment loss. While most of this was employment loss was due to hour reductions or furlough, the rise in full unemployment was similar to the 2008-2009 financial crisis. Job retention schemes like the one implemented in Scotland lessened some of the employment losses, but low-paid and low-skilled jobs were hit the hardest, exacerbating the existing inequality. Even with the economy reopening, these job losses did not recover as quickly as high-paying jobs.

Baum et al. (2020) examined some of the effects of COVID-19 on the workforce. Different countries had different responses to the pandemic, but generally offered some kind of support to their citizens. The UK governments encouraged businesses to keep paying employees for as long as possible. Where this was not possible, the businesses put people on furlough and the government supplemented a portion of their prior income. Some employers extended benefits even during furlough, or provided partial pay. Sick leave was extended for standard workers and provided for independent contractors who would not have otherwise received it. A job retention scheme was in place from June 2020 through October 2020, with the government providing 80% of income to workers while on lockdown (The Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2021). People who were not with their employers for a prescribed length of time, migrants, and gig workers without formal contracts were not covered by those subsidies (Baum et al., 2020). The workers who were not put on furlough covered the work of those who left, and this severe understaffing could often lead to burnout (Mullen, 2022; Robertson et al., 2023).

The UK implemented a traffic light system for international travel, with countries listed as green, amber, or red (The Scottish Parliament Information Center, 2021). Green countries were generally in the EU and had fewer travel restrictions, amber countries had stricter travel restrictions, and red countries were entirely barred from travel. Countries moved from amber to red and back regularly, so planning ahead for travel was difficult and required constantly checking a country's status. Even when travel was not entirely barred, there were various quarantine requirements. The required quarantine lengths ranged from 7 days to 14 days over the course of the pandemic, and travellers could be required to stay in a hotel for the duration depending on the country of origin. The quarantine period was eventually removed for travellers vaccinated within the EU who provided a negative test, but the traffic light system only ended on 4 October 2021.

This system was difficult for people planning to undertake work or studies in the UK, but effectively ended travel to the UK for tourism purposes given the length of the quarantine periods. With travel also restricted between Scotland and the rest of the UK during the January 2021 lockdown, this meant very little travel to Scotland whatsoever. Baum et al. (2020) reviewed some of the effects of the pandemic on hospitality. Many hospitality workers move to find new work, either to bigger cities or simply to new places, but the pandemic disallowed travel. Even if travel

were allowed, hospitality work was impacted worldwide. Low wages and job instability are standard in hospitality, which meant that many of the people who lost their jobs did not have savings to rely on. Women were hit especially hard because of child care facilities closing; even if they kept their jobs, they had nowhere to send their children during work hours (Baum et al., 2020). Schools opened and closed several times throughout the pandemic, and even when they were open, children were at times required to stay home if their classmates tested positive for COVID-19 (The Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2021).

Unsurprisingly, migration to the UK changed as a result of the pandemic. The Resolution Foundation (2020) compared past and present data on international arrivals and found that fewer non-EU visas were issued in 2020, though they noted that may have been partially due to visa centre closures as a result of the virus. In addition, they found that there was a very large drop in the population of EU migrants who had been in the UK for fewer than five years. These migrants were unlikely to be geographically restricted to the UK because of home ownerships or family responsibilities, and may have chosen to return to their home countries to be with family. Furthermore, the Resolution Foundation (2020) also found that many of the migrants who left the UK were in lower-skilled jobs such as hospitality. There was a large increase of job loss in lower-paid occupations during the pandemic, and the drop in the number of EU migrants in those occupations suggests that they may have already left the country.

Because of mandated closures during lockdown and the resulting organisational downsizing, there were not as many jobs available. Baum et al. (2020) note that in many cases with layoffs, local employees were prioritised over migrants and many people lost permission to be in the country when they lost their jobs. Migrants who lived in housing supplied by their employers lost their homes as well as their jobs. International students who relied on hospitality schedules to pay their rent lost their only source of incomes and sometimes their homes. For people who returned to their home countries, it is unclear whether they would want to return to either the UK or the hospitality industry after COVID-19.

4.5 Cost of living crisis

Increases in the cost of goods, energy, and other necessities of daily life led to a cost of living crisis in Scotland. By September 2022, inflation was approximately 10.1%, having increased from 0.5% in February 2021 (Scottish Government, 2022). The most heavily-impacted costs were those of energy and materials, especially food. Energy prices increased by over 70% of their 2021 rates, partially due to embargoes on Russian gas as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war. These astronomical energy costs were followed by mortgage rate increases. The UK government implemented rent freezes and eviction moratoriums, and provided support for energy payments, but the vast increases were more than many could handle. The impact of the costs of food, transportation, housing, and energy on households meant that many households had to cut discretionary spending, especially on everyday luxuries such as hospitality. The reduced income in hospitality was exacerbated by the already rising costs for food, materials, and energy.

Curiously, the report from the Scottish Government (2022) on the cost of living crisis cited rising labour costs as one of the issues faced by businesses as well, but also stated that private sector pay rates fell by 1.6% in terms of real pay during this time. The report was also released before the minimum wage increase in Scotland of April 2023, which offered increases of 9.7% for almost every category of worker, with increases of 10.9% for workers aged 21-22 (Low Pay Commission, 2023). The increase in the national minimum wage from 2022 to 2023 was the highest of any increase in the previous 10 years (Francis-Devine, 2023). Figure 4.1 below is compiled from the Francis-Devine study and displays these rates and the percentage of increase in that 10 year period. Of note, the age ranges for each category changed during certain years, and in these cases the increase percentage was calculated from the nearest previous rate.

Year	Age 23+	Age 21-22	Age 18-20	Age16-17	Apprentice	National Living Wage increase
2023	10.42	10.18	7.49	5.28	5.28	9.7%
2022	9.50	9.18	6.83	4.81	4.81	6.6%
2021	8.91	8.36	6.56	4.62	4.30	2.2%
-	Age 25+	Age 21-24	Age 18-20	Age 16-17	Apprentice	-
2020	8.72	8.20	6.45	4.55	4.15	6.2%
2019	8.21	7.70	6.15	4.35	3.90	4.9%
2018	7.83	7.38	5.90	4.20	3.70	4.4%
2017	7.50	7.05	5.60	4.05	3.50	4.2%
2016	7.20	6.95	5.55	4.00	3.40	7.5%
-	-	Age 21+	Age 18-20	Age 16-17	Apprentice	-
2015	-	6.70	5.30	3.87	3.30	3.1%
2014	-	6.50	5.13	3.79	2.73	3%
2013	-	6.31	5.03	3.72	2.68	-

Figure 4.1 10 years of national minimum wage rates per hour, in pound sterling

Hospitality makes up 16% of the jobs in the UK paid at or below the national living wage (Francis-Devine, 2023), and it is safe to assume that many hospitality jobs are paying the minimum rates or similar. As noted in Section 3.0 The hospitality industry, many people employed in hospitality are students. While mature students certainly exist, students typically finish university by age 22, meaning that the students employed in hospitality are likely receiving the national minimum wage appropriate to their age group. This makes the discussion of businesses impacted by rising labour costs in the Scottish Government (2022) report somewhat confusing: wages have certainly been rising, but this has been the case every year since the national minimum wage was implemented in 1999 (Francis-Devine, 2023). This is especially strange in the case of industries that typically employ younger workers, such as hospitality, as those rates are even lower.

Whether or not the wage increase truly accounts for one of the challenges facing businesses, there is no doubt that challenges indeed exist. Inflation rose significantly higher than wages, even with the highest rate of wage increase in 10 years. Struggling households cut costs when they can, and one cost that is easy to cut is visitation to hospitality venues. Venues already struggling with increased costs of energy and materials (and, ostensibly, labour) then see decreased business from people trying to manage their dwindling finances. This led to businesses greatly reducing hours of operation in order to remain afloat, or closing entirely (McLaughlin, 2023). The challenges of these businesses were then passed onto the workers in those businesses: already struggling with their own budgets for food, energy, transportation, and housing, hospitality workers were faced with reduced working hours to match their employers, or redundancy if their employers closed entirely.

4.6 Moving forward

In the hospitality industry alone, hundreds of thousands of workers were laid off (Baum et al., 2020). The Resolution Foundation (2020) noted that migrants constituted a third of the workforce in the accommodations industry, which largely downsized due to the pandemic, so the pinch of a labour shortage due to Brexit seemed unlikely to hit until the overall economy has recovered. They posited that unemployment might balance out lower recruitment, but not in low-skill jobs that were ineligible for visas and had high turnover already.

The idea of a delay in labour shortages turned out to be optimistic. Forbes (2022) relayed that as of November 2021, over one third of businesses in Scotland reported worker shortages. Half of the hospitality sector reported shortages, as did more than half in vital industries like healthcare and transportation. Supply chain issues caused a lack of materials and shortages in supermarkets. The Scottish government tried to focus on promoting fair work and upskilling workers, but the lack of freedom of movement meant that the labour shortages continued, and they were only increased by the late 2021 Omicron variant of COVID-19. Government training was being aimed at young workers and people who were out of work in industries like childcare, meat production, and carers; notably, hospitality is absent from this list.

The Scottish government launched an advertising campaign in summer 2021 encouraging people under 30 to apply for roles in hospitality, highlighting the vast number of work options in the industry (VisitScotland.org, 2021). This was meant to help with labour shortages after Brexit, though its implementation over a year into the pandemic highlights that the labour shortages beginning with Brexit continued despite mass job loss during COVID-19. The shortages in hospitality were still staggering in summer 2022 (Skills Development Scotland, 2022), with double the number of vacancies in the sector prior to the pandemic (Watts, 2022). Nearly half of the Scottish hospitality industry was still facing staffing difficulties resulting from the pandemic as of April 2023 (Robertson et al., 2023).

The recruitment in the hospitality industry did not cease to suffer once the pandemic was managed. The pandemic did not cause new problems, but strongly exacerbated existing ones (Baum et al., 2020; Ioannou, 2024). Hospitality was one of the first to let go of employees and one

of the last to get them all back. People in service jobs were 'in the frontline of both the health and economic risks from COVID-19' (Baum et al., 2020, p. 4), and in many cases, service workers in hospitality were laid off sooner than management. A lot of people in low-skill hospitality jobs moved to low-skill workplaces that had jobs available, like supermarkets. Even if their previous venues reopened and called them back, many people did not want to return to an unstable industry. That job insecurity would still remain after the height of the pandemic. Jobs that were merged as a cost-saving measure during the pandemic, such as concierge and front desk roles, remained merged years later when businesses found that the increase in training costs was worth the labour savings (Mullen, 2022). This meant a continuation in high-stress roles resulting in burnout, and many workers just were not interested.

Baum et al. (2020) posited that employers who made the effort to support their workers to the best of their ability during the pandemic could be seen by their workforce as at least trying to mitigate the damage and might be more likely to recruit good talent based on the good will they generated. Even those mitigation measures could leave scars. Rodriguez et al. (2025) found that the results of furlough still echoed years later: the people who had been placed on furlough during the pandemic had a heightened sense of job insecurity, especially if they had been full-time before their time furloughed, and they felt that if it happened once before, it could happen again in the future. A stronger focus on job security was not the only change from the pandemic. People had to work extra hours after the pandemics because of understaffing, and now they highly valued their time off and flexibility (Roberston et al., 2023). The rise in remote work showed people that there was a different way to work: specifically, one that might have better work life balance than previously available in precarious jobs (Baranes and Brown, 2023).

4.7 Conclusion

Migrants became a scapegoat for the lack of high-quality jobs in the UK despite making up a large portion of the workers in ‘low-skill’ jobs. The end of freedom of movement with Brexit made it considerably more difficult for EU migrants to live and work in the UK. Existing migrants were given a path to stay, but many felt unwelcome in what they had previously considered their home. New migrants all must go through the expensive and difficult visa process, and there is no path into the UK for ‘low-skill’ migrants. Industries that relied on migrants started facing worker shortages.

This situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many migrants returned to their home countries to be with family, especially when businesses closed and workers were placed on furlough or laid off. Hospitality already had a poor reputation, but as one of the longest-closed sectors in lockdown, it was now visibly unstable. This was further impacted by the cost of living crisis, where both businesses and workers were impacted by rising costs of their everyday needs, sometimes leading to reduced hours or business closure.

Businesses that remained open had a difficult time filling vacancies. If one has to work in a ‘low-skill’ job, why not choose one that is considered essential and will not close down suddenly, like a supermarket? The previous industry incentives of travel and talking to many different people

were not appealing in a global pandemic. How can businesses in the hospitality industry prevent further turnover? How can the industry retain migrant workers in an environment that makes them feel unwelcome?

5.0 Labour turnover

Labour turnover is expensive because of the costs of recruiting and training new workers (Haldorai et al., 2019; Nishii and Mayer, 2009). The staffing shortfall while finding replacements puts more pressure on remaining workers (Nishii and Mayer, 2009; Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Severe staff shortages can force venues to reduce their opening hours (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). The shortages in staff can delay new trainings and product launches as well as complicate knowledge retention: venues without proper documentation may lose valuable procedural knowledge when senior employees leave, and it may be harder to train future leaders (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Of note, much of this literature in this section predates or occurs right around the economic recession of 2008. This was a time when jobs were plentiful, and during such times worker retention becomes more of a focus, as described further in Section 5.5 Bad jobs, not bad migrants. Mohsin et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative analysis of the literature on labour turnover in hotels from 2000 to 2020 and found the same general patterns emerging. Whether one thinks of this as the literature providing consistent models of labour turnover or a statement on how quickly businesses return to poor practices when they are able is dependent on one's level of optimism.

This chapter examines elements of turnover with a special focus on the hospitality industry and particularly on migrant workers within the industry. Section 5.1 Turnover in hospitality provides a broad view of the positive, negative, and neutral elements of turnover. Section 5.2 Management influence looks at the relationship between management and turnover. Section 5.3 Training and promotions discusses the ways in which worker development can affect turnover. Section 5.4 Elements of a good job looks at what makes a 'good' job as well as the employment of both local workers and migrants in 'bad' jobs. Section 5.5 Bad jobs, not bad migrants examines the way in which migrant workers might be blamed for the proliferation of bad jobs.

5.1 Turnover in hospitality

Being able to attract and retain workers is seen as a critical issue, especially in hospitality (Baum et al., 2020; Mohsin et al., 2022). Turnover can be healthy and lead to new people with new ideas, but constant unplanned turnover leads to stress and lack of productivity (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Some turnover is entirely neutral. Hiring workers that eventually plan on moving will lead to eventual turnover (Rowley and Purcell, 2001), though this can be planned for and even advantageous for a company that relies on seasonal operations. The level of turnover in hospitality, however, is not neutral. A study by Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008), notably conducted before the 2008 recession, perceived an upcoming talent shortage. While high turnover was still considered to be normal in hospitality at the time, the researchers predicted that recruitment and retention would be harder in later years if reasons for the high turnover were not addressed. Time has shown that these issues were not adequately addressed, and both recruitment and retention have indeed become more difficult due to the reasons covered in Chapter 4.0 Labour market upheaval.

Sometimes the nature of the work itself can lead to turnover in hospitality (Deery, 2008). The long hours and heavy workloads due to both busy peak seasons and understaffing (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008; Haldorai et al., 2019) can lead to high stress and eventual burnout (Deery, 2008; Mohsin, 2022). Improper work-life balance is common in hospitality and can lead to turnover (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008; Haldorai et al., 2019). When a worker is unbalanced, it can cause issues in both their home lives and their work lives, leading to a worker who is both unhappy and unproductive. Managers who are present all the time because they feel they need to be the face of an organisation can have a very negative work-life balance and project that balance onto their staff (Deery, 2008). Hospitality managers interviewed by Maxwell and MacLean (2008) said that while some extreme hours may be required by those at the top of hospitality organisations, they should not expect their staff to work those kinds of hours. Conversely, flexible work arrangements that accentuate work-life balance, such as the option for part-time hours for caregivers or the ability to trade shifts, can be attractive to workers (Deery, 2008; Rowley and Purcell, 2001).

The large amount of vacancies in hospitality mean that it is difficult to have enough locals to fill jobs (French, 2018), and as discussed further in Section 5.5 Bad jobs, not bad migrants, the working conditions in hospitality dissuade locals and leave more opportunity to employ migrants to fill gaps (Joppe, 2012). A large portion of this labour shortage is filled by migrant workers (Choi et al., 2017; McDowell et al., 2007). Hospitality has fluctuating needs for labour, and high migrant turnover meets that need (Alberti, 2014), as employment contracts with migrants can be flexible and tailored to the tourist season (Joppe, 2012).

It is expensive for the employer to deal with the turnover of migrants, and it is more cost-effective to retain them since they are cheap and fill labour gaps (Kim et al., 2016). In general, people stay in good quality jobs for a longer period of time (Kalleberg, 2011). Migrants and employers do not have the same strategy with regards to the temporariness of a situation, and migrants' reasons are nuanced: they may leave a job for labour reasons or personal reasons (Alberti, 2014), as discussed in Section 2.6.5 Migrant agency. Migrants are not citizens and do not have the same benefits, so they have to use their mobility power and support networks to improve their lives (Alberti, 2014). Migrant workers regularly leave hospitality, either to return to their previous career with a now-established host country network or to return to their home country (Janta and Lugosi, 2022). In the Norwegian hotel studied by Aasland and Tyldum (2016), the migrants interviewed seemed to think of hospitality as a stepping stone.

While turnover may be the ultimate goal of a migrant worker upon starting a job in hospitality, it can also be a necessity due to poor conditions. Unfavourable working conditions in hospitality may lead to migrants leaving (Filimonau and Mika, 2017) as they will have no attachment to their workplace (Alberti, 2014). Hospitality workers generally want better working and living conditions and often want to support a family (Kalenjuk et al., 2020). While Baxter-Reid's (2016) case studies on a hotel, laundry company, and bus company found differing levels of pay and unionisation, the three companies were similar in that hours were long and hard to socialise around, work was boring and routine, and migrant workers were given the worst shifts.

All three companies had turnover and retention problems prior to EU expansion, which provided a larger pool of applicants.

This endless flow of workers is not a guarantee: in economic depressions, people are just happy to have any job, but in upturns they are more discerning (Kalleberg, 2011). Older people with families may see the high turnover and easy entry into hospitality as a warning sign (Janta et al., 2012). People with high skills that are sought after may have more choice in their careers (Kalleberg, 2011). Highly-skilled workers may avoid hospitality entirely, as the less skilled work is not attractive to many workers (Alberti and Danaj, 2017). Chefs are skilled workers who are highly important in hospitality work (Treuren et al., 2019), but there is a deficit of available workers for skilled chef roles (Alberti and Danaj, 2017).

A business' temporary view of its workers does not go unnoticed. Migrant hospitality workers interviewed by Alberti and Danaj (2017) were aware they were only temporary and weren't committed to the job. Since the work was really rough and poorly paid, very few people wanted a permanent position in it even if permanent positions were available. Some migrant workers interviewed by Alberti (2014) reported only doing the minimum for a company because they were not going to be there for long and felt that the company did not care about them: they were just there to do a job for a period of time, and the company treated them like they were temporary anyway. Some migrant workers interviewed by Baxter-Reid (2016) said they had good relationships with management and liked to commit themselves to the company and the service they provided, but the majority of people who said this were in supervisory roles. Even they were working hard to make themselves viable for future opportunities, often away from their current employers. Workers and employers in a study by Ioannou (2024) also had a temporary, dismissive view of one another, but in contrast to the other literature, the workers in this study were not migrants. This poses the temporary view as an issue of hospitality specifically, then, and not one particular to migrant workers.

5.2 Management influence

Emotions can have an even bigger impact than pay and benefits (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). The vast amounts of emotional labour required can cause stress and emotional exhaustion. Burnout, cynicism, bullying (Deery, 2008), and harassment (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008) often present in the workplace can lead to turnover. Even one person having strong negative feelings can affect the group as a whole (Nishii and Mayer, 2009). Turnover can lead to additional negativity among the remaining workers (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Conversely, some organisations foster a social team environment where workers instantly have a social group that they can still talk to after work. Groups that function well together with a positive culture can result in less turnover (Deery, 2008; Nishii and Mayer, 2009).

As discussed in Section 2.6.4 Mistreatment, management can have a great effect on the worker experience. This effect remains true outside of instances of explicit exploitation as well. Group leaders have a lot of influence on the outcomes of their teams (Nishii and Mayer, 2009). Changes in management or leadership strategies can lead to turnover if not handled well (Deery,

2008; Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Strategies for talent management need to have support from and be modelled by the top: without that support, any retention strategies will not succeed (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008; Maxwell and MacLean, 2008). Nishii and Mayer (2009) refer to this as the theory of inclusive leadership: effective leaders encourage autonomy and responsibility in their teams. Migrant workers are less likely to leave jobs with better relationships with supervisors and groups (Choi et al., 2017). Migrants in the Kim et al. (2016) study reported that organisational support was more important to adjustment than being around other people like themselves. Migrant workers who had a strong support system were less likely to leave their companies, and they were less likely to leave in general if they did not have bad culture shock.

Rowley and Purcell (2001) studied the way that managers within the hospitality industry handled turnover. Some of the management they spoke to were not sure how to handle high turnover rates and looked at turnover as all the good people leaving them. The researchers found that solid initial recruitment, training, and performance management can increase retention. The best managers anticipated some turnover and managed it appropriately, putting in effort to train their workers and considering it a fine investment if the workers stayed for at least a year and a half.

Professional, effective management can have a strong effect on the workplace. A good working environment and putting effort into building organisational fit can help with retention (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Simple changes, like spreading out antisocial work hours equally among the staff or focussing on tasks completed instead of hours worked as markers of success, can improve morale (Deery, 2008). Recognition for a job well-done is free, simple, and can have a strong impact on the workforce. Migrant workers interviewed by Goethals (2019) said their work had no recognition for service, and they felt abandoned. The lack of recognition in workers interviewed by Baxter-Reid (2016) was especially prevalent among housekeeping and bus drivers since they worked without supervision.

Management in hospitality can often fail to understand how to motivate and develop workers (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). But some hospitality venues can have hundreds of employees: how does one develop workers when they have so many? Some practices encourage focussing on high-talent individuals instead of all individuals, but this can lead to just temporary improvements, if any (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). Maxwell and MacLean (2008) point out that focussing solely on a small group of high performers can have a negative effect on the group. Looking for workers with high potential can help identify people to develop but can also inspire jealousy and can overlook people with potential who are quieter about it.

This is deftly illustrated in a study by Nishii and Mayer (2009) on turnover as it related to the quality of relationship between leaders and their teams in a large US supermarket chain. They found that group leaders significantly affect turnover in groups based on the relationships they have with their workers. In venues with strong management-employee relationships equally applied to all workers, turnover was very low. Even in venues with shallow relationships across the board, turnover was not very high; as leaders did not have a deep relationship with anyone, nobody felt excluded as a deep relationship was not expected. Instead, turnover significantly

increased in venues where the relationships with managers varied, causing the development of a definite hierarchy.

Nishii and Mayer (2009) are careful to address that differentiation may be for different reasons, and not all differentiation may lead to turnover. Differentiation based on inherent characteristics, such as race or gender, would absolutely lead to a sense of unfairness and likely drive turnover. On the other hand, if the management focusses on less skilled workers who need more help, this will likely not be seen as an unfair advantage. The researchers also posit that additional opportunities given to hard workers may be seen as fair, but as Maxwell and MacLean (2008) point out, this can still overlook people who have not had the opportunity to work harder. This could be negated by following the further advice of Nishii and Mayer (2009), who stipulate that differentiation can be addressed by encouraging management to get to know all of their workers equally.

5.3 Training and promotions

There is some complaint of the lack of upward mobility and development opportunities in hospitality (Janta and Lugosi, 2022; Wright et al., 2019). The literature generally suggests that there is little investment in hospitality training and development: there is plenty of talent in the industry, but if people are not trained, challenged, and developed, there is no reason for them to stay (Maxwell and MacLean, 2008). Deskilled workers performing tasks below their ability level will likely want to leave an organisation (Deery, 2008). Meanwhile, workers who are engaged will likely want to stay with the organisation and will put in more effort (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). Simple moves such as involving staff in coming up with solutions to problems can help them feel listened to and engaged (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Big drivers of engagement are integrity, autonomy, growth opportunities, team and manager relationships, and feeling like they make a difference in the company (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008).

There is evidence that workers are more motivated in places where they have promotion and development opportunities (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008; Deery, 2008). Training and development can improve retention as well as the product being sold, such as the improvement of a customer service experience through improved people skills (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). That development could take the shape of multi-day structured learning or even informal on-the-job learning as needed, but all development was helpful. Rowley and Purcell (2001) found examples of hotels retaining workers through training opportunities. Larger venues found success through methods such as training overseas and trading staff between venues to provide development opportunities, while other venues benefitted from tailoring training to their specific staff needs, including one-on-one training for workers that did not like a formal training environment. These individualised approaches allowed employers to retain workers in the same hard job that another employer had difficulty keeping filled. Some employers may believe that workers will just work at their establishment for a little while and then leave, so there is no point in training them (Rydzik et al., 2017). Hospitality managers interviewed by Maxwell and MacLean (2008) agreed that looking at talent management as a benefit to the industry as a whole helps the overall industry

attract quality talent, but it can be hard for smaller businesses to look past their own needs and not see a sunk cost when the talent leaves them.

The potential for management roles in hospitality is sometimes not a great incentive, as the pay is still low and the ability to make one's own decisions is still severely limited. With that said, development with no chance for upward movement can also be a problem. Sometimes there are false expectations about what a job entails, how quickly promotions can happen, or what kind of advantage qualifications can bring (Deery, 2008; Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Seniority tends to drive promotions, not qualifications (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Even then, seniority alone will not necessarily lead to promotions. If there is a lack of promotion opportunities, workers who have been developed may feel trapped or stifled (Maxwell and MacLean, 2008) and ultimately want to leave the organisation (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008).

5.4 Elements of a good job

It is difficult to exactly define what makes a good job, but some of the factors include adequate compensation, opportunities for advancement, adequate hours, work-life balance, fair treatment, safe environments, good relations with co-workers, job security, skill development, engagement, level of autonomy, and the feeling of making a difference (Kalleberg, 2011). Workers interviewed by Robertson et al. (2023) said that a good job had transparent job conditions, development opportunities, flexibility, and appropriate staffing levels, pay, and benefits. Workers studied by Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008) consider important elements of a job to be respect, interesting work, good teamwork, feeling accomplished, decent pay, work-life balance, development and promotion opportunities, retirement benefits, and reputation of the employer. The job descriptive index describes job satisfaction as coming from the work, pay, and relationships with co-workers and management (Deery, 2008).

The definition of a good job may vary from person to person, and this definition may also vary based on a person's race, gender, or class. Jobs may have a mixture of good elements and bad elements and will be defined as 'good' or 'bad' by the worker. Neoclassical economists say that jobs can be good in some respects and bad in others and can compensate in one area to make up for another; e.g., a dangerous job may pay more. The factors that are most important in a job may change for workers over time (Kalleberg, 2011). Even if these elements were identical for each person, management and workers may have very different perspectives on the quality of these factors (Deery, 2008).

Kalleberg (2011) looked at the elements that made up a 'good' job in comparison to a 'bad' job. He establishes that finding value in 'bad' jobs can be determined in two different ways. There is the idea of problematic rewards work value, where people value most the thing they are least likely to get, such as a person who has an unstable work history who highly values stability. There is also the idea of reinforcement work value where people may adjust to the rough realities of their work situation, such as women who may accept lower wages than men because they expect to have lower wages. Finding value and job satisfaction is an important part of establishing the overall quality of a job.

As labour is generally performed in exchange for payment, there is an obvious connection between the level of payment and worker retention. This is especially a concern for migrant workers in the UK, whose pay can be less in essence than that of local workers due to visa fees and lack of certain tax benefits (Meyer and Bridgen, 2022). Assuming that a good job is simply a high-paying one is simplistic, however, as there is more to it than that; working for a charity may pay poorly but have a wonderful, meaningful work environment, and a job that pays very well may have an abusive environment (Kalleberg, 2011). Some people will be happier to work in a pleasant work environment for less money than a subpar work environment for more money (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). One example comes from a migrant who lived in the hotel he worked for in Norway: his pay was low, but as the hotel compensated him with room and board, he was satisfied with his arrangement and described it as 'pure income' (Kalenjuk et al., 2020, p. 144).

While pay may be almost uniformly low among hospitality workers, workplace perks can be attractive and help increase retention. Parties for workers, service recognition prizes, and workplace discounts can be motivating, as can sincerely and regularly thanking them for their work (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Thinking about the daily needs of workers when they are outside of the workplace can illuminate other areas of improvement. Discounts on activities outside of work, such as gym access, can be a low-cost incentive (Deery, 2008). Even something as simple as a uniform can impact the quality of a job. In a study by Goethals (2019), the uniforms were only partially supplied, leading to financial hardship for workers who need to supply the missing pieces. Travelling to and from work can be hard for some workers given the working hours and low pay, but offering transportation or accommodation, either for occasional or long-term use, can help ease the burden and keep workers happy (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Addressing this issue can go beyond the workplace, as in the case of the Glasgow City Council backing the 'Get Me Home Safely' campaign, wherein hospitality employers would be required to provide transportation for workers whose shifts ended after 11:00 PM (Christian, 2023).

With that said, poorly-implemented workplace incentives can be worse than no incentives whatsoever. Rowley and Purcell (2001) note examples of this. Some of the benefits offered may not be realistic: offering free meals on shift is useless if workers do not have real breaks to eat, and offering a hotel stay abroad is a frustrating temptation if travel costs are not included. The manner in which an incentive is presented can also make a difference. One workplace mentioned letting workers go home early with pay if it was slow, which was a well-received incentive, but this was very different from workplaces that implemented the same early release without the pay, which upset workers.

Sometimes the feelings on these factors can be explicitly in comparison to previous workplace experiences. Section 2.3 Choosing a country touched on this in the context of migrants choosing to live in a country with better conditions compared to their own, but it applies to the workplace as well. Robertson et al. (2023) found that workers were satisfied to be paid the real Living Wage if they were previously paid the minimum wage. Some workers can find satisfaction with work that is not glamourous because it provides them with a better life than they might have otherwise had (Adamson and Roper, 2019; Kikon and Karlsson, 2020). Shen and Huang (2012) found that migrant worker satisfaction was partially because they could compare their higher

incomes and quality of life to their friends back home. New migrants in Norway interviewed by Aasland and Tyldum (2016) reported higher job satisfaction than native Norwegians. Norway has low unemployment, high unionisation, and strong regulations, and the job conditions were similar for local workers and for migrants, so the researchers posit that their higher satisfaction may be due to previous experience with worse working conditions. The chefs interviewed by Kalenjuk et al. (2020) said they highly regarded being valued, appreciated, and paid appropriately, and were happy that work hours and overtime pay were respected. Their high satisfaction was related to not being stressed, having free time, adherence to labour law, and the giving and rewarding of responsibility.

5.5 Bad jobs, not bad migrants

Migrants have been used as a scapegoat for all societal failings in the UK (Bloch et al. 2015). The EU needs migrants 'as both labour force and population reserve and as a political tool to conceal conflicts of interest by the scapegoating of migrants for various social problems' (Sager, 2015, p. 126). Migrants can be viewed as a burden on resources and their presence can cause tension in previously homogenous communities (Janta et al., 2011a; Shariff et al., 2019). Locals can feel that migrants are taking their jobs and lowering overall wages (Alberti and Danaj, 2017; Turner, 2010). The call for 'British jobs for British workers' mentioned in Section 4.3 Brexit conveniently distracts from issues with low pay and job insecurity and projects the blame onto migrants (Shabi, 2017).

Industries that relied on migrant workers were incredibly hard-hit after the 2008 recession, and the resulting poverty was blamed on migration and on minorities (Pradella and Cillo, 2015). Pulling attention to the ways in which immigration can affect British workers distracts from the real issue of the widespread prevalence of low quality jobs (Anderson, 2010). Instead of using money and resources to train locals, employers could find cheap migrant workers abroad who already have that skillset (Wright et al., 2019). As noted in Section 2.6.4.1 Replaceable, the overall workforce experienced better treatment when there was no available supply of cheap labour. The budget for government-funded adult learning in the UK was slashed significantly over the course of the 2010s and especially in late 2020, leaving formal training to the employers instead (Wallis et al., 2022). Some employers interviewed by Rolfe (2017) were looking at career pathways for low-skill British workers. While they had been looking into it before Brexit as well, the end of free movement made it more urgent. The finite supply of cheap labour made it suddenly vital to revise pay structures and benefits packages.

Kalleberg (2011) describes the fluctuation in good jobs and bad jobs over time. There were many bad jobs prior to World War II, but the amount of good jobs in relation to bad ones rose afterward with the work of government regulations and unions. One major area of growth was in low-skill work with high pay, such as unionised factory work. Job quality started to decrease again around the turn of the twenty-first century, and people were anxious about getting secure jobs that paid a living wage and had the ability to advance. There have been a growing number of bad jobs in recent times, which can be partially due to the removal of institutional worker protections. Job security as a whole has fallen, and there has been a huge growth in nonstandard employment as

management cuts costs wherever they can. These workplaces make use of subcontracting, nonstandard hours, and low wages. A major example of this is the service sector, including hospitality: there are plenty of jobs, but they mostly pay poorly, do not offer the hours desired, and have little room for advancement.

According to Turner (2010), economic theory posits that employers will hire migrants where they are cheaper than locals, and locals will lose out as employers win. Being able to use migrant workers instead of locals can make the market weaker since there is no incentive for positive change like raising pay or increasing training, and this could lead to the displacement of local workers (Wright et al., 2019). Limited labour sources generally mean higher wages, while more numerous labour sources generally mean lower wages (Turner, 2010). When the 2008 recession decreased the amount of new migrants, locals took more lower-paying jobs because of the difficulty finding work (Piso, 2016). This continued in less unstable times as well. In the laundry and hotel companies interviewed by Baxter-Reid (2016), the companies' ease of accessing migrant workers made work conditions more unpleasant for the current staff. When there were fewer staff available, the workers were treated well, but with EU expansion and readily-available staff, treatment was poor. Management in both departments made comments about firing people who fell behind. Workers were too afraid to complain about conditions because they would just be fired. There are arguments that migration should be restricted in order to prevent lowering wages, but if the wages for a job are so low that locals will not perform the job, using migrant workers as a solution simply exploits a different group (Sager, 2015). In the absence of a limitless pool of applicants to exploit, pay and conditions would have to improve in order to attract staff (Resolution Foundation, 2020).

The fear of migrants harming the economy is a prevalent topic worldwide. The study on migrants in the Malaysian hospitality industry by Shariff et al. (2019) is expressly anti-immigration, as the researchers discuss their view that permanent migrants add pressures to urban environments and compete for resources. They express fear that local jobs may be displaced, despite also stating that locals did not want jobs in hospitality. The researchers also mention that developed countries could better handle larger amounts of migrants. For an example from one such country, communitarians in New Zealand studied by Smith (2019) argued that hosting seasonal workers detracted from the quality of life and work for locals. The seasonal work that used migrant labour was designed around that labour existing in its current form, instead of providing things that would incentivise labour in other forms, like a wage increase. It is of interest that much of the discourse around migrants 'taking' labour is aimed expressly at the low-skill work that locals expressly do not want, and that businesses are apparently incapable of quality of life increases unless they are denied the temptation of labour exploitation.

Focussing more on English-speaking countries in Europe, Turner (2010) had an illuminating study on job competition between locals and migrants in Ireland. While Ireland is relatively open to immigration, many residents feel that the lower wages that migrants take will depress wages overall. When there were not many jobs available, highly-educated people were in competition with less-educated people for the lowest-skill jobs. This was also true within migrant groups, so highly-educated migrants were more likely to find work than less-educated migrants.

This propensity for highly-educated people to take lower-skill jobs continued over a decade later. Ioannou (2024) found in his study that recent graduates were unable to find work in their fields and they often ended up working in hospitality, often years longer than they intended. In these cases, the competition is not between migrants and locals but instead between those with a higher level of education and those without. In the cases of migrant students who graduate, however, their degree is not as visible as their migrant status to a local who may covet their employment.

Employers may make decisions about how to use migrant labour based on immigration policies (Wright et al., 2019). The marginalisation of migrant workers is part of larger exploitation to the benefit of business owners (Sager, 2015), and the vulnerability of migrant workers makes them easier for employers to control (Baum et al., 2020; Resolution Foundation, 2020). In a case study from MacKenzie and Forde (2009), management knew people did not want to work at their company, and they had major trouble hiring and retaining workers. Management cycled through different vulnerable groups according to the labour market at the time: women, followed by young people, and then whichever migrant group was the newest and least established in the country. With the expansion of the EU on the horizon at the time of the study, they proactively reached out to employers in accession countries. Hiring the next vulnerable group is a short term strategy, but as they kept having success, they made the conscious decision to consistently seek the next vulnerable group.

Some of the literature covers the level of satisfaction of migrant workers compared to the level of satisfaction of locals. Shen and Huang (2012) found that migrant workers were more satisfied with their lives than local workers in the same industry, but also had a much higher degree of burnout. Aasland and Tyldum (2016) asked workers in a Norwegian hotel about their levels of satisfaction with their work and had a different result. Native Norwegians were quite satisfied regardless of whether they intended to stay short-term or long term. Eastern Europeans were moderately satisfied with work, though they tended to be more satisfied if they were in front of house positions. Migrant workers from outside of Europe in back of house positions, especially cleaners, were extremely dissatisfied.

Migrant workers are also more likely than locals to accept undesirable work hours (Baxter-Reid, 2016; Urzi, 2015; Yaduma et al., 2015). Students are common targets for low wages and long hours as well, as young people may be more likely to tolerate poor working conditions and benefits (Anderson, 2010), but it can be difficult to hire them around their school or university schedules (Rowley and Purcell, 2001). Employers interviewed by Rolfe (2017) used varying numbers of migrant workers, but all said that migrant labour increased to meet their seasonal demands. The employers said that migrants' flexibility with working hours was the major incentive to hire them, not the lower wages. Some migrant hospitality workers interviewed by Alberti (2014) spoke of unreasonable demands on their time that made it hard for them to work multiple jobs. Other migrants enjoyed the high number of hours. Migrants interviewed by MacKenzie and Forde (2009) who had worked in other companies in the UK said they preferred their current employer because they could work more hours and overtime was at a premium, an important point when one’s wages are low. The workers did specify that these long hours were acceptable because of the short-term nature of their time with the company, as they had no time for anything outside of

work. The frequently temporary nature of migration works especially well for employers with seasonal hiring needs, as they can target workers who only intend to work for remittances or money back home and will leave after a short period (Alberti and Danaj, 2017).

As discussed in Section 2.6 Migrants in the workplace, migrants are more likely than locals to be in temporary work and have nonstandard employment contracts. Younger workers and migrants who have recently arrived are most likely to be on those temporary contracts (Resolution Foundation, 2020), and this temporary nature makes workers dependent on and vulnerable to their employers (Baxter-Reid, 2016). In the UK, the prevalence of migrants in temporary work could partially be due to logistical issues. While short-term employment in less-than-ideal jobs could be endured in order to meet the requirements to continue unemployment benefits (French, 2018), working fewer than 30 hours a week on a long-term basis would make British workers ineligible for the Working Tax Credit, and the changing hours complicated childcare (Rolfe, 2017). Migrants are generally ineligible for these benefits regardless of hours worked (Kalleberg, 2011), though attaining eligibility does not necessarily mean they would accept the benefits. Many of the migrants interviewed by Goethals (2019) said they were ineligible for benefits, but those that were eligible refused to pursue them to avoid the stigma of being a benefits tourist. These benefits or lack thereof may not be related to longevity in a position, as in the case of employers interviewed by Rolfe (2017) who said that turnover was similar between British workers and migrants.

5.5.1 The ideal worker

Employers like workers with high initiative, and it can be assumed that people who choose to move abroad must have high initiative to do so (Andresen et al., 2020). Migrant workers may work harder because they want to gain English and job skills or want to earn more money for remittances (Alberti, 2014), and this hard work can easily be exploited. Employers can look for their ideal worker based on stereotypes of gender and race and not actual credentials (McDowell et al., 2007; Rolfe, 2017), with the assumption that certain groups of people are harder workers than others or better suited to certain types of work (Alberti, 2014; Anderson, 2010; Yaduma et al., 2015). Employers may or may not outright admit these preferences (see, for example, Wright et al., 2019), but employers interviewed throughout the literature of critical migration studies demonstrate the abundance of stereotypes held about different types of workers (see, for example, McDowell et al., 2007). These stereotypes and preferences can change over time. In one hospitality organisation studied by Ferris et al. (2018), it was noted that the preferred migrant nationality to employ happened to coincide with whichever migrants were from the poorest sending nation and thus willing to accept the least in wages; the organisation in question had a preference for employing Asian migrants, followed by Polish migrants after EU8 accession, and then Romanian migrants after EU2 accession. A study by McDowell et al. (2007) found a similar result in the housekeeping department of a hotel, where the management quickly went from a preference for Vietnamese men to Polish women after the EU8 accession; while there was an initial perception that the Polish women were less compliant and prone to forming cliques, this attitude changed after accession made them the cheapest to employ.

When asked about these perceptions, many migrant workers are very aware that employers hired them using racial and gender stereotypes (McDowell et al., 2007) and why they are thought to be good workers (Baxter-Reid, 2016). Migrants can sometimes conform to these stereotypical expectations to an extent (Baxter-Reid, 2016). McDowell et al. (2007) refer to this as interpellation, where the employer constructs an ideal worker based on stereotypes. This construction can be internalised by the workers, and they can conform to the employer's vision. Stereotypes of migrant workers can be harmful to relationships with co-workers (Choi et al., 2017; McDowell et al., 2007). Management attitudes and preconceptions toward migrant groups can keep workplaces divided; if workers think a certain ethnic group has poor work ethic or language skills, this can negatively influence their interactions with people in that ethnic group (Lugosi et al., 2016).

The employer perception of migrants as great workers in the UK is generally in comparison to British workers. There is a tendency in unattractive jobs that pay low wages and have long hours to consider British workers as lazy (Anderson, 2010; MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). Low-skill British workers are at a hiring disadvantage to migrants because of stereotypes about work ethic, but this also allows employers to avoid saying they hire migrants because they will work longer hours for less money (McDowell et al., 2007).

This migrant willingness to accept lesser work conditions has a time limit. When a migrant spends more time in their host country, they will likely adjust their work attitudes to match the locals (Anderson, 2010; Goethals, 2019; Piso, 2016). This can partially be an adaptation to cultural norms but can also be a result of experience with how the job market works. More established migrants from outside the EU interviewed by Alberti and Danaj (2017) noted that new accession migrants would work harder and longer hours. Migrants who initially accept their work conditions can come to understand that the work they do is paid poorly and considered beneath the locals (Goethals, 2019; MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). Migrant workers interviewed by Baxter-Reid (2016) said they felt like they were good workers, but their effort was not rewarded and their workload increased, so they stopped trying as hard since they felt local workers were not held to the same standards. Management in the same study attributed this lowering quality over time to the workers learning they would be paid the same no matter the effort they expended and adjusting their effort to meet their pay level.

5.6 Conclusion

Turnover can be costly for employers, and hospitality has a very high rate of turnover. Turnover literature points to issues like pay, intensity, antisocial hours, manager relationships, lack of promotion opportunities, and poor work-life balance as some of the reasons for turnover in hospitality. Not all turnover is due to poor job quality, however; some workers may intend to only take a job for a short period of time for reasons such as gaining skills or funding university, or they might move on because they have received a better opportunity. People are more likely to stay in a 'good' job, but what defines a good job is dependent largely on a person's previous work experience and their specific needs. A job can have good elements and still be considered bad, and a good job can have bad elements as well.

Migrant workers are often used to fill employment gaps due to high turnover, but they have the same reasons to leave jobs as local workers. They might be given worse tasks than their local peers, but they also might be happier with the work depending on their circumstances in previous jobs. Management may assume that they will work harder than local workers based on stereotypes. Because migrant workers are often available to fill these roles, they can be blamed for the pay and existence of these roles as a whole. The roles would still exist whether or not migrants fill them, and they would simply not be filled as locals do not want them.

6.0 Developing a theoretical framework

This chapter connects the literature review to the methods section by discussing the theoretical framework adopted for this study. It describes the idea of Push-Pull-Mooring and how it can be used to look at the reasons people stay in the jobs they have. Section 6.1 Paradigms in existing literature examines the philosophical approaches used in literature on migration and hospitality work. Section 6.2 Push and Pull Factors discusses the basic idea of push and pull factors and how they relate to existing literature. Section 6.3 Mooring looks at mooring factors that encourage people to stay in one place. Section 6.4 'Fair Work' policies and 'Good Work' practices gives an overview on existing policies for 'decent work' and how those policies differ from 'good work.' Section 6.5 Mooring Net model describes the model to be used to analyse the research for mooring factors.

6.1 Paradigms in existing literature

There are large bodies of literature on migrant workers, hospitality, and specifically on migrant workers in hospitality. The existing literature comes from different philosophical backgrounds and uses different methods to obtain data according to the particular research questions. Research on migrant workers in or outside of the hospitality industry often, but not always, approaches the research from a position of exposing precarious working situations. Research on hospitality can also cover those precarious working conditions but may also focus purely on the costs and profits of the industry without discussing the working conditions.

Radical structuralism is common in research that explores the most vulnerable migrant workers. Vahabi and Wong (2017) studied the mental health of migrant live-in caregivers in Canada, advocating for a change in government policy to support a currently exploitative system. Delaney and Tate (2015) researched the exploitation of workers in India who migrated from rural areas in order to work in the garment industry, exposing the poor conditions and changes required. While the philosophies are not directly stated, the exposure of the inherent conflict in the current systems and stated need for change suggest this paradigm. At times, the research philosophy is more expressly discussed. In both Lawthom et al.'s (2015) study on forced labour of Chinese migrants in the UK and Smith's (2019) study on migrant agricultural workers in New Zealand, the researchers specifically refer to the works of Marx. The study by Kim et al. (2016) on the social adjustment of Chinese migrants in the South Korean hospitality industry quoted social exchange theory while presenting solutions to adjustment issues.

According to Saunders (2019), the majority of standard business research falls within a functionalist paradigm, and this applies to some of the research on migrant workers as well. Piso (2016) focussed on migrant hospitality recruitment through social networks in rural areas with a generalisable, practical approach. Liu et al.'s (2017) quantitative survey of the subjective wellbeing of rural-to-metropolitan Chinese migrants attempted to discover whether or not neighbourhood cleanliness and amenities increased wellbeing in order to advise urban design. These studies express a problem and a solution, but do not focus on exploitation or conflict, thus leaning more toward functionalism.

This thesis falls somewhat between functionalism and radical structuralism. This researcher leans ontologically toward objectivism, that there is a certain order to the way things work, but with the idea that there are different ways to perceive this objective reality. The way that things work can change, but that change is gradual and not radical. Applying this to hospitality as a whole, there is a way that the industry works, though people within the industry may perceive the rules differently depending on their roles. The rules can and arguably should be changed, but not radically, and not quickly: small steps can change the way things work within the confines of existing reality. The nature of those changes are also dependent on the individual: if a change is made to an aspect of the industry, what changes for their reality?

6.2 Push and pull factors

Push and pull factors are often used in literature about migration to specify the events or conditions that can repulse (push) from or attract (pull) to a country (see, for example, Anderson, 2010; more recently, Andresen et al., 2020). Janta and Lugosi (2022) describe the simplest economic push and full factors for migration: the push is a lack of jobs in the home country, and the pull is job availability in a new country. Push and pull factors do not exclusively reside in migration literature, however, though the exact phrasing of 'push factor' and 'pull factor' may not be used. When thinking more generally, push and pull may be applied to aspects of a job as well. Many of the facets of turnover described in Section 5.0 Labour turnover can be considered push and pull factors, especially the descriptions of what makes a 'good job' in Section 5.4 Elements of a good job. Wages, hours worked, and work-life balance are frequently cited as being problematic in the hospitality industry (see, for example, Alberti, 2014). The same factor can be either a push or pull factor depending on the context. Wages, for example, can be a pull factor if they are high and a push factor if they are low.

As an exercise in applying the idea of push and pull factors outside of migration literature, five studies specifically on labour turnover in hospitality previously cited in this thesis were compared to observe the factors listed as reasons for turnover. To be clear, the factors were not explicitly listed as 'push' or 'pull' factors in these papers but were referred to as reasons for job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, or as reasons people may want to take a job or leave it. The exact wording of each factor may change, but the themes are similar. Each of these studies looked at a different aspect of the workplace from a different perspective. Both Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008) and Deery (2008) focussed on talent management strategies, though Deery (2008) had a more in-depth look at work-life balance. Maxwell and MacLean (2008) recorded the comments of senior management of venues at the Scottish Tourism Forum, which, of interest, was the only group of people not to mention compensation as a turnover factor. Rowley and Purcell (2001) looked very specifically at UK hospitality turnover at the turn of the century. By comparison, Haldorai et al. (2019) reported the results of a survey of hospitality workers in Malaysia. Despite different contexts, cultures, time frames, and methods, similar themes repeatedly emerge. Figure 6.1 provides a visual of this comparison.

Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008)	Deery (2008)	Haldorai et al. (2019)	Maxwell and MacLean (2008)	Rowley and Purcell (2001)
Compensation	Compensation	Compensation		Compensation
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Work-Life Balance	Work-Life Balance	Work-Life Balance	Work-Life Balance	
Respect	Workplace Culture	Workplace Culture	Treatment	Workplace Culture
Skill Development	Skill Development		Skill Development	Skill Development
	Skill Use		Skill Use	
Promotion Opportunities	Promotion Opportunities	Promotion Opportunities	Promotion Opportunities	Promotion Opportunities
		Safe Environment		Safe Environment
Teamwork	Teamwork	Coworker Relationships		Coworker Relationships
Job Security				
Interesting Work	Nature of Work		Engaging Work	
Feeling Accomplished				Making a Difference
Retirement Benefits	Workplace Incentives	Workplace Incentives		Workplace Incentives
Reputation of Employer		Reputation of Employer		Reputation of Employer
Management Style	Management Style		Management Style	Management Style
Emotional Labour		Emotional Labour		Emotional Labour

Fig. 6.1 Push/Pull Factor Comparison

Looking at the push and pull factors from a purely behaviouralist perspective does not account for differences in decisions among people with the same options. People are, after all, individuals, and do not function as a cohesive group. Instead, Moon (1995) proposes that the reasons behind a change in life circumstances are a mixture of 'institutional framework, personal behaviour and cultural context' (p. 506). Moon (1995) looked at push and pull factors in the specific context of domestic migration, but the factors can be applied more widely. He lists push and pull factors such as job opportunities, weather, and infrastructure as examples, but emphasises that push and pull factors alone cannot account for people's choices to live in a certain area; if that were true, why would anyone live in a location with many push factors if they had the option of an area with attractive pull factors?

Of course, people do not robotically weigh each new factor in their lives: they have responses to things as they happen and are not categorising them as 'push' and 'pull' events. They may make what feels like a logical decision based on what seems like a good idea at the time. An example of this can be found in the Iversen and Jacobsen (2016) study on migrant entrepreneurs in Norway. The respondents could all list pros and cons (or, as it were, pull and push factors) leading to their moves and new businesses, but many of them said that the decision simply felt right. Moon (1995) described some of this decision-making in terms of habitus, one's internalisation of cultural norms, habits, and expectations. For example, instead of mechanically describing British weather being a push factor and Spanish weather being a pull factor, a person stuck indoors on a gloomy day may notice that their British friends who moved to Spain are always having a lovely time out in the sun and fancy a similar daily experience for themselves. Perhaps not everyone in the same situation would consider relocating to Spain, and this could be because they had an entirely different habitus. It could also be because there are other factors that entice them to stay in place.

6.3 Mooring

A large part of the theoretical framework centres around the Push-Pull-Mooring (PPM) theory. Originally based on the reasons behind why migrants move, PPM can also be used as a lens to determine why people choose to stay or leave certain jobs (Haldorai et al., 2019). Push and pull factors have been examined in the previous section, but what, then, of mooring factors? Haldorai et al. (2019) describe mooring factors as the components that modify a push or pull factor and make someone want to stay or leave. Moon (1995) describes them as social components that allow a person to feel wellbeing and also bind a person to a place. In terms of migration, these can be elements like the political atmosphere, family and friends, or weather.

A mooring factor may not be described as 'mooring' in other pieces of literature, though the idea is the same. Halvorsen et al. (2015) refer to the feeling of wanting to stay in one place as 'embeddedness.' The attachments to a country or workplace can be referred to as 'anchors,' as mentioned by Trąbka and Pustulka (2020). Alberti (2014) notes that people may choose to leave their workplaces if they do not have any 'attachments.' The exact wording may change, but the sentiment remains: there is some sort of factor that can bind people to a physical location or a workplace.

Unlike push and pull factors, moorings are within a person's control as their perception of their mooring factors is dependent on their aspirations. Moon (1995) emphasises that all moorings are value-laden, and not a single fixed value but a range. He views factors as ideal, tolerable, and intolerable. People may have an ideal situation in mind, but would be satisfied with a tolerable situation. If the situation becomes intolerable, they would be likely to change their behaviour. For example, a person may ideally want to be surrounded by all of their family, but find having a few relatives nearby tolerable. If those relatives move away, however, they may find the living situation to now be intolerable.

While the idea of moorings traditionally relates to migration, the theory can be applied to jobs as well. Factors in a workplace can be job dimensions like pay, hours, job satisfaction, work culture, or job security. A hypothetical example could be a person who is offered a new job at a competitor. The new job has similar tasks and hours of operation at slightly higher pay. If the person has no mooring factors at their current job, they may take the new offer; after all, the pay is higher. If, however, the person has a strong attachment to the work culture or particular benefits offered at their current job, or even friends in the workplace, these mooring factors may cause them to turn down the new job offer despite the higher pay. The specific mooring factors may not be obvious on the surface and will be very dependent on the individual. For example, traditionally 'dirty' jobs can be satisfying for workers who enjoy a physical challenge (Adamson and Roper, 2019).

So far, the description of mooring factors has focussed on the positive factors that encourage a worker to stay. The example of a person who declines a higher-paying job in order to stay in a workplace because of its benefits and culture naturally implies that the culture and benefits are good. But what of people who stay in a job they dislike? There is an example of this in Sager's (2015) case of Mira, an undocumented migrant in Sweden who worked at a pizzeria. Mira stayed

in her job for years despite the low pay and poor working conditions. As she was undocumented, she was afraid of leaving her job, and she knew that her workplace would provide a secure source of income (that is, until it closed suddenly and left her without compensation). That illusion of safety and security was her mooring factor, but it was not a positive one. Other migrants end up staying in supposedly temporary jobs for much longer than expected as well, despite unpleasant working conditions (see, for example, Alberti, 2014; Baxter-Reid, 2016). Moon (1995) posits that if a high-value mooring is not seen as something they could have in another location, then there may be less incentive to leave. This would suggest that there are both positive and negative mooring factors. The idea is not new; while they do not specifically use the term 'negative mooring,' Adamson and Roper (2019) refer to the manner in which bad jobs can restrict people in a location or job.

But how does one define a mooring factor? The determination of this point is heavily inspired by the capability approach, though it does not use a specific capability theory. Robeyns (2017) looked at wellbeing through the lens of the capability approach, which evaluates what people are able to do and how they are able to live with the resources they have. The approach is more common in education and poverty studies, but can also be used to evaluate the quality of work. People and jobs are multidimensional and all dimensions must be considered when determining job quality and fit for the individual. Measuring a factor like poverty based on income does not paint the same picture as using the capability approach: it is not about how much a person has, but what they are able to do with what they have. Likewise, a person with a high wage may not have a good job if they have to spend most of their wages on their commute home, or if their hours are so long that they are unable to spend any money on leisure. The weighing of the wage as a mooring factor is about what the person is able to do with what they have.

It must be stated again that the research for this thesis is not using a specific capability theory; true theories using the capability approach must fit a number of factors and details that are outside the scope of this research. Instead, this thesis uses the idea of what someone is able to do given the circumstances they have available to determine potential mooring factors. If a worker is able to live a fulfilling life given the money and stability provided by their job, they may feel moored in that location. An example of this is a kitchen porter interviewed by Rowley and Purcell (2001) who had remained in her job, traditionally a role with a high level of turnover, for 20 years because she was happy with her hours and tasks. Likewise, if a worker is unable to pay for basic necessities or develop their skills in a position, they will likely not be moored in that location. By looking at the research through a lens inspired by the capability approach, the goal is to capture a fuller understanding of what both migrant workers and local workers are able to do in the workplace with the resources they have available, and determine why they might stay or leave.

A positive pull factor is generally simple to identify, though what counts as a mooring factor greatly depends on the person. Using the capabilities lens, a mooring factor at a job could be anything that allowed them to do what they desired with the resources that they had at hand. If a person mostly wants to spend time with family, work-life balance could be a strong mooring factor. If a person wants to progress in the business, training and promotion opportunities could be their mooring factor. A 2018 Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA) report on

recruitment and retention reports the influences on decisions to stay as work-life balance, pay and benefits, opportunities to learn and apply skills, and promotion opportunities (Leask et al., 2018). Are these mooring factors? It depends on the person's logic behind why those elements are reasons to stay, but they are very likely to be mooring factors.

Identifying a negative mooring factor is a bit more complicated. The previous example from Sager (2015) cited job security and income as reasons that Mira stayed in her abusive work environment. That job security would be a negative mooring factor: Mira was able to survive because of her job and felt moored there, but she was not happy about it. Other literature describes workers who took a low-level job in order to build skills and then found they were unable to find jobs elsewhere (see Baxter-Reid, 2016). Job security would be the negative mooring factor here as well, though it is due to the lack of opportunities elsewhere. There is also a neutral mooring factor to consider; Moon (1995) expresses that not all moorings will necessarily be strong motivators, as perhaps nothing really ties a person to a location but they stay simply because they cannot think of a better alternative. In this case, an aversion to the effort of finding a new job could be a neutral mooring factor.

To further complicate matters, people may not accurately describe their circumstances or feelings. For example, a manager in the McDowell et al. (2007) study said gender was not a factor in his hiring practices, but then also said that he exclusively hired women for front desk roles because they were more personable. This does not simply mean he was a liar: it was true that he hired based on gender stereotypes, and it was also true that he did not believe that he did so.

So what is the real truth? Critical realism can help with determining this. Saunders (2019) describes the three layers of critical realism as the empirical, the actual, and the real: the empirical layer consists of what can be seen, the actual layer looks at the interacting dynamics that cause the empirical information, and the real layer examines the root causes beneath the surface. Looking at people's experiences through these layers can explain the different accounts given by workers and management. For example: objectively speaking, migrant workers are often exploited in their workplaces. Sometimes they may agree that they are exploited and sometimes they may not (see Bloch et al., 2015 and Lawthom et al., 2015), sometimes they may enjoy their work and sometimes they may not (see Vahabi and Wong, 2017), and sometimes they may think of their employer as kind and sometimes they may not (see Smith, 2019), but regardless of their feelings on the matter, exploitation still occurs. Examining the empirical information (e.g., what workers and management say about their situations) can help reveal the actual layer (e.g., the influence of different work elements and how they interact) and determine the real layer (e.g., the true mooring elements).

Another way to find the real truth is both simpler and more complex: both might be true simultaneously. Baum et al. (2024) define paradox as 'contradictory, often interrelated, attributes of societal systems that are structurally embedded' (p. 3). This folds into paradox theory, which holds that tensions exist in society but that those tensions are, to an extent, accepted by society. Some examples of paradox within the hospitality industry that they cite include a location that is hospitable for customers while being inhospitable for the workers who serve them, whose labour is necessary but commodified. Hadjisolomou et al. (2025) build on this research, finding in their

research on dignity in the hospitality workplace that workers who were regularly harassed still expressed being treated with dignity. This feeling was primarily due to support from their management, which allowed them to exist in a paradoxical state: they were both dignified and undignified at work.

There is a long-held belief that the industry simply has issues that are unable to be remedied. Baum et al. (2024) argue that workers do try to challenge these tensions, but that this would 'require fundamental behavioural and perceptual change at an organisational and/or societal level if their impact…is to be ameliorated' (p. 14). The idea of ameliorating the impact of paradoxes rather than eliminating them is intentional. There is not a quick fix for the state of the industry, but there is the ability to improve it. Both Baum et al. (2024) and Hadjisolomou et al. (2025) agree that the way to work within this paradoxical system is to challenge the acceptance of poor treatment and strive for a fairer workplace. A workplace that listens to workers and does not tolerate customer abuse is one that does not require a state of paradox for treatment and dignity.

6.4 'Fair Work' policies and 'Good Work' practices

The push and pull factors that emerge in the literature are not unknown to policymakers. Adamson and Roper (2019) summarise the definition of 'decent work' according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as containing employment opportunities, fair wages, 'sociable working time, stability and security of work, work/family considerations, fair treatment in employment, workplace safety, social protections, social dialogue and the social and economic context of work' (p. 552). Many of these factors appear in the Fair Work Framework, which has emerged in Scotland as a means to create decent work. The Fair Work Convention (2016) developed the Fair Work Framework to define fairness in a way that applies to different job types, industries, and sectors with the goal of shaping better work environments in Scotland by 2025. An inquiry into fair work within the Scottish hospitality industry was launched in 2022 at the same time as this research (Fair Work Convention, 2024). The framework breaks work into five categories: effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment, and respect (see Figure 6.2). Each of these elements is commonly found in unionised environments, but less so in industries with less unionisation, such as hospitality.

Effective voice means that workers are able to honestly express themselves, are listened to, and feel like they can make a difference. This needs formal and informal structure for productive dialogue, must be embraced at all levels of worker and management, and depends on transparency, honesty, and tolerance. Opportunity refers to the ability of everyone to have access to opportunities in the workplace. This is often a problem in marginalised groups. Problems can include accessing the workplace, such as ability to get apprenticeships or training, low pay, lack of advancement opportunities, or ageism. Opportunity can be improved with diverse recruitment, mentoring systems, and skill building. While no job is guaranteed forever, the security element for the framework increases through reliable hours, contracts, and income. Jobs that provide a living wage, pay transparency, flexible hours to accommodate caring needs, sick pay, pension, and understanding of employment rights have a higher element of security. Fulfilment is about being able to use skills, access to developmental opportunities, having a manageable level of work, and

having some control and influence over work. Higher fulfilment generally leads to higher quality output. Lastly, the respect element of the framework emphasises that everyone is a human being with worth and dignity. Health and safety, bullying and harassment policies, training on interpersonal issues, conflict resolution, clear behaviour expectations, and respect for personal lives of workers lead to a healthy workplace.



Fig. 6.2 Fair Work Framework (Fair Work Convention, 2016)

Revisiting some of the earlier push/pull factors mentioned in hospitality turnover literature from Figure 6.1, some of them fit very nicely within the Fair Work Framework. Wages, promotion opportunities, and job security are clearly outlined within the framework. Others, such as emotional labour and management relationships, could be argued to fit into one category or another, but they are not expressly defined. This is to be expected. It is, after all, called the *Fair* Work Framework, not the Every Element of an Attractive Workplace Framework. There are initiatives for fair or decent work throughout Europe looking at similar factors, though some criticism aimed at these initiatives say that they look more at increasing the productivity and output of a job than on increasing overall wellbeing (Mira, 2021). The Fair Work Framework does not seem to fall within that particular criticism, as the factors involved are very supportive of the worker's wellbeing.

With that said, it is still not the perfect model of job quality, nor is it meant to be. In its framework documentation, the Fair Work Convention (2016) specifically states that the framework is the beginning for a workplace, and the hope of the framework being implemented is to lay a foundation upon which better jobs can be built. Even with that clarification, it was unlikely that the Fair Work inquiry into the Scottish hospitality industry would reveal that every business is providing a fair workplace, and it did not (Fair Work Convention, 2024). If the bare minimum of *fair* work cannot be achieved, one might wonder if it is realistic to expect adherence to a model for *good* work. It could be argued that that is a pessimistic view. The Fair Work Framework, for

example, aims to establish a baseline of work in Scotland. While it is unlikely to be achieved by all jobs immediately, it could be fully met in the future. In the meantime, the jobs that meet or exceed the baseline could always find room for improvement. By establishing a model for a good job, not just a fair job, a new goal is formed for those who already meet the criteria for fair work.

Even adhering to some aspects of a good work model could improve a workplace. Aspects of a workplace can serve as mooring factors whether the overall conditions are ideal or not, so improving tolerable factors could strengthen existing mooring factors even if not every aspect of a job would be considered 'good.' Moon's (1995) description of circumstances as ideal, tolerable, and intolerable can apply on a more granular level to specific conditions of a workplace. For example, if someone is moored to their workplace because of fantastic coworker relationships but would consider leaving the job for a higher salary and better working hours, improving the working hours alone would lessen push factors and perhaps add a new mooring factor, even if pay remained the same. Good qualities can make up for underdeveloped qualities when they are truly important to the workers. The conditions seen as 'good' now could simply be seen as 'fair' in the future, but getting to that point requires striving beyond the baseline in the present.

6.5 Mooring Net model

The factors that make up a 'good' job are explored in Section 5.4 Elements of a good job. Much of the literature specifically on job quality looks at intrinsic factors, the elements of a job itself, versus extrinsic factors such as wages or conditions. This could be because intrinsic motivators are thought to be more important for jobs in knowledge-based industries (Gallie, 2007) that inspire such literature. Looking at other job quality models for comparison, Mira (2021) created the European Intrinsic Job Quality Index to measure job quality through an intrinsic lens. The justification for focussing on intrinsic skills alone was to avoid equating a high salary with a good job in the way of many economists, and to match with previous research by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

While it is important not to oversimplify the definition of a good job by looking at only its salary and other external benefits, it seems remiss not to address them at all. A job can meet every criteria of the European Intrinsic Job Quality Index perfectly, with every worker performing the most interesting and fulfilling tasks with a group of like-minded people, but if those workers are not paid enough to afford food or housing, it does not seem likely that anyone would call that a 'good' job. Difficult economic situations could make extrinsic factors carry more weight (Gallie, 2007). Looking at job quality perceptions of US healthcare workers, Morgan et al. (2013) measured the weight of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for intention to leave their jobs. In this context, US healthcare work is emotionally rewarding but generally considered a 'bad job' because of the hours and physical labour. This study defined extrinsic factors as financial rewards, benefits, promotions, training, career development, and the physical and emotional requirements of performing the job. The participants reported high job satisfaction based on the intrinsic factors of the role, but still intended to leave their jobs based on unsatisfactory extrinsic factors.

This exposes a gap: there are numerous economic and theoretical models in the literature for the effects of extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors separately upon labour turnover and retention, and there are multiple sources about the elements that make up good and bad jobs, but there is not a model that incorporates both. Instead of looking at only extrinsic or only intrinsic values, the most thorough way to measure job quality is to look at both factors together and the way they interact with one another.

With these job quality studies in mind, as well as factors from the Fair Work Convention, this researcher developed the Mooring Net model consisting of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This was necessary because both intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors are important to labour turnover and retention, as the myriad of literature shows, but existing models tend to focus on one or the other. Existing theory also tends to point toward a specific factor, such as wages or fulfilment, as being a reason for turnover or retention instead of looking at the way those factors combine, such as the common case of low wages and high fulfilment in third sector work. Specifically, this model allows an explanation for how the extrinsic and intrinsic factors interact and influence the individual instead of focussing on the factors themselves. Returning to the example of third sector work, the low wages and high fulfilment are not a guarantee of mooring on their own: they depend on how they impact each specific person, and they interact with other elements of the job, for example manager relationships and working hours, to determine whether or not a person wants to stay in their job. The Mooring Net model looks at all of these factors at once and how they impact each person.

The theoretical basis for the mooring elements on the net is outlined in Section 6.3 Mooring. Mooring as explained by Moon (1995) and Haldorai et al. (2019) is what makes a person want to stay or leave. Taking inspiration from the capability approach (Robeyns, 2017), this thesis expands the determination of mooring elements based on what a person is able to do with the resources that they have. A person can have a positive, negative, or neutral mooring. They may also describe their situation as positive while it is actually negative: as an example from a participant in this thesis, a worker described feeling moored in a positive work environment where they were actively experiencing wage theft. Two theories can explain descriptions like these. Critical realism as described by Saunders (2019) has the empirical layer that can be seen, the actual layer that is composed of the underlying dynamics causing the empirical layer, and the real layer behind it all. In this case, the empirical layer was nice treatment from management, the actual layer was previous experience in a horrific work environment, and the actual layer was that they were still being exploited but to a somewhat lesser degree. This could also be explained by Paradox theory (Baume et al., 2024; Hadjisolomou et al., 2025): both are true at the same time. In this scenario, the worker was both treated well and treated poorly. They had a weak mooring factor with the wages at their institution, but a very strong mooring tie to their direct manager.

The model is built with three extrinsic factors and three intrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors of the model are Interaction, Intensity, and Fulfilment. Extrinsic factors in the model are Incentives, Security, and Opportunity. Some of these elements are similar to those used in the Fair Work Convention, but the specifics of what falls under each category has been altered to better fit the idea of a good job than the idea of a fair job. Figure 6.3 displays the elements of the model.

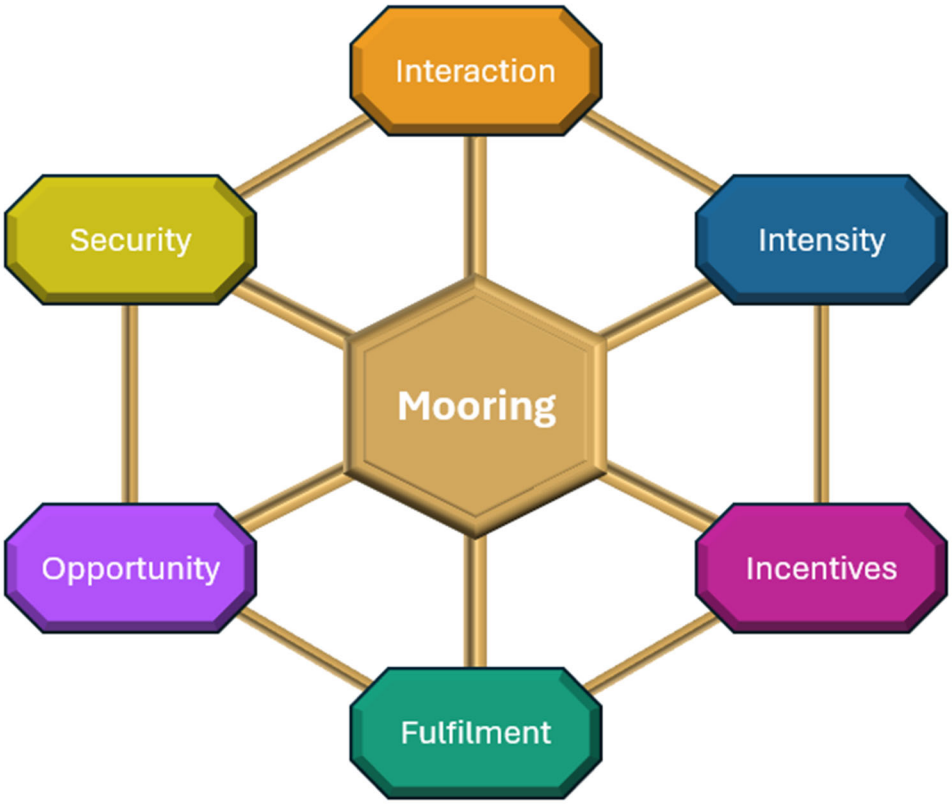


Figure 6.3 Mooring Net model

Interaction is about a worker's relationships with management and co-workers, teamwork, and a respectful environment. This can also represent interactions with guests, though some of those interactions would involve emotional and aesthetic labour and fit under Intensity as well. Hospitality workplaces can be convivial and encourage close-knit relationships, especially between co-workers, but strained relationships can also greatly impact a person's experience in the workplace. Likewise, a trusting relationship between management and workers can lead to a supportive environment, while a tense relationship can make the environment feel unbearable. Teamwork sounds like it might be another way of phrasing 'relationships with co-workers,' but is specifically about the way the workflow is managed. One might have wonderful relationships with one's co-workers, but that does not necessarily mean that everyone works well together, or that different work teams communicate appropriately in order to achieve the tasks at hand. As for a respectful environment, a workplace where all members of staff get along well can be wonderful, but if someone joins the staff with a different set of personal characteristics, especially protected characteristics, a respectful environment would make room for that person, where a disrespectful environment may make them feel othered. Interactions with guests can add or detract from this respectful environment.

Intensity relates to the stress levels, work pace, hours worked, work-life balance, and the performance of emotional and aesthetic labour. All jobs can be stressful at times, but continuously

elevated stress levels that carry over to one's personal life, or intense moments of stress, can be unhealthy. Similarly, the work pace in hospitality can vary greatly with slow periods and intense busy periods. This can be sustainable, and even desirable for some, but can be overwhelming if there is no downtime and boring if there is too much downtime. The consideration of hours worked overlaps somewhat with Incentives, as more hours worked generally relate to a higher salary, but in this case the hours refer to whether or not the number of hours is excessive, the time of day the hours occur, the rest time between the hours, and the consistency of one's schedule. This is related to work-life balance, as a worker may have difficulties maintaining an outside life or unable to relax due to scheduling. The other aspect of Intensity is the need to 'perform' for guests, as discussed in Section 3.3.2 Emotional and aesthetic labour. Workplaces where one must constantly perform this type of labour can be exhausting.

Fulfilment is about making a difference, feeling accomplished, skill use, engaging tasks, and autonomy. Feelings of accomplishment and making a difference can be separate or intertwined. For example, one may feel accomplished after finishing a busy shift, and one may feel like they have made a difference by brightening someone's day, or one may experience both feelings by handling a challenging scenario to improve an overall situation. These feelings can vary by day, but one may also feel a general sense of accomplishment or making a difference when they think about their job. Skill use relates to being able to use one's skills that were generally gained in previous jobs or outside education, though it can also describe skills that were gained on the job. As described in Section 3.3.1 Low entry barriers, deskilling can be rampant in hospitality and lead to feelings of boredom or dissatisfaction. Engaging tasks are tied somewhat to autonomy, as performing repetitive tasks is required by many hospitality roles. Autonomy is difficult to measure in hospitality due to the nature of the work: one does not generally get to choose one's tasks or the speed and order in which they are completed as the tasks are part of a larger process (Mira, 2021). Autonomy can still be measured, however, through the levels of surveillance and micromanagement that workers endure, and if they have the ability to address problems themselves without input from management. In a similar vein, tasks can be considered either monotonous or engaging depending on the manner in which they need to be carried out. There is also the concept of being able to be one's true self at work: rare in hospitality, where one is performing the emotional and aesthetic labour aforementioned in Intensity, but fulfilling where possible.

Incentives are relatively straightforward and pertain to wages, perks, benefits, and employer reputation. Wages can refer to the hourly wage, a salaried wage, tips, or bonuses received for reaching performance goals. Perks can be something related to the job itself, such as a free meal when on shift at a restaurant, or something available through company connections, such as discounted gym memberships. Benefits include offerings such as private medical insurance, additional pension contribution, or extra holidays. Of note, these would not include items that are legally required of an employer, such as the minimum number of holidays, as those fall under employment rights and are not a 'benefit' to working in a particular location. Employer reputation may seem like an odd inclusion in this category, but working for an employer with a specific reputation can assist with connections or future job opportunities. For an example, working for a large international hotel chain with a reputation for excellent service can provide networking opportunities and possible job opportunities in multiple countries, while a long tenure in a

restaurant with a reputation for treating its workers horribly could show future employers that a candidate can withstand tough conditions, though it may not be as persuasive if the candidate worked as management in said establishment.

Security refers to job security, contract stipulations, a safe working environment, and union representation. Job security is difficult to quantify, but generally relates to both consistency of hours and safety from redundancy. The number of hours overlaps somewhat with the Intensity category mentioned earlier, but in this case relates specifically to fears that one will not receive enough working hours to pay bills. This is joined with contract stipulations. The issues with zero-hour contracts are discussed in Section 3.2.1 Hours, but there can be similar issues with contracts that stipulate a low number of hours, or workplaces that do not adhere to contract terms. Security also relates to a safe working environment. This could be safety in the environment itself, such as proper hygiene and safety standards, or safety from the people with whom an employee interacts. Union representation can also relate to security, though this can be somewhat tricky. If every member of a large workplace is part of a union, there is likely a strong feeling of job security. If a single person in a small workplace is a member of a union, they may have additional support for establishing their rights, but they will not have the power of collective bargaining.

The final extrinsic factor is Opportunity, pertaining to skill development, training, mentorship, and promotion opportunities. Skill development can be formally acquired through training or informally acquired through daily practice on the job. Training refers to classroom training, on-the-job training, or computer modules. Depending on the implementation, each of these could have varying rates of efficacy. Mentorship is the process of pairing a senior worker with a newer worker in order to help the newer worker gain skills and grow. Promotion opportunities specifically refer to opportunities within the organisation for upward mobility. Hospitality tends to have many opportunities for sideways mobility or upward mobility in a separate organisation, as established in Section 5.3 Training and promotions, but direct upward mobility within the same organisation can be sparse.

Each of the elements of this model can make a job good or bad, but the important aspect of this model is the mooring element. A job may consist of all of these aspects or none of them, but is most likely to have a combination of good and bad elements. A person's attachment to one factor, or their mooring, can make up for detachment from another factor. For instance, if a job has excellent Opportunity elements, it can compensate for poor Incentives if a person is simply hoping for a stepping stone. On the other hand, a strong repulsion from one element can undermine the mooring effect from other attachments. For example, a workplace with great levels of Fulfilment and Intensity may not be sustainable for someone who only experiences negative Interactions.

The 'net' aspect of the model is not purely aesthetic, but exemplifies how the elements interact with one another. Think of the level of attachment as a rope in this mooring net. A strong attachment is a strong rope, and a weak attachment is a frayed rope. A few strong ropes may bear the weight of several slightly frayed ropes, but when too many ropes are frayed, or if one rope is frayed too badly, the whole net can snap. This harkens back to Moon's (1995) idea that mooring factors can be ideal, tolerable, or intolerable: a workplace may have several ideal mooring factors

(strong ropes) among many tolerable ones (normal ropes), and those may or may not be strong enough to make up for a single intolerable factor (frayed rope).

The Mooring Net model is different from existing approaches in that it is not meant to be applied to a specific job, but instead how a person is moored to a specific job. Applying the model to jobs as a whole would be overly behaviourist; a person is not an equation with a single solution, and adding up multiple factors will not necessarily make every person want to stay in a job. Instead, this model looks at each factor as a sort of 'net' that supports the mooring of an individual in a particular job. A person may have a strong, medium, or weak tie to each element. Elements can be woven together, such as a feeling of Fulfilment with the Opportunity to progress in one's job. Those bonds can strengthen or weaken mooring at the job overall.

This framework advances the theoretical understanding of worker retention and turnover by looking at the different mooring elements as intertwined and individual to the worker. It is not as simple as saying, 'raising wages will decrease turnover' or, 'improving management relationships will increase retention.' These are things that can help, certainly, but whether or not they will make a specific person want to stay in their job depends on the other mooring elements of that individual as all of the elements are interwoven. This does not, however, mean that the framework is so personal that analysis of a person's mooring net could not help understand overall retention and turnover at a venue or even in an industry: if multiple individuals say that the same elements are causing them to leave jobs despite the very personal nature of this model, that element is a very strong mooring factor and needs to be examined.

6.6 Conclusion

Literature on migration has a history of using both functionalism and radical structuralism, while literature on hospitality and turnover tend to apply a functionalist approach. This thesis falls somewhere between the two, and focusses specifically on the individual's perception of reality and the level of change needed to adjust that perception. This thesis introduces the Mooring Net model based on the ideas of PPM as established by Moon (1995) and furthered by Haldorai et al. (2019). The definition of mooring elements is further influenced by the capability approach, specifically what a person is able to do with what they have, though it is not specifically a capability theory. Critical realism and paradox theory are employed to identify deeper mooring elements against empirical observations of mooring. The elements of the Mooring Net model are heavily influenced by the Fair Work Convention but have been modified to focus on the factors that make up a 'good' job and not just a 'fair' job.

The following chapter examines the methods applied to this theoretical framework in order to examine mooring factors that lead to or prevent labour turnover.

7.0 Methods

This chapter will cover the methods used in this research. Section 7.1 Researcher positioning describes the positionality of the researcher, inherent biases, and how they were addressed. Section 7.2 Fieldwork discusses the research design, including the literature behind the choice of methodology, philosophical approach behind the methods chosen, different iterations of the methods over time, and the selection of venues and participants. Section 7.3 Data analysis: Transcription and coding shares the transcription process and details of coding.

7.1 Researcher positioning

The researcher comes from a background of working in hospitality, specifically theme parks, in her home country. She started in frontline service roles before moving to back of house roles. She worked with executives but was not in a management role until the final editing portion of this thesis. This provided her with a strong understanding of company finances as well as the familiarity of depending on a workplace meal voucher to eat. Back of house roles provided significantly better treatment and incentives.

This change in circumstance, along with her volunteer work with migrants in her home country who also worked in theme parks, led her to look at the experiences of frontline workers again with a critical eye: her experiences in the frontline were difficult, but migrant workers had an additional layer of challenge. She became more familiar with these challenges as a migrant herself in the UK, especially the instability and challenges of staying with post-Brexit visa regulatory changes; she was unable to stay in the UK after the completion of her studies and had to return to her home country.

Due to this background, the researcher has bias in favour of migration, frontline workers, and of the hospitality industry as a whole, but with better working conditions. This bias naturally encouraged the researcher to look at materials examining migrant and worker exploitation in the research process, but in recognition of her own bias in these, she also examined neutral figures of migration statistics (see Scottish Parliament, 2018) and wages over time (see Francis-Devine, 2023) in order to provide a more holistic view.

The researcher did not have any previous relationship with her participants. She is a naturally friendly person with a professional history of encouraging people to talk about sensitive aspects of their job, so people tend to be candid with her. She had a lot in common with the hospitality professionals given her previous experience in the industry. Like most of the other migrants in this study, she was white, English-speaking, and highly-educated, but she was the only migrant whose UK residency was tied to her current employment status. To avoid her bias influencing data collection, the researcher asked open-ended questions. This is part of the nature of semi-structured interviews, but the questions were not designed to steer toward a particular answer.

With inherent bias, there is a tendency to look for expected patterns and answers one expects to see. In order to reduce that influence on data interpretation, the researcher relied on

thorough coding to ensure that all answers were looked at equally. The researcher's background did provide additional insight into participants' answers that might not otherwise be apparent. For example, familiarity with frontline work allowed her to read between the lines when someone was minimising a traumatic work experience, or either downplaying or exaggerating how busy they were.

7.2 Field work

This section will discuss the field work undertaken. Section 7.2.1 Iterations of research design discusses the different forms of the research design, including the logic behind each method and why it was or was not used. Section 7.2.2 Research design describes the research design that was ultimately used. Section 7.2.3 Venue selection elaborates on the types of venues in which the participants work, including both the ideal selection methods and the actual selection methods. Section 7.2.4 Participants provides details about the participants, including the sampling methods and some demographic information.

7.2.1 Iterations of research design

The methods used in existing literature naturally vary given the different philosophical approaches to research on migration, labour turnover, and worker wellbeing outlined in Section 6.1 Paradigms in existing literature. Robeyns (2017) found that most research in the field of economics focussed on collecting quantitative data in order to create neat statistics. This extends to some research on migrant workers; for example, Shariff et al. (2019) conducted functionalist research to find demographics of migrant workers in the Malaysian hospitality industry, and used a purely quantitative approach in distributing surveys. Other research on migrant workers tends to use qualitative research to gain a larger understanding of the living and working conditions of the migrants in question. Smith's (2019) study on migrant agricultural workers in New Zealand used in-depth interviews to learn more about the conditions of the workers. Meanwhile, Iversen and Jacobsen (2016) had a functionalist approach to finding the motivations between migrant tourism entrepreneurs in Norway, and also used semi-structured interviews. This research uses semi-structured interviews in line with much of the existing literature.

All iterations of the research were meant to use qualitative data, though the initial versions intended to use quantitative data as well. The use of mixed methods is common in business research as quantitative methods can be used to spot trends and qualitative data can be used to explain those trends in depth (Anderson et al., 2013). The initial desire for mixed methods fit this use, but patterns can be observed in qualitative data analysis as well. For an example from the findings in Section 8.2 Opportunity, some participants believed promotions were amply available and others believed they were difficult to obtain, and the researcher simply looked at the job titles of the participants who felt each way to observe the pattern that the ones who felt promotions were amply available had already been promoted. The other benefit of quantitative data is that industry professionals often prefer its generalisability (Anderson et al., 2013). If the goal is to reduce turnover and increase retention, businesses may prefer to listen to their more familiar data formats.

The presentation of data to businesses may not be as neat without the percentages, but individual stories are moving in their own way.

The ultimate goal was always to focus on qualitative data. Qualitative data is rich and shows a level of nuance that quantitative data is unable to show (Anderson et al., 2013). There is a difference between answering 'yes' or 'no' to the question of whether or not one wants to leave their job and the kinds of answers a person provides in a qualitative interview. It is not black and white, and that level of nuance leads to the philosophical approach to this research as developed in Section 6.5 Mooring Net Model. Do people want to leave their jobs? Looking to critical realism, they may give all the empirical answers of wanting to leave while exhibiting all the actual behaviours of wanting to stay. Qualitative methods are crucial for uncovering the layers between the empirical, the actual, and the real. Looking back to paradox theory, perhaps people simultaneously do and do not want to leave. Two things can be true at the same time to someone, but looking back to critical realism, this does not mean that both are always actually true; sometimes only one of those things is actually real. Embracing the Mooring Net Model, they may be strongly moored in one element and unmoored in another. The net may be frayed but unbroken, so their answer is not simple: maybe they *do* want to leave their job, but they also do not. A person's mooring is a personal thing and all elements are interconnected. Qualitative data is able to reveal this in a way that quantitative data cannot. To fully understand the experiences of migrant workers at this moment in time, this level of depth was necessary, and thus a qualitative approach was necessary.

Due to extreme challenges in accessing businesses, the methods were modified over time. The researcher initially desired a multiple case study format (Method A), pivoted to a widespread survey with the intention to interview a selection (Method B), and finally settled on multi-stakeholder interviews (Method C). The following sections describe each method, why it was chosen, how it was or was not implemented, and the challenges encountered.

7.2.1.1 Method A: Multiple case studies

The initial idea for the research followed a multiple case study format looking at different businesses during the same approximate time frame. Surveys for demographics and basic questions would be distributed to each worker by the employer. The researcher would then use the surveys to select candidates to interview. Ideal candidates would have a mixture of demographics, job experiences, and feelings on the workplace. The candidates would primarily be migrant workers, but local workers would be selected as well as a basis of comparison. Interviews would also be conducted with members of management, ideally someone from HR and a shift manager. These sets of data would be analysed separately and then combined. The data would ideally point to any patterns over time regarding turnover of migrant workers, including a comparison to turnover in local workers. The interviews would provide additional nuance to these patterns and add insight into the migrant experience in the workplace, as well as local perception of migrants in the workplace.

Over the first six months of 2022, eighteen businesses were asked to participate. These invitations were sent out in waves, as the researcher was ironically worried about too many

businesses wanting to participate. These businesses included ten attractions and eight hotels, with a mixture of urban and rural locations all over Scotland. None of the businesses were related to winter sports, so January was chosen to initiate contact with the idea that business would be relatively slow and open for research. Further invitations were sent out each month. Most of the invitations were not responded to, despite multiple follow-up requests via phone and email. Five businesses in total responded. One rural attraction said that they would be unable to participate. One urban attraction responded with interest, but did not respond to follow-up requests to set up logistics. Two urban attractions and one urban hotel responded with interest, but the logistics of setting up the surveys and interviews led to multiple months of delay and eventual cessation of communication. One urban attraction offered to participate after the completion of the busy summer season, but when contact was attempted again in the autumn, the attraction ceased to respond.

The researcher attempted to change the format of the surveys so that the businesses interested in participating could simply send a link to the workers and the researcher could contact them separately. The electronic surveys were sent out in June 2022 to businesses with whom the researcher had spoken previously, and more in September to two businesses with whom the researcher had networked in the interim. Despite the initial positive response about this electronic method from the businesses, there were no responses to the surveys.

7.2.1.2 Method B: Surveys and interviews

As Autumn 2022 began and the businesses targeted for case studies seemed entirely unlikely to respond, the researcher decided on a less curated approach. A slightly altered version of the survey was created that would apply more widely. As this survey was anticipated to have a much larger number of participants, it was intended solely for migrant workers. While this would not provide the desired comparison with local workers, it was thought to provide a wide range of participants. The researcher would contact a selection of participants for interviews.

The survey underwent peer review through PhD colleagues and was widely distributed electronically in September 2022. The interviewer sent the survey to the International Student departments of thirteen Scottish universities, four major Scottish activist groups related to hospitality work and migrant groups, two local Scottish subreddits on Reddit.com, and nineteen Facebook groups pertaining to migrant workers and hospitality work. The researcher also shared the survey on LinkedIn and individually with acquaintances from previous networking attempts. In the first ten days that the survey was live, it only received six responses, all of which were either blank or irrelevant (e.g., a migrant who did not work in hospitality).

In October, the researcher sent the survey to four Scottish hotel associations and an English as a Second Language Provider. The language provider and two of the hotel associations did not respond. One hotel association pointed the researcher to an association with whom she had previously spoken. As the university International Student departments were largely unable to assist with the research, the researcher also sent the survey to 147 student societies at those universities pertaining to identities that may or may not apply to migrant groups (e.g., ‘Chinese student society’). The last attempted survey was 25 January, 2023. There were 23 responses in

total, 15 of which were blank beyond the consent form, and none were fully complete. Of the eight respondents who attempted the form, only one provided an email address with consent to be interviewed, but did not respond when contacted.

7.2.1.3 Method C: Multi-stakeholder interviews

When both Method A and Method B seemed like they might not get the desired participation, Method C of interviews with a convenience sampling method began. Beginning in October 2022, requests for interviews were sent to previous networking connections, people affiliated with the University of Strathclyde who currently worked in hospitality, and the businesses who had originally agreed to participate in Method A. 11 requests were sent out initially. Three people did not respond. Two responses were positive, but delayed due to the busy nature of the hospitality industry during the holidays. Six people responded affirmatively, one of whom was from a business from Method A.

In order to avoid the disappointment found in Method A and Method B, in January 2023 the researcher sent out 116 requests for interviews to hotels across Scotland. Ten hotels were contacted in each major city, and slightly fewer for each of the islands as there were fewer establishments with multiple employees. Hotels were specifically targeted as the researcher had already reached out to most attractions in the country and it proved difficult to find contact information for restaurants. The researcher also requested interviews from three restaurants and two attractions that she had visited recently, as there were migrant workers present during these visits. Out of these 121 total interview requests, three people responded affirmatively.

In addition to these digital requests for interviews, in March 2023 the researcher printed her contact details onto business cards for a direct approach. She provided these cards to hospitality workers she spoke to at restaurants and to participants at a protest over labour conditions at a local restaurant. There are not exact figures for this approach, as 14 business cards were taken but other people took photos of the cards. Two people agreed to interview with this approach. A third agreed to interview but did not respond to scheduling requests.

Throughout this time, the researcher continued to ask for interview participants through her university and personal network. Through a combination of networking and direct approach, interviews were conducted with 32 participants. The content of the interviews is further detailed in Section 7.2.2 Research design, and information about participant selection and demographics is in Section 7.2.4 Participants.

7.2.2 Research design

Qualitative data was gathered in the form of semi-structured interviews. Interviews began in November 2022 and concluded in July 2023 with a total of 32 interviews. The interviews were conducted over Zoom. Zoom was chosen for three primary reasons: to accommodate busy schedules, to more easily talk to people in different cities, and because Zoom had an automatic transcription function. Three interviews were conducted over Microsoft Teams as the participants did not want to use Zoom, but Teams used a similar automatic transcription feature. The interviews

ranged between 30 and 80 minutes. The researcher found that 30 minutes was far too short to answer all of the questions, but most questions were answered within 50 minutes.

The interviews were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews were selected to ensure that all questions were answered thoroughly while allowing for a natural flow of conversation that a fully structured interview might not. Each interview began with, 'Tell me about your role.' Depending on how the participant responded, the interviewer would direct the conversation toward a matching question. For example, if the participant mentioned learning new things, the interviewer would ask about official and unofficial training on the job, mentorship, or the opportunity to use existing skills. Often the participants would answer a question without it being asked either directly or indirectly. The interviewer kept the list of questions on her other monitor while talking to the participants and made note of which ones had been answered. Toward the end of the interview, she directly asked any questions that had not yet been covered. A limitation of this method is that the interviews covered some topics more thoroughly than others (Saunders, 2019). This researcher argues that this is not a limitation, however, but a feature aligning with the Mooring Net Model: certain topics were explored more thoroughly because they were of more interest to the participants and indicated their mooring elements more clearly.

The questions were different depending on the role of the participant. Participants were split into three stakeholder groups: workers, management, and policymakers. Workers were defined as frontline workers in both front of house and back of house positions, as well as lower-level office jobs (e.g., hotel recruiter) and lower-level management (e.g., bar supervisors). These roles may have some levels of additional responsibility, but are not responsible for hiring and firing decisions. Members of management were defined as higher-level management roles with responsibility including hiring and firing decisions. Some members of management owned their businesses, and others simply held a 'manager' title. The final category was policymakers. These participants did not currently work in a hospitality venue but did work adjacent to the industry, such as skill development, union organisation, industry research, or consultancy. All of the policymakers were actively involved with hospitality organisations and had a large degree of insight into their operations. The majority of these participants had also worked in hospitality themselves in the past.

Questions were grouped according to the classifications defined in the Mooring Net model in Section 6.5 Mooring Net model: intrinsic factors of interaction, intensity, and fulfilment, and extrinsic factors of incentives, security, and opportunity. There were also questions about COVID-19, Brexit, and more general uncategorised questions about how long a person had been in their role and what made them want to stay or leave. Figure A1 displays the worker questions.

Members of management were also interviewed, but their questions differed from the ones asked of the workers. In contrast to the questions for the workers, which primarily focussed on their experiences, the questions for employers mainly covered worker turnover and its associated costs. While the worker questions were directly about their lived experiences, the manager questions were slightly more calculated. Management was still asked about their own lived experiences, but many of the questions asked were designed to be compared with the answers the workers gave. Figure A2 displays the management questions.

Unlike the other two groups, policymakers did not have a separate set of questions. Instead, their questions were modelled on the same question list for the managers but were modified according to their area of interest. For example, union representatives were asked why people chose to stay or leave hospitality, and the researcher was able to ask very directly about employer exploitation and different treatment of migrants, as these are issues that concerned the union. Conversely, a policymaker from an organisation devoted to promoting visitor attractions had many answers about the perks available in hospitality and the overall perception of the industry, but while they were still asked about migrants in the workplace, the question had to be asked carefully and without the implication that those workers were at any disadvantage.

There were some methodological limitations with this approach. The smaller sample size necessitated by thorough qualitative research and especially interviews means that there is no generalisability on a wider scale. The lack of quantitative data also means that there are no statistics to provide (Anderson et al., 2013; Saunders, 2019). Even if all of the worker participants provided the same answer to a question, that does not mean that all workers feel that way. To provide a counterpoint to this limitation, however, that is not the point of the Mooring Net Model: it is a highly personal model designed to look more closely at the needs of the individual, and thus is not meant to be applied widely.

In an ideal scenario, follow-up data would have been collected after one year from the same participants as the first session to discover whether workers who expressed an intention to leave actually did so, and why workers who expressed an intention to stay did or did not do so. Actual turnover and turnover intention can be very different numbers (Nishii and Mayer, 2009), and collecting both can help reveal mooring factors. For example, if a worker expressed an intense desire to leave in the initial interview but remained in the same role a year later, the factors that compelled them to stay could be strong mooring factors. Likewise, a worker who expressed a deep attachment to a certain element of the workplace but left a year later could expose the kinds of pull factors that can overcome strong moorings. Given the difficulties in the field work and time limitations with which to conduct the research, these follow-up interviews were unfortunately not possible.

7.2.3 Venue selection

When searching for literature on hospitality venues, the majority of the research focusses on hotels and restaurants. Broadening the search to ‘tourism’ venues allows for more variety but still a majority of hotels and restaurants. Of note, the experiences of the workers in these venues are similar, though the physical tasks of workers in hotels and restaurants may vary greatly. The work has low pay (see Janta and Lugosi, 2022), the hours are antisocial and vary greatly depending on seasonal need (see Yaduma et al., 2015), the tasks are often noted as dull and repetitive (see Janta et al., 2011b), and there is little room for training and advancement (see Wright et al., 2019). Work in these venues may be seen as prestigious in areas where manual labour is common (see Kikon and Karlsson, 2020), but in the UK the jobs are generally viewed as low-status (see McDowell et al., 2007).

As the work experiences in different venues in hospitality and tourism are highly similar, this left the question of exactly which venues to incorporate in the research. This thesis initially sought to study two areas of hospitality: hotels and attractions. Migrant workers in hotels, as mentioned, have been widely studied in the past, and there is a variety of literature for direct comparison. Attractions, on the other hand, seem to be largely untouched in the field of study. Research had been conducted on general labour turnover in Scottish attractions (see Leask et al., 2018), but not specifically on migrant workers in that area at the time this research was conducted. Attractions as defined in this thesis are venues that individuals or groups might visit for entertainment for several hours. While this definition matches venues such as cinemas and bowling alleys, this thesis uses the definition specifically of visitor attractions that draw tourism from an area outside of the immediate vicinity, either from within or from outside the UK. Given the difficulties of obtaining subjects, the type of venue was dependent on the subjects who were willing to participate. Three participants were from attractions, four were from bars, four were from restaurants, and eleven were from hotels. One participant worked in a restaurant at the time of interview but had extensive experience on cruise ships, and is a bit of a classification outlier.

Ideally, venues in both urban and rural locations would be compared. The experiences of migrants can vary greatly depending on the community they have around them (Janta et al., 2011a). Work venues in the city may have a wider variety of migrants than ones in rural locations, though the countryside may have a larger population of fellow migrants if word of mouth has spread that somewhere is affordable or pleasant to live. The difficulties in recruiting workers in rural areas (see Maxwell and MacLean, 2008) and the relative ease of finding work in urban areas (see Kalenjuk et al., 2020) reveals that there must be more than individual preference at play. In the actual research, only three participants worked in rural locations, with the majority instead working in Scotland's central belt. This is due to the sampling method discussed further in Section 7.2.4 Participants.

Another comparison would ideally be made between venues operating at different market levels, such as high-end hotels and budget hotels. Some of the literature describes workers having a sense of pride in their jobs when they worked at luxury locations (see Kikon and Karlsson, 2020 and Shariff et al., 2019). Of note, these workers were not located in the UK, and it is uncertain whether or not this viewpoint would transfer. The price point of the venues the subjects worked within varied, as their workplaces ranged from a fish and chip shop to a five-star hotel.

7.2.4 Participants

Due to the issues with finding participants detailed in Section 7.2.1 Iterations of research design, participant selection was primarily through convenience and snowball sampling. Of the 32 total interviews, only six were conducted as a result of a direct approach from the interviewer. Of the remaining 26 interviews, 15 were introduced to the interviewer through her personal and university networks, and the remaining 11 interviews were the result of snowballing through previous interviews. Of note, all of the participants spoken to through snowballing were only one step removed from the original interview subjects; i.e., if Person A recommended Person B for an interview, Person B would respond and give an interview, but did not provide further interview

subjects. One additional interview was conducted as a result of direct approach, but the recording was lost due to a technical issue, so this interview has not been included as part of the total number. Two of the interview subjects worked at the same location and were interviewed together.

As described in Section 7.2.2 Research design, the participants were split into three groups: workers, management, and policymakers. This multi-stakeholder approach allowed for a wider presentation of experiences and opinions. All of the workers worked in different locations at the time of being interviewed, but several of them had previously worked in the same establishments. The members of management all worked in different locations from one another, but four worked in the same locations as participants from the worker group. The policymakers had the most overlap, as two organisations represented four participants. Many of the policymakers had lengthy expanses of previous hospitality experience and had worked in the same venues as people from all three groups. Of note, many of the policymakers also knew one another, and some had recommended one another for participation in this study.

Figure 7.1 below provides a demographic profile of the participants. The initial goal for the research was to compare the experiences of migrant and local workers, with an emphasis on the experiences of migrant workers. Because of the challenges with finding participants, only 10 interview subjects were migrants, though one member of management and one policymaker both identified themselves as the children or spouses of migrants and had insight into their family members' experiences. One of the workers was a dual citizen of Italy and the UK. While it could be argued that this person was not a migrant due to his citizenship status, the researcher categorised him as a migrant because his childhood and adolescence were spent in Italy and he only arrived in the UK for university. One participant was from Northern Ireland and, as a British citizen, was of course not categorised as a migrant, but he spoke at length of his experiences with domestic migration.

Classification	Age	Gender	Venue Type	Tenure - Venue	Tenure - Industry	Migrant	Migrant Nationality
Worker	20s	Male	Attraction	1-5 years	1-5 years	No	
Worker	20s	Female	Bar	< 1 year	1-5 years	Yes	Finnish
Worker	20s	Male	Bar	< 1 year	1-5 years	Yes	Italian
Worker	20s	Male	Bar	< 1 year	5-10 years	No	
Worker	20s	Non-binary	Bar	1-5 years	1-5 years	No	
Worker	20s	Female	Hotel	< 1 year	1-5 years	Yes	Greek
Worker	20s	Female	Hotel	< 1 year	10+ years	Yes	Hungarian
Worker	20s	Female	Hotel	< 1 year	1-5 years	No	
Worker	50s	Female	Hotel	1-5 years	10+ years	Yes	Spanish
Worker	20s	Non-binary	Hotel	< 1 year	5-10 years	No	
Worker	20s	Male	Hotel	5-10 years	5-10 years	No	
Worker	50s	Male	Other	10+ years	10+ years	Yes	Bulgarian
Worker	20s	Female	Restaurant	< 1 year	< 1 year	Yes	Canadian
Worker	20s	Female	Restaurant	< 1 year	1-5 years	No	
Worker	20s	Male	Restaurant	1-5 years	10+ years	No	
Management	40s	Female	Attraction	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Management	40s	Female	Attraction	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Management	30s	Male	Hotel	10+ years	10+ years	Yes	Mauritian
Management	30s	Male	Hotel	1-5 years	10+ years	No	
Management	40s	Female	Hotel	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Management	30s	Female	Hotel	5-10 years	10+ years	No	
Management	60s	Female	Hotel	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Management	30s	Female	Restaurant	5-10 years	5-10 years	Yes	South African
Policymaker	40s	Male	Policy	1-5 years	5-10 years	Yes	Slovak
Policymaker	50s	Male	Policy	1-5 years	10+ years	No	
Policymaker	50s	Male	Policy	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Policymaker	50s	Male	Policy	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Policymaker	50s	Male	Policy	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Policymaker	50s	Male	Policy	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Policymaker	50s	Male	Policy	10+ years	10+ years	No	
Policymaker	20s	Female	Policy	1-5 years	5-10 years	No	
Policymaker	30s	Male	Policy	5-10 years	5-10 years	No	

Figure 7.1 Participant demographic profile

7.3 Data analysis: Transcription and coding

Of the 32 interviews conducted, 31 were recorded and transcribed. The one interview that was not recorded and transcribed had copious notes that were sent to the participant for approval immediately after the interview in order to ensure that the words were not misrepresented. The other interviews were all recorded through Zoom or Microsoft Teams, both of which provided automatic transcriptions of the interviews. As both Zoom and Microsoft Teams are American companies and presumably programmed to capture those regional accents, the automatic transcription was only able to accurately capture the researcher and the single Canadian interview participant. The researcher listened to each recording and edited the automatic transcripts to ensure accuracy. In several cases where the participant was entirely unintelligible to the automatic transcription function, the researcher manually transcribed those responses. Where both the automatic transcription and the researcher failed to understand the participant, a note was made that the section was unintelligible.

Semi-verbatim transcription was used. The researcher retained some stutters and filler words, but removed instances that would cause confusion during data analysis. For example, 'sort of' and 'kind of' were often used as filler words whether or not the modifier was intentional. In those cases, the researcher listened to the context of each sentence and left in 'sort of' and 'kind of' if the modifier was intended, and removed them if the modifier was unintended. This was intended to enhance clarity, as the statements 'I sort of hate this job' and 'I hate this job' are very different on the surface, so the intended meaning was key. The researcher also added notes when sarcasm was being used and when laughter occurred to clarify the context of the sentences. One interview was conducted in Spanish with the aid of an interpreter. As the researcher speaks limited Spanish, the answers of the interpreter were used with some extra context where the researcher understood additional details directly from the participant.

The researcher used definitions of coding methods as established by Saldaña (2021). The coding method chosen for analysis was technically eclectic coding, as multiple methods of coding were used. Most methods chosen were deductive and based on previously-established theory, though the researcher was open to emerging themes as coding continued. The primary method was concept coding based on the major elements of the Mooring Net described in Section 6.5 Mooring Net model, with two additional categories for elements of upheaval relevant to the time of the field work and hiring practices. Attribute coding was also used for basic information about the participant and their place of work. This was primarily used in order to spot patterns related to demographics such as age, gender, migrant status, length of service in the particular venue and hospitality as a whole, and any pertinent details about the venues such as location and size.

The software NVivo was used for coding. Attribute coding was used solely within the NVivo programme, and the researcher developed a preliminary code book based on concept coding. These codes were based on the themes from Mooring Net with an additional category for the different forms of upheaval as described in Section 4.0 Labour market upheaval and another for mooring factors as defined in Section 6.3 Mooring. This code book was shared with peers and supervisors in order to conduct a cross-coding exercise with a sample transcript. Figure 7.2 below provides the code book. Codes were first attributed to the primary code. Once

all primary coding was complete, secondary coding was conducted for the coding subcategories. Figure 7.3 lists the total number of codes for each category.

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Description
Incentives	Pay Perks Benefits Workplace reputation Industry reputation	'Perks' and 'benefits' were sometimes considered to be the same by many participants. Workplace and industry reputation were often tied together as well.
Opportunity	Skill development Training opportunities Mentorship Promotion opportunities	Skill development and training are usually explicitly defined. 'Mentorship' sometimes appeared as a 'buddy system' or one-on-one training scenario.
Security	Job security Workplace safety Contract Union membership	Descriptions of 'safety' and 'security' may not match technical definitions. Discussion of contracts may overlap with hours per week.
Interaction	Co-worker relationships Management relationships Team dynamics Guest interaction	Any discussion of relationships between team members and management, as well as interaction with guests.
Intensity	Stress levels Work pace Hours per week Work-life balance Emotional/aesthetic labour	Descriptions of stress levels, work pace, hours per week, and work-life balance; could be either positive or negative. Also performance of emotional and aesthetic labour.
Fulfilment	Feeling of accomplishment Feeling of making a difference Ability to use skills Engaging tasks Ability to be true self	Discussion of accomplishment and making a difference might also talk about meaning, usefulness, etc. Skill use can be tied to previous jobs or education. Tasks may also be described as 'repetitive.' Definition of 'true self' can vary.
Hiring Practices	N/A	Any discussion of types of workers who were or were not hired.
Migrant Experience	N/A	Any discussion about migration and the daily and work-specific experiences of migrants.
Upheaval	Brexit COVID-19 Cost of living	Any mention of Brexit, COVID-19, or the cost of living crisis. Discussion of visa or settled status would fall under 'Brexit.'
Mooring	Reasons to stay Reasons to leave	This overlapped with other codes, and was mostly used to draw attention to identified mooring factors for the discussion chapter.

Figure 7.2 Code book

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Total Codes
Incentives	Pay	117
	Perks/Benefits	81
	Reputation	129
Opportunity	Mentorship	23
	Promotions	104
	Skill Development	58
	Training	73
Security	Contracts	41
	Job Security	88
	Safety	46
	Union	23
Interaction	Co-workers	82
	Guest Interaction	119
	Management	99
	Team Dynamics	79
Intensity	Emotional/Aesthetic Labour	18
	Hours	114
	Pace	79
	Staffing Levels	46
	Stress	85
	Work-Life Balance	94
Fulfilment	Accomplishment	52
	Tasks	52
	Passion	24
	Skill Use	18
	True Self	23
Hiring Practices	-	140
Migrant Experience	-	139
Upheaval	Brexit	59
	Cost of Living	26
	COVID	98
Mooring	-	201

Figure 7.3 List of codes

7.4 Conclusion

While a multiple case study approach with follow-up after one year was initially desired, the realities of labour shortages in Scotland after both Brexit and COVID-19 made this impossible. Instead, a multi-stakeholder interview approach was taken using both convenience and snowball sampling. 32 semi-structured interviews were conducted over a combination of Zoom and Microsoft Teams, each typically lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. Questions were based on the Mooring Net Model. The interviews were transcribed semi-verbatim and primary and secondary codes were applied using mostly deductive concept coding.

The participants were a mixture of workers, management, and policymakers. This provided a diverse set of data, but not as diverse as would be preferred, as a large number of the participants were British, the majority were white, and many were located in a similar geographical location. The venues were primarily hotels and restaurants instead of the intended attractions. Even with these limitations in place, the researcher was able to gather a large amount of data pertaining to the research questions. The findings of this process will be further described in Section 8.0 Findings.

8.0 Findings

This chapter shares the results of the participant interviews. Each section is written in the form of a narrative with specific quotes to illustrate particular points of interest. The findings are organised according to the factors in the Mooring Net Model described in Section 6.5 Mooring Net Model, starting with the slightly more obvious extrinsic factors for turnover and followed by intrinsic factors. While the literature on hospitality work covers both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, the industry narrative on turnover tends to focus strongly on extrinsic factors, particularly pay and opportunity. Following the factors in the mooring net model are sections on hiring practices and the effects of world events described in Section 4.0 Labour market upheaval. Migrant experiences are woven throughout these sections, but the final section on migrant experiences focusses on items that stand out from the other defined topics.

8.1 Incentives

Almost all of the policymakers discussed the low pay of the industry. Reasons for this included logistical issues with the high cost of labour in hospitality, the high cost of living driving up the price of materials and utilities, as well as the government-mandated salary limitations imposed by charitable attractions. Several policymakers stated that businesses might only be able to afford the minimum wage, and they might still have to cut staffing levels to afford the increase in the minimum wage. While they acknowledged the lower pay, they noted that the fun work environments and progression opportunities made up for the lower salaries. Other policymakers noted that the low pay would drive workers to other industries. Several participants brought up the idea that to young people, any rate of pay will be enough. A union policymaker said that the idea that the low wage was acceptable was harming people in hospitality: they were unlikely to want to fight for higher wages if they felt that the bare minimum was acceptable because they were young. Another union representative noted that higher pay and work conditions in hospitality could lead to higher pay in those industries as well:

> *"We are the lowest paid. If we're higher paid, then everyone else would be higher paid. And just kind of other elements of like, how prevalent sexual harassment is in the workplace, and stuff like that. If we raised all the standards as the kind of bare minimum, like, we are the worst. We are the bottom of the barrel. If you just basically bring the barrel up, everyone else is improved."*
>
> *Union policymaker, female, 20s, Scottish*

In contrast, some of the members of management interviewed had an inflated view of their pay rates. For example, one hotel group manager said that the pay was 'competitive' and 'market-rate,' with the implication that these were good salaries, though those terms are generally used to mean that pay is similar to others in the same industry. An inn owner said that while she paid her chefs very well, she had lower wages for her general workforce that she supplemented with perks. The only other members of management to admit to having low pay for the workforce were both at charitable attractions. They mentioned that the private sector might be appealing to more of their workers in the long term.

About a third of the frontline workers interviewed reported that their wages were either the minimum wage or less than £1 an hour over minimum wage. Despite this, a surprisingly low number of workers outright said that their workplaces had low pay, and most of the ones who did were migrants. A couple of workers implied low pay but softened the language, especially those who liked their roles or worked back of house, but the general consensus was that the pay was not great in their particular venues or in hospitality overall. The use of 'not great' could mean anything from not being able to go on holiday to outright poverty. Workers who mentioned decent pay in their current venues one moment would later share a story that showed that their pay was not at all sustainable. One particularly egregious example came from a non-binary Scottish bar worker, who said that after removing the costs of shift meals and taxis home (as public transit was unavailable after closing time), they only took home £80 a month.

A few participants felt that they received a fair wage specifically in comparison to previous roles, so they felt like their wages were much higher. It should be noted that the timing of these interviews aligned with the increased minimum wage, so their new roles were not offering a premium, but simply the higher minimum wage. Workplaces that paid the higher living wage were addressed very favourably whether or not the participants worked in those locations.

These wages were not astronomical, but because they were able to pay their bills and live on a budget, the workers felt as if they were earning enough. The theme of 'enough' came up among several participants of all nationalities and career levels, especially with regard to housing. While some members of management and policymakers mentioned that getting a mortgage would be harder with the variable wages offered in hospitality, workers were more concerned with the immediate options of rent. Even slightly higher wages could greatly improve one's quality of life. An example was a worker at a charitable attraction: at the time of interview, he had a seasonal job in his venue that paid a higher rate than his regular role. While he was fine with his wages in general, his regular salary presented an issue: it was not enough to be able to apply for a new flat. When he received his new position, which specified the salary as it would be at a full-time rate over the course of a year despite being a seasonal position, he was able to find nicer accommodation:

> *"So when I was first looking, not a single letting agent would actually even pay any attention to my application, because my salary was so low. The minute I got the ranger position and I could put in 22, I didn't need the 22k, I just needed that piece of paper that said that I had it. So that's how I managed to get my new place, which was absolutely fantastic."*
>
> *Attraction worker, male, 20s, Northern Irish*

The issue of tipping provided mixed views. For example, those working in bars and restaurants were likely to receive tips and would be aware of this in interacting with customers. Other interviewees, including several migrants, talked about tips being low or non-existent, especially in comparison to their work in other countries. Interestingly, several interviewees mentioned tips specifically when asked about perks and benefits in their workplace, listing them among other perks like shift meals. The issue was also raised with regard to how many businesses were not transparent about tips and might keep them. A union official paid more attention to this detail, specifying that they had very recently successfully campaigned for it to

be made illegal for employers to keep any tips. This was following a scandal at a well-known hotel, where they found over £140,000 in missing tips over just a nine month period. He said one of the most difficult parts of the campaign was simply making the workers believe they deserved what they had earned:

> *"One of the biggest culture shifts was in persuading workers that that is their money, right? They have earned that money. Even amongst workers who knew that it was wrong, what was happening to them, there was a big perception around, 'Oh well, if I didn't work at 5 Star Resort, I wouldn't make those kind of tips, so should they be justified and taking 10, 15%?' It's like, no! That's your, you're being paid the minimum wage in a 5 star resort. That's what's disgusting. So that tip is a small fraction of compensation towards what you have done to provide that service."*
>
> *Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish*

Some workers described wage theft in their positions. One said that it was his reason for leaving his previous job: the management kept tips and used them to make up for shortages in the till, though they did not make up for any overages by adding them to the tips. He did say that the staff made up for their lost tips by serving themselves complimentary beverages. The other two workers who described wage theft, both migrants, were actively experiencing it in their current roles. Both talked about having their clocked hours shaved down, and while they said they were unhappy about this and had to confront their management about fixing the discrepancy, it continued to happen multiple times.

Some participants recognised that while promotions might be frequent, they may not come with much more compensation. Some interviewees noted that actual raises may be £1 or less for supervisory or lower management roles. One hotel general manager equated this with the minimum wage going up: the lowest pay had to go up, which left the supervisors on little more than minimum wage, and then they wanted a raise. Expanding upon this, one hotel worker said that they had left their previous supervisor role because the manager refused to raise supervisor pay when the minimum wage rose to meet it. Indeed, a union official extended this issue to general managers themselves: the union represented a lot of general managers, and they might be making £30,000 to £40,000 a year despite working many more hours than the average worker.

Some workers described changing jobs for higher pay, for example following their manager who left their organisation and offered higher pay at their new organisation. Managers had different feelings about people leaving for higher pay. Several managers and policymakers said that it could be easy for workers to go to other industries entirely given the lower wages, especially as the wages only seemed to rise in more senior positions. An inn owner said that she encouraged her workers to take high-paying opportunities she could not match, letting them know she was available for part-time shifts if they wanted them. An HR manager at a hotel echoed the possibility of changing industries entirely with regard to back of house roles, which sometimes offered much higher salaries outside of hospitality, but there were no hard feelings:

> *"And you know, double your salary is double your salary, it's sometimes hard to say no however much she might love the environment you're in."*
>
> *Hotel HR manager, female, 40s, Scottish*

Others were not so forgiving. An HR manager at a hotel group said that workers were regularly leaving for 5 or 10 pence more an hour at other roles, and then returning because the other roles would not provide things like meals on shifts. One hotel general manager bemoaned the lack of loyalty in the workforce since COVID-19, with workers leaving for other hotel jobs down the road that paid 50 pence more an hour. Of note, while discussing his own career history, he also talked about how he accepted his current role because it paid more than his previous company.

An issue raised by interviewees was the cost of getting home with jobs that had antisocial hours. Generally, public transportation is off or greatly reduced past a certain point in the evening, and workers could not afford to live close to work or take a taxi every night. A union official told a harrowing tale of one of their members who asked for a taxi home after her late night shift. Her employer refused, and the worker was sexually assaulted while walking home.

A further issue highlighted by a small number of migrant workers was the tax burden they experienced due to the higher tax rates when working more hours, leaving them with very little to live on. One, a cleaner in hotels, discussed it in general terms: she preferred working fewer hours because she paid fewer taxes and took home more of her gross pay. Another, a bartender, specified that it was about the way the tax system worked on a weekly system:

> *"So at the moment, I earn £1 more an hour than I used to when I was a bar supervisor. It's various reasons why I now earn less in real terms. A, because I'm paid weekly now rather than monthly, which means that, if in a week I work 45, 50 hours, I get that week taxed as if I worked 45, 50 hours every week. And obviously that's quite a, I mean, it's quite a rare occasion for me to have to work 50 hours a week. At the moment, that kind of balance in between tax and earnings, where I'm earning enough to be taxed in a higher income bracket, but not enough more for it to be an actual raise in real terms."*
>
> *Bar worker, male, 20s, Italian*

Of the people who emphasised that working in hospitality was about more than just the money, citing career progression or camaraderie, almost all of them held senior positions in the industry and did not work frontline roles. The exception was a migrant cruise ship worker, currently employed in a fish and chip shop, who said that money was important to him but secondary to feeling appreciated and enjoying his work. An HR manager from a hotel group agreed with him:

> *"All the things you can do without having to make it about money, about salary, because you don't get people buying into their roles just because of money. They're not going to work harder because you pay them more."*
>
> *Hotel HR Management, female, 40s, British*

Beyond this questionable statement, a few participants offered ideas of remuneration that were not strictly an increase in hourly wages. For example, some interviewees brought up the idea of referral bonuses or how some businesses were starting to pay a bonus for people working unsociable hours, with one interviewee noting that they received 50 pence more an

hour for night shift work, and it was not particularly competitive. This same interviewee noted the increased customer abuse received during the night shift and stated that the night shift bonus was not enough to compensate for this.

One policymaker told a story of joining a hotel as an HR manager. He said that when he joined the company, a group of workers approached him asking for higher pay. He asked them all how long they had been with the company and they all responded with various lengthy terms of service, so he said that he bet them all that they would still be there by the time he left the company, and their pay must be fine if that was the case. He told this story as an example of the capability for open discussion in the hospitality industry, with the air that it was a hazing ritual and not an honest discussion of pay with new management.

8.1.1 Perks and Benefits

Interviewees noted a range of perks and benefits. For example, hotel workers mentioned the potential to have discounted trips to other hotels in their chain, including overseas. Interviewees who worked in attractions received free access to their own venues and others with reciprocal arrangements, including free access for themselves and their families, discounted access for friends, and free or discounted annual passes as a reward for length of service. Other interviewees in working in food and beverage mentioned discounts for food and drinks at not only their venues, but any venue their companies owned. The discount rates were generally 20% or 30%, though one hotel worker specified a 25% discount.

Most of the policymakers, specifically those related to the hospitality and tourism industries, raised the idea of venues having reciprocal discounts for one another. A few policymakers mentioned this as a hypothetical arrangement, though did not provide examples of it in practice. Others confirmed that this was currently in place between some venues in Edinburgh, and more widely throughout Scotland for attractions that were members of ASVA.

Interviewees mentioned a range of other perks, including uniforms, free drinks after their shifts, company events such as staff parties, nights out, and holiday events. Others mentioned their job environments as more of a perk, including flexible schedule accommodations, task variety, and not being stuck at a desk all day. There were also more unusual, unofficial perks like being allowed to keep items that hotel guests left behind. One member of HR management noted the especially unusual ‘perk’ of reasonable adjustments to a role to accommodate disabilities; this was curious to list as a perk since it is a legal requirement, which one would assume she was aware of as a CIPD-certified HR manager.

One worker specified that perks would not matter in a place with a reputation of ‘being shitty to work in.’ Another said that the perks could, in fact, make up for less desirable aspects:

> *“But I think really, it's just kind of balancing the perks with the law-breaking. You're never going to get a perfect job, I don't think.”*
>
> *Restaurant worker, male, 20s, Scottish*

Several participants discussed workplaces that provided accommodation. For example, an owner of an inn in Orkney had recently purchased additional accommodation for the staff members. While many of her staff members were local, she said that workers from other countries or elsewhere in Scotland often reached out to her for seasonal work but needed a

place to stay. She owned a flat that she used in the past, but it was not enough to house her seasonal workforce, so she purchased a six room hostel.

> *"It's really helpful, but I wouldn't have gotten that person if I didn't have a place for them to stay. And I can't put them into hotel rooms, it's just, there's no point putting a member of staff into a room that I could charge a couple hundred pounds a night for. So it's about having that different style accommodation for them."*
>
> *Inn owner, female, 60s, Scottish*

Two of the policymakers discussed the housing scarcity for workers in rural areas. There were not enough local workers in those areas, they noted, and anyone travelling in for work would not be able to find housing without workplace accommodations. For an example of this, one migrant restaurant worker interviewed was living in workplace accommodations in Skye. She expressed frustration at the lack of available rentals in Skye, citing friends that were on the long waiting list for Council housing and even one that was homeless for a few months. When housing was available, she said, it was not too expensive and she would be able to afford it on her wages, but there simply was not enough housing available with the number of holiday lets on the island. She also expressed frustration with her company, which owned multiple properties on the island but prioritised them as holiday lets even when they did not have enough space for worker accommodation, to the point of removing workers from their accommodation to have more available guest spaces in the summer.

> *"Most people are looking for somewhere with staff accommodation. So they won't even bother applying, or they just won't bother going ahead with the application when they find out there's no accommodation. Because I mean, what else? I mean, Skye is a pretty place to live, but why else would you live here? So you're coming here for staff accommodation. Because most people know when you're going to a small town, you'll get staff accommodation. […] So they're working on it, and they're still hiring, but there's not enough people, because there's not enough staff accommodation, and there's nowhere to rent. So you kind of need staff accommodation when you come here, but there's not enough. So what are you supposed to do?"*
>
> *Restaurant worker, female, 20s, Canadian*

When asked about benefits specifically, most of the respondents listed perks. There were some, however, that listed actual benefits such as private medical and dental care, paid holiday leave, sick leave, life insurance, enhanced pensions, annual bonuses, and enhanced parental packages. Knowledge of these benefits was more prevalent among members of management and policymakers. One policymaker specialising in HR said that offering benefits like private healthcare is not always needed and, at times, it could be enough to simply point workers towards their legal entitlement to sick pay and leave, in addition to posting resources they may be able to access on their own. He added that larger companies may have more scope to offer bigger benefits packages.

8.1.2 Reputation

Participants had mixed views about the reputations of their venues. Members of management said that they felt that their venues had positive reputations, though only one mentioned an annual staff survey that reflected their perception. A few hotel workers posited that the better reputation a venue had, the better a place it was to work, though another hotel worker disagreed with this after having negative working conditions in a luxury hotel.

A few workers, mostly migrants, mentioned that their workplaces had decent reputations. Some of these workers were very positive about their workplaces overall, and others were itching to leave, so their perception of the reputation was not necessarily reflective of their personal experiences. The reasons for the positive reputations included paying the living wage or sponsoring fun team events. Size did not necessarily seem to dictate reputation, as one respondent said that their venue's positive reputation was due to having a respectable head company, while another said their venue was 'a nice family-run business.' Other workers said that their workplaces had more of a neutral reputation. Several workers brought up the idea that the best one could hope for was not to hear anything at all:

> *"So, it doesn't have a bad reputation. I think that's basically equivalent to a good reputation in hospitality. I know it sounds terrible, but it's true."*
>
> *Bar worker, male, 20s, Italian*

Some of the participants talked about the poor reputations of their particular venues, especially venues that were part of larger chains or hospitality groups. They described management that was abusive to staff and generally viewed workers as disposable. Those particular chains were brought up as examples of the worst places to work in hospitality by workers and union representatives whether or not they personally had worked at a venue in the past. One worker who previously worked at an infamous UK pub chain said that when she told people where she used to work, they felt sorry for her.

One migrant bar worker said that the reputation went both ways. In an insular industry like hospitality can be, a worker might get a good reputation and thus make it into the workplaces with good reputations. Those places with better reputations also had their pick of workers because they were desirable places to work. That posed a problem for the people who did not make the right connections:

> *"I feel like everybody who joins hospitality gets streamlined into the quote-unquote 'better venues' where you get treated fairly, and even just treated legally. You get streamlined in those through the venues that do not actually have good working standards or humane working conditions for the people. And then if you're an immigrant, especially, I don't know how it is if you've not got documentation, or how it is if you come from outside EU or something like that, there's other obstacles, and it might be that you never make it out of that kind of atmosphere or circles."*
>
> *Bar worker, female, 20s, Finnish*

About half of the workers said that they felt that hospitality had a poor reputation, even if they personally liked working in the industry. They listed burnout, customer abuse, work

hours, low pay, wage theft, job insecurity, and lack of upward mobility among other reasons for feeling this way. One migrant bar worker said that she felt like she should not be going to bars or restaurants at all anymore, knowing how the workers are treated.

Not everyone felt that hospitality had a negative reputation. Several participants talked about the role of hospitality as a place where guests could relax and have a good time, though most of the people who felt this way were managers and policymakers. One bar worker said that he had felt strongly about hospitality's role as a social hub until he started working in it, and now his initial outlook made him feel somewhat naïve. Many respondents, mostly those who were no longer in frontline roles, said it was a fun industry to work in and a good way to make friends. A few participants said that they felt hospitality was a welcoming environment to people from all over the world. Of note, only one of those participants was a migrant worker herself; the others were Scottish, and were enthusiastic about the amount of people from other countries they were able to work with. No participants said that the industry itself was unwelcoming.

Policymakers and managers with an overall positive view of the industry did still concede that it had room for improvement, citing poor working conditions and the view of hospitality as a place for a job but not a career. They noted that the industry's negative perceptions were often due to a few poorly-run companies. A union representative who worked with hospitality executives said that, while they were aware of the issue of hospitality's poor reputation, they tended to blame things like the media or unions calling attention to issues at particular venues, thinking instead that the problems were limited to one or two venues instead of the industry as a whole. He listed the items that needed to change, including improving contracts and reducing sexual harassment, but there was a simpler way to phrase the changes needed overall:

> *"So the first thing you need to do, without being too corporate about it, to make sure that the industry survives and thrives, is to look after the people that make the profit. And that, for me, is the foundation of it all."*
>
> *Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish*

A few participants brought up the idea that hospitality is 'not a proper job,' but instead something that a person does for money while studying before moving onto something else. It could be a fun adventure, but not forever. Frontline work in particular was described by most participants as something anyone could do, though a few gave the caveat that customer service and other soft skills were often undervalued. Of interest, even some of the participants who had long-term careers in hospitality and extolled the skills needed in the industry looked at their own entry-level roles as unskilled or as 'classic student roles.' Even though that experience was the foundation of their careers, it was not seen as valuable overall. One pub worker said that he was nervous about starting a career in his professional field after his studies because, while he had years of experience in hospitality, it was just casual work:

> *"Like, this is a proper job, and I've been working hospitality, which is not a proper job."*
>
> *Bar worker, male, 20s, British*

A few participants brought up an interesting idea: hospitality is seen as a career elsewhere in Europe, but not in the UK. Two policymakers discussed the idea that other countries have professional certifications for hospitality roles, so it is seen as more of a professional role. One added the caveat that, despite this, many Europeans still take hospitality jobs in the UK, so there must be some appeal. One European migrant policymaker attributed this to having more of a sense of career progression in Europe, with positions such as head waiters and floor managers.

8.2 Opportunity

A number of interviewees acknowledged the idea of being able to build skills in hospitality. Several workers described excitement about being able to learn new skills, generally focussing on technical skills, but also sometimes specifying skills gained in talking to customers. Several participants mentioned the skills gained in any job, such as time management, organisation, problem-solving, teamwork, and a basic understanding of business operations. With hospitality in particular, those business operations included the basic tasks required daily, such as cleaning and waiting tables, but also an understanding of scheduling and revenue streams. One migrant worker also brought up English language practice. Interviewees also highlighted soft skills gained when speaking to customers. Sometimes these soft skill improvements were framed in a positive light, such as improved confidence, increased empathy and understanding, and simply being better at speaking to people. Others described their improved soft skills with words like ‘patience’ and ‘resilience,’ particularly in the face of repeated customer abuse. One policymaker called this ‘handling difficult conversations.’

Managerial interviewees described skill building as well, with reference to their own skills and skills gained by their team. A policymaker specified that the skill-building could go in any direction, given the interests of the team, and gave the example of an attraction that had a very low turnover rate because the management encouraged workers to tailor their jobs to their own interests as much as possible within the scope of operations.

Interviewees generally suggested that the most important thing for a hospitality candidate was the right attitude as technical skills could be trained. This sentiment that technical skills were not the most important aspect was even highlighted by participants who had hospitality management degrees. This is not to say that having the technical skills as well as the ‘right’ attitude would be a hindrance. For example, managerial interviewees at a charitable attraction mentioned that they sometimes hired people with niche skillsets, such as grant writing, for general positions in the venue and simply kept them in mind when an opening arose that required those technical skills.

One of the points brought up frequently by policymakers was the transferability of skills gained in hospitality either within the industry or beyond the industry. Over half of them raised how useful hospitality skills were in different career paths and how they would help people ascend the corporate ladder in their chosen fields. When specified, this usually came down to soft skills, though the quick pace of hospitality work was also raised as a reason for success in other fields. These policymakers also noted that helping improve the skillsets of workers benefitted hospitality as a whole, as the workers would often remain in the industry even if they left their original venue. Of note, all of these policymakers also spoke about how their own hospitality skills helped them transfer to careers related to hospitality policymaking, and

many of them had hospitality management degrees. Several workers raised this point too with reference to other jobs in hospitality; for example, one noted how he looked forward to taking the skills learned at his family's restaurant to another venue where he could use them with more creativity.

Several of the employees interviewed described their work tasks as easy to perform. Some of these descriptions were with a negative tinge, as in the tasks were very easy and there was nothing special about them, but others preferred the tasks not being too complicated. A few workers described their tasks as easy, but with a positive tint: while their tasks were simple and repetitive, this allowed them to mentally relax to an extent. A cruise ship emphasised this relaxing nature, though he did not find his tasks to be dull:

> *"Why would you change it? It doesn't really, it's not the job that you need to do much for. Once you learn it, you learn it. It's not a lot of mental efforts that you need to do to learn anything. It's just so easy job."*
>
> *Cruise ship/chip shop, male, 50s, Bulgarian*

Related to this point was the broader question of whether hospitality work should be seen as 'unskilled' labour. As one HR manager noted:

> *"And people say it's unskilled work. It's not unskilled work. You've got to be proper into what you're doing, and attentive. You're a ride operator and you get it wrong, that's people's lives on the line, you know? And to call that unskilled work is really, really, it's an insult to what they do and how committed they are to their work. It's not unskilled, but you don't have qualifications to do it. You don't have a piece of paper that says you can do it, but you can certainly do it. Very, very well, in most cases."*
>
> *Hotel HR Management, female, 40s, British*

8.2.1 Training

Some employees and managers at larger multi-venue companies, mostly in hotels but in one charitable attraction as well, described a fairly thorough training regimen of one or two days of induction, online training for compliance needs, and then a period of shadowing that could range from a single shift to several weeks. The number of days for induction depended on the size of the company and the level of employment, though even entry-level frontline workers received at least one day of induction in these circumstances. Some training opportunities were provided outside the company itself. A few interviewees mentioned the ability to take outside courses through the Flexible Workplace Development Fund or ASVA, or individual courses that supported their role, such as CIPD certification. Of note, none of these interviewees were in frontline service roles.

There were also cross-training opportunities provided to help people learn different roles, allowing opportunities to learn from different departments. One policymaker described the possibility to try out something new, such as social media management, while remaining in one's primary role. Some managerial interviewees highlighted the benefits of cross-training, such as allowing workers to perform multiple tasks. They recognised that all staff, including managers, would often be trained in different departments to a certain extent, specifically to

allow them to help out during issues. While they did not express this sentiment as a cross-training opportunity, several hotel workers described helping out different departments during especially busy periods.

Thorough training programmes were, unfortunately, a rarity among respondents. Training was generally mentioned as something conducted at the beginning of employment, although a small number of participants described training that continued periodically, generally related to safety. About a third of the workers interviewed described the training they received as very basic with a higher emphasis on shadowing other workers to learn their tasks. Some workers described separate training out of normal work hours such as an evening of service training at the corporate headquarters or an evening of sampling the menu so they would know what to recommend to guests, but this was not the norm. Online training was very common and generally spoken about either neutrally or dismissively, though one HR manager described the online training specifically as a benefit that workers had to further their development in the company. Those who worked in bars and restaurants reported training on safety standards regarding food and alcohol service, which they generally completed online. One worker in a popular pub chain described an alarming company attitude toward training:

> *"So I've only received training on the bar, how to do stuff, there's a whole thing about pouring pints, fire safety and all that stuff, but you don't get training on anything outside of your job description, which often you're asked to do, like cleaning ice machines or…and they justify this with, they have the SOPs, standard operating procedures, for everything, that you can look up, but very often in not, you're in front of customers and they don't want you to have your phone in front of customers to look up the SOP. They want you to get on with it, they don't want you to waste time. Sometimes you're pressured into doing stuff without the proper equipment or training as well. They never have the proper equipment in hand, they never have the gloves, they never have proper mops and stuff. It's just, it's very odd. Training, I suppose, it's not very high-quality training. It's just watching a video and answering a quiz, it's not on the job, there's no one showing you how to do stuff when you get there, it's all just kind of, 'You can do it.' And more often than not, yeah, it's definitely training for training's sake to protect their own liability."*
>
> *Bar worker, male, 20s, British*

A few participants noted the difficulties with finding the time and budget to provide training, especially the sort of training that would help develop frontline workers or lower levels of management. One hotel worker expressed regret that, while her company used to have the thorough level of induction and training, staffing reductions led the company to reduce training to a single day of induction and compliance training, followed by shadowing. This lack of resources was echoed in some smaller venues. A policymaker mentioned that business owners he spoke to would express trepidation about paying for opportunities if the worker planned on leaving in the future, though he would counter this argument with the idea that the worker might not leave at all:

"You don't know how long somebody is going to stay with you, so why would you not invest in them because you're frightened that they're gonna leave?"

Policymaker, male, 50s, Scottish

Some participants mentioned that this extra training could be aimed at entry-level workers, developing their skills and making the workforce more attractive. One union representative mentioned that this, along with raising pay, was the main answer to the retention issue. Most of the additional training opportunities mentioned, however, were aimed at managers. Managerial interviewees discussed ongoing training opportunities for management, though even within those groups the levels of management differed: a charitable attraction extended this training to line management, while a larger hotel group aimed it specifically at upper management around the operations manager or general manager level. One union representative clarified who might benefit most from these opportunities:

"So I would say promotional, and development opportunities especially, so like advanced training opportunities, they do exist, but they are very…I think we see a lot of, I wouldn't say discrimination, but kind of like indirect discrimination, where if your face fits and you're friends with the people in the know, you get these opportunities. You get these development opportunities."

Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish

The issue of inconsistent training among different venues was raised by several policymakers. The perception of Scottish hospitality in general, they said, could be down to a single good or bad experience in the sector, and high training standards across the industry would only help perceptions. One policymaker mentioned that, while thorough training was often more common in larger venues because of higher budgets, there were quite a number of small Scottish venues that were taking advantage of government funding to ensure that they provided a strong training basis to their new workers and continued to provide training opportunities further in their careers as much as they were able.

Several policymakers spoke about the concept of modern apprenticeships for hospitality and tourism. One spoke about frequent usage of apprenticeships in his past work in a hotel chain, specifically as 'quite intensive training' as compared to the regular hospitality training module. It is unclear whether these were formal apprenticeship schemes with government oversight or a bespoke solution as proposed by the business. Another discussed the capability of larger businesses to make wider use of apprenticeship schemes, as they have the staff available to find resources to apply for said schemes, but stressed that this ability is not closed off to smaller businesses. Another mentioned the push for modern apprenticeships, whilst questioning how beneficial they were to both the workers being trained and the industry as a whole:

"So an apprenticeship for a long-term career, or do they just use it as cheap labour, and then as soon as the apprenticeship's over, they get rid of them?"

Tourism policymaker, male, 50s, British

8.2.1.1 Mentorship and Buddy Systems

Almost all participants discussed shadowing as a standard method of training. Sometimes this shadowing followed formal computer or classroom training, and other times it was the only form of training. The exact length of shadowing varied depending on the venue, with some interviewees stating a two week shadowing period was standard at the beginning of employment, while others said they followed a senior coworker for a single shift before being left on their own. One HR manager noted the 'buddy system' as part of a longer 90 day training programme, but this was aimed mostly at back-of-house roles and seemed like more of a description of a probation period.

None of the participants in a longer shadowing period (e.g., one longer than a single shift) seemed dismayed by shadowing being the primary form of training. If anything, they were mostly positive about the person they were shadowing, and described their training as good. For two participants, this 'good' description was directly in comparison to other jobs where they had only had a single day of shadowing, so this may have tainted their perception.

A small number of participants discussed shadowing as an opportunity to learn about departments other than their own, thinking of it as a sort of cross-departmental training. For example, a small inn and restaurant owner regularly provided opportunities to her staff to try out other departments, partially for where their own interests might lie but mostly to test them out for other potential fits. Additionally, this process was used to determine whether or not they had management potential, at which point she would enrol them in a frontline supervision course at the local college.

Some interviewees noted challenges when new employees were assigned to shadow them. For example, a room attendant noted there were expectations she would perform the same amount of work as if she did not have anyone shadowing her, leaving a choice between improper training or improper work:

> *"When we are doing this training, they should at least give us less rooms that day to clean so you would have time to do the cleaning and explain to the other person how things have to be done, and explain in detail what needs to be done in the room. But they don't do that. They expect you to clean the same rooms in the same time while there is a person there shadowing you, and you're meant to be explaining things to them. You have to teach, but you're not going to teach anything. […] If you're asking me to train someone, I want that training to be proper. If you're asking me to do it in the same hours, that's not possible, so I found that really difficult."*
>
> *Hotel worker, female, 50s, Spanish*

Mentions of actual mentoring, in the sense that a more experienced colleague or manager helped a worker shape their future career with frequent guidance and check-in sessions, were sparse. An owner of a small café did describe mentoring each of her employees, specifying that she knew they would not work there forever and wanted to help guide their careers as best she could. Only one employee described being assigned an official mentor

within their company. Instead, management seemed to be the main target of true mentorship; one policymaker described the benefit of mentorship for that group:

> *"The mentoring that exists, I think, really invaluable for managers. So taking first line supervisors and above, within hospitality in particular, they would really benefit from, as part of their succession planning, having a level of safe space, psychological safe space, to be vulnerable about what they know and what they don't know, and how they apply what they know to solve problems within the business."*
>
> *Policymaker, male, 50s, Scottish*

8.2.2 Promotions

The majority of interviewees emphasised the career opportunities potentially available in hospitality. For example, employees recognised how their peers had been promoted or had been promoted themselves. Managerial and policymaker interviewees highlighted the potential for career progression within their own organisations or advancement in the industry as a whole, recognising the ability to travel to world, to try out new skill sets, and to be rapidly promoted from an entry-level role. Within this context, managerial interviewees discussed their own moves up the career ladder, both within their current companies and throughout multiple businesses. The only ones who did not discuss their upward mobility within hospitality were the two members of management who owned their own businesses. Most of the managers described their progression over a long term, generally 10 to 15 years.

Some interviewees noted how their workplaces sought internal hires for promotions. When a position became vacant, workers who expressed interest would be considered for the roles before they were posted externally, though a smaller number suggested that their workplaces seemed to favour external hires for management positions. For example, a General Manager stated that he favoured internal promotions because it could be hard to introduce people management to a new team, and internal hires had the benefit of knowing the venue as well as the team. One business owner described looking at the performance of her workers and giving supervisory positions to those who performed the tasks well.

Not all workers were positive about this internal hiring process, however, suggesting that sometimes promoted staff lacked leadership skills such as handling conflict. Several participants discussed that promotions to supervisory or managerial positions were based on skill in their role, and sometimes simply on longevity. Skill in the role did not always translate to skill as a leader, and as workers were promoted out of their competence, they would not necessarily succeed in their new roles:

> *"You know, 'You're a great bartender, so be the bar manager now, and good luck.' You know, it's two totally different skill sets. But people are not even told that now your job is to look after your team, not that much the customer, right? But people don't get told that, and people don't have the skills to be on those positions, and it's not their fault whatsoever."*
>
> *Hotel worker, female, 20s, Hungarian*

One thing that participants agreed on was that promotions could be gained with greater speed than in other industries. Venues like hotels and restaurants offered fast tracks to supervisory positions and above. Policymakers in particular were keen to point out this aspect of hospitality promotions, though some workers noted it as well. For example, one hotel worker expressed surprise at the number of promotions she had seen in her venue in her six months of employment. Some workers described being moved into supervisory positions in a year or less, and into back of house roles in under five years. Interestingly, almost all of the workers who had been promoted were migrants. Of those who had been promoted, however, most progressed by moving to higher positions in different businesses. Only two of the workers progressed within the same business, and one of those was the business owner's son.

That said, not everyone wants a promotion, as some workers are simply there for a short period of time. Multiple business owners described the temporary or seasonal nature of their workers. But most workers discussed the career progression available in their venues, and a few discussed specific positions that they were hoping for within the company. Others brought up the idea of a promotion to coincide with life changes:

> *"I don't know if I'll decide to change further later on, based on like, how many commitments, for example, if I can't be in a hotel all the time. Maybe I would go for something like with my master's degree, like tourist marketing, that might help later down the line. So I am thinking of careers based on life stages as well."*
>
> *Hotel worker, female, 20s, Greek*

A few participants described entry-level hospitality positions as a 'foot in the door' for what workers really wanted. Two members of management at different charitable attractions described this phenomenon favourably, as they felt that the workers had a passion for the venue and the mission and would do well in their roles until their ideal roles were available. A hotel worker expressed a similar feeling that she had noticed amongst her colleagues in a hotel chain, stating that they might have to move to a different venue to get the role they wanted, but that they had a passion for the company and stayed in it.

One policymaker, when he was in charge of hiring at an attraction, had a different view on people using an entry-level position as a foot in the door. When potential employees expressed a passion for the attraction's mission and a desire to move into back-of-house roles there, he expressly did not hire them. His reasoning was that they were looking for a different role, not a service-oriented one, and they would leave shortly after being hired due to the dissatisfaction.

> *"If you are someone who studied museum studies and you get a job as a customer service assistant in a visitor attraction, you will get frustrated because it's not the job that you actually want. That's when you leave."*
>
> *Tourism policymaker, male, 50s, Scottish*

Some participants discussed the idea of hospitality jobs as 'stepping stones,' mostly to other hospitality jobs but occasionally to other industries as well. The policymakers who mentioned this were positive about the process, discussing how the skills gained in hospitality allowed workers to further their careers. While they might be leaving their workplace behind,

the skills gained at that place were not wasted, as they were a benefit to the industry as a whole. Only one business owner described being used as a stepping stone and she looked at it in a positive light, though it should be noted that she employed workers with disabilities and their ability to 'step' to another job was viewed as success in her mission.

The 'stepping stone' was not always upward, but sometimes sideways. One policymaker described the stepping stone idea as a minor benefit for the workers, mostly in the sense that a new hospitality job could be gotten very easily with skills gained from previous ones, so there was not a lot of incentive to stay in workplaces that did not offer what they wanted. A worker described the 'stepping stone' process as necessary in order to obtain any sort of career growth:

> *"But I was on, companies back in the years, it's terrible now, but they didn't tend to promote the crew, so it would just carry all on the same position and just go ahead. And I didn't want this. I wanted career, I wanted higher positions. So I had to jump from company to company to reach what I was before COVID."*
>
> *Cruise ship/chip shop, male, 50s, Bulgarian*

Some interviewees observed that the people most likely to get promotions were those who were the most accommodating and with the fewest objections to business operations. For example, one employee felt that she did not get a promotion because she was 'hard to manage,' as opposed to more pliable co-workers. One managerial interviewee described promotions as being given to people who 'work hard' and who 'listen and learn,' which sounds obvious on the surface when not compared to the same participant's reasoning that people primarily leave hospitality because they are unwilling to work unsociable hours. A union representative was more direct about this observation:

> *"I think people think that hospitality is really good, because you have kind of clear, like you can start from front of house, and then you know that there's team leaders, you know that there are supervisors and then assistant managers and managers, and you do see people kind of climb up those rungs of the ladder. But I don't think that it's a very, it's not normally open pool, it's more kind of favourable to who the managers prefer. And then again, it's also, if you're a bit conscious, if you're willing to say no to things, you're less likely to get promoted."*
>
> *Union policymaker, female, 20s, Scottish*

Despite the narrative about the opportunities for career progression in hospitality, the lack of career progression was raised as a concern by several participants, especially in the context of working in smaller organisations with limited promotion opportunities. On this point, several policymakers suggested the lack of career progression was one of the factors leading young people to choose jobs in other industries.

More specifically, two participants noted the role of head chef as indicative of the progression ceiling. Chefs are one of the hospitality roles with the most professional training and highest pay outside of management, and head chefs in particular could be seen as the height of achievement in the field, so this mention might be surprising. But each participants raised

the same issue: once that great height was achieved, there was nowhere to go unless one was ready move to another restaurant.

> *"That's one of the problems with hospitality, is people are pretty sure that there's no real…there's a limit of how high you can go. Like, a head chef is a head chef. I think you can go to other hospitality businesses."*
>
> *Inn worker, male, 20s, Scottish*
>
> *"But what surprised more was the reasons that they gave. Long hours was up there, low pay was up there, disrespect, but number one was lack of progress and promotion opportunities. Which is interesting, because in my head you've got the KP to the head chef, and in between that you've maybe got 5 different levels of like, sous chef, chef de partie, that grows each time. But maybe they mean that once you reach a ceiling, there's not many opportunities. You just move from hotel to hotel or restaurant."*
>
> *Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish*

In some cases, promotions are unavailable simply because people do not want to leave coveted positions. This seemed to be especially the case in the charitable attractions that two members of management worked in. In each case, there was limited funding available for positions and very high interest in those same positions. As a benefit for the business, the interest was so high that they rarely needed to hire externally; they had a list of candidates with years of experience in the venue, working in other departments until the opportunity they really wanted was available.

> *"They can be hard to come by. Some people would call it like 'dead man shoes,' [laugh], so where people don't often leave."*
>
> *Attraction manager, female, 40s, British*

Outside of the third sector, even for-profit businesses can have limited resources for promotions. Interviewees cited corporate restructuring, often as a response to COVID-19, which removed several layers of promotions for workers. An HR manager noted that fewer opportunities for promotion now seemed to exist:

> *"I think that some of that is as a result of the organisational construct, some of that is a result of turnover, and in more recent years, some of that is as a result of the pandemic. So that's created a slowdown in terms of promotions within the organisation so that we don't become top heavy. So from an from an employee perspective, they would be saying there aren't enough opportunities."*
>
> *Hotel HR manager, female, 40s, Scottish*

8.3 Security

Participants had varying contract types, both part- and full-time, and both temporary and permanent. Some workers were on full-time contracts that had non-standard arrangements such as four days on and then four days off. Several managers described arrangements with a

core full-time staff and a larger supporting network of part-time workers. Temporary contracts were viewed differently by members of management, with some depending on temporary contracts for the busy summer season and others avoiding them entirely because they wanted a longer time commitment.

One interesting note were the contracts used in two different rural tourist destinations. One participant, a migrant restaurant worker, said that she and her co-workers received full-time hours all year, even during the slow winter periods; this was meant to retain workers during the busy summer months. An inn owner in a different remote tourist location mostly used seasonal workers, but she had a different policy for her long-term migrant chefs: they worked very long hours in the summers and went home in the winters, but received year-long compensation.

A few participants talked about varying contract hours. Several participants from charitable attractions said that the seasonal nature of the work meant that they had to give workers very low hours off-peak or else implement fixed-term contracts for peak seasons only. While this worked well for students or others who just wanted to work during summer peak and on weekends, they noted that these limited hours could also prompt workers to leave the organisation in search of something more permanent.

There were mixed views on these variable hours. A restaurant worker said that the hours for all of the workers in his venue reduced during the less busy periods, but that the owners split the remaining hours fairly among the workers. He said he preferred this to businesses that would over-hire for their busy periods and then fire the workers when they were no longer needed. Some participants stated that the variable hours made it very hard to plan their lives, both in terms of scheduling logistics like medical appointments and in terms of balancing finances. For example, one bar worker said that he and all his co-workers were on contracts for 8 hours a week to allow the business flexibility; at the time of interview, he had been doing regular 30 hour weeks, but was scheduled for 8 hours the following week because it was a slow period. A union policymaker said that this was common in hospitality:

> *"We calculate that the average hours worked in hospitality is 28, and the average contractual hours is 12. So you've got a situation where there is a 16 hour gap between the hours that people actually work and what they are legally paid for. Not paid for, sorry, what they are legally given as almost a safety net minimum."*
>
> *Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish*

A few participants discussed the use of zero hour contracts. The only participants who were somewhat positive about them were a few policymakers, who noted the flexibility they offered workers like retirees and students, but especially the flexibility they offered to the businesses who did not have to have more full-time staff because of them. One migrant hotel worker also echoed this flexibility for the business, though she said she did not particularly like them. Other participants, including management and policymakers, very firmly stated their disagreement with the use of zero-hour contracts, asserting that their prominence was only acceptable among vulnerable hospitality workers. One union representative said that one of his major aims was to get rid of zero hour contracts, arguing that they did not suit the businesses either:

"Why would you bring someone in on hours that they don't know what they're working, and you don't know what they're working, and although it's a huge power imbalance, technically they could just not turn up and not come into work, and that would be perfectly legally acceptable in terms of the contract. How can you plan, how can you develop whatever business plans based on that model? It's completely nonsensical."

Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish

Two interviewees, one migrant and one Scottish, noted they did not have a copy of their contracts and were not entirely sure what they contained. Both were aware that this was illegal, but as both were treated well by their workplaces, neither was terribly concerned.

8.3.1 Job Security

The variable contract hours discussed in the previous section created a sense of insecurity financially and logistically, and were often cited as the reason for a feeling of job insecurity. They also impacted the overall feeling of security in some venues and made workers refrain from speaking up. For example, one worker at a charitable attraction said that his co-workers felt like they were unable to speak up about issues in the workplace. This worker had a permanent contract with the company and felt like he could be honest with management about issues in the workplace. His co-workers with temporary contracts did not feel like they could speak up; instead, they wanted to keep their heads down and prove themselves to be compliant and worthy of permanent contracts.

Other participants discussed cycles of hiring and firing that were prevalent across the industry to increase staff for the busy periods and be rid of them again once those periods ended. For example, one bar worker talked about constant firings at his workplace, where a common practice was to have security escort out workers at the end of their 3 month probation period. He was especially upset about the recent firing of a supportive manager at his workplace:

"This manager, he's been there for 5 years, he was thrown away like nothing."

Bar worker, male, 20s, British

A few participants, none of them migrants, said that they felt quite secure in their positions. These participants mentioned the insecure nature of hospitality as a whole, especially after COVID-19, but felt that they personally were not worried about instability. One was a member of management who had been in her role for 15 years, but she felt that the people on her team felt secure as well despite not having the same length of service. The other three participants who said they felt secure were frontline workers, and said that their security came from management liking them and from a history of stable hours. One worker said that the sense of security specifically made them very attached to their work:

"Honestly, it takes a lot for me to leave a job, because if I've got good job security, and I'm paid more or less the same every month, it takes a lot for me to leave, because I don't like leaving that kind of security."

Hotel worker, non-binary, 20s, Scottish

A restaurant worker felt secure in his role, but with an interesting twist. He worked in a family-owned restaurant, and he knew that if they faced financial troubles, he would no longer have a job. He had also never seen his work contract, which he was aware was illegal. Despite this, he felt like his role was as secure as one could have in hospitality because the owners cared about his wellbeing, and he did not feel like they would get rid of him without a very good reason.

This feeling of job security pervaded even when the jobs were demonstrably insecure. One examples was a bar worker who said that they felt their job was secure and that they were not worried about being fired due to their chronic illness because that was illegal, but their manager dropped their shifts to the legally contracted minimum because of their chronic illness. Another worker, a migrant, went on holiday and returned to find that her job had been moved to a new location with a split shift. She was not fired and she did not lose hours, and felt her position was secure despite technically being an entirely different position.

More than half of the members of management said that workers in their venues felt like their jobs were secure, either because of long-term contracts, promises of repeated hiring for seasonal roles, or because of existing staffing shortages. In fact, a few frontline participants said that there was a sense of job security specifically because of the high rates of turnover, citing a feeling of being needed because other people were leaving and the ability to easily get another job even if they were fired. A general manager at a hotel echoed this sentiment with a bitter note, saying that the good workers probably felt *too* secure in their roles.

A union policymaker said that much of this was workers realising their own worth: while companies had become reliant on high turnover and looking at workers as being disposable, this was no longer the case, and workers wanted more out of their employers. A policymaker continued this thought, adding that the feeling of job security could change over the years because of labour shortages. When there were not many workers available, the workforce was empowered to be picky with who they worked for and make more demands of their employers. Employers were, in turn, forced to expand their definition of the ideal worker and look into pools they may not have accommodated in the past, such as older workers or people with disabilities. One inn owner remarked that she experienced this, saying that she 'had to bend over backwards to get people to work' the year prior.

Participants had mixed feelings about the security of hospitality as an industry. Some said that the industry as a whole was insecure, some attributing that to the cycles of hiring and firing, and others to the rising costs of labour and utilities. One policymaker said that some roles were simply more secure than others, but did not specify which roles were the secure ones. A migrant worker said that bar work gave her a different sort of security: the skills she had gained working in a bar meant that she would always have work to fall back on. A number of participants noted that they felt hospitality was a resilient industry: it might shrink back when the economy was rough, but it would always come back.

8.3.2 Unions

A union official highlighted how the union had worked on promoting the living wage, securing tips for workers, getting workers home safely from late-night shifts, and trying to

highlight the issues with zero-hour contracts. He highlighted that unions had a role to play in making hospitality a stronger industry:

> *"I'm always of this opinion, the point of unions is to, apart from drive up standards and conditions and defend workers, is to make a sector, hitherto impossible to remain, to make it a career option, right?"*
>
> *Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish*

The same interviewee noted that he saw increased union membership numbers during the pandemic, but it was thanks to young people engaging on social media, and especially from seeing momentum from other unions. Despite this point, employees who were interviewed evidenced limited engagement with the union. For example, a restaurant worker who was a member of the union did not have a terribly positive view of the union, and felt that they did not do enough to help with the mass layoffs at the beginning of lockdowns. He conceded that they were stretched thin in some cases, and somewhat powerless in others: union recognition was only required in workplaces with more than 21 employees, and smaller workplaces were thus unprotected.

Other interviewees who were not union members recognised the potential benefit of unions, though would not consider actually joining. Reasons for this included a feeling that the union would not do anything, or the idea that organisation was futile given the rate of turnover. Relatedly, several interviewees alluded to the views of their employers towards unions, with one hotel worker recognising they were not in a union and did not know anyone else in a union, but that their management was very wary of unions as a whole. This was partially because their workplace was adjacent to a union headquarters. The wariness was mentioned by a few other participants as well. A union policymaker mentioned that the workplaces he dealt with were often somewhat scared of unions as they did not understand them fully. One migrant worker's perspective was different from this, as her employment contract at a previous workplace was suspicious:

> *"In the last contract there's some sections about unionizing and union work that were a bit questionable. Not illegal, because you can't forbid unionizing. But there was definitely some clauses, and joining unions or unionizing was frowned upon."*
>
> *Bar worker, female, 20s, Finnish*

Another bar worker said that he imagined his workplace 'likely discouraged' union membership. Of interest, he also said that his workplace had a poster for a union in the staff room, but he did not feel that would actually be a supportive venture. The feeling of not trusting unions or similar activist fronts was discussed further by another union policymaker, especially with regards to migrant and other minority communities. She highlighted that many of the workers in the union were white and British, and that made them inherently a separate entity. They did not have connections to the more vulnerable communities, and even if they built connections with one or two members of those communities, that did not mean there would be trust from the community as a whole. Workers would come to the union with issues, but they would not be comfortable putting their name down on an official grievance because they were worried about losing their jobs. She worried about this especially with regard to migrant workers, who would not attend meetings despite working with translators to make them more

accessible. They simply wanted to keep their heads down and work. The union was actively working on building connections in vulnerable communities, but the policymaker was worried it would be an uphill battle:

> *"And then we had someone from Ireland as our secretary, so still kind of slightly precarious and still a migrant, and trying to kind of ask, what can we do? And they're like, 'You cannot force people to stand up for the rights, and you cannot force people that are precarious to stand up, that are more precarious than you, to do more than you would do and risk more than you're risking.'"*
>
> *Union policymaker, female, 20s, Scottish*

8.3.3 Safety – physical and mental well being

Despite the underwhelmed response to the online training provided at venues, several workers said that their online safety training made them feel like their venues were safe, especially in venues with regular safety training updates. One migrant restaurant worker said that she did not receive online safety training, but she trusted their HR to make sure 'everything is as it should be.' Other workers talked about the provision of personal protective equipment in the workplace, including non-slip shoes for kitchen workers.

Conversely, a bar worker said that his venue never provided protective equipment, not even gloves. This worker was the only one to say that he felt like his workplace was outright physically hazardous, but the stories he told were harrowing. He reported that the workers in his pub chain did not receive training on how to properly lift heavy items but were expected to do so regularly, often up and down flights of stairs. He and other co-workers had skinned themselves doing such lifting. He had also crushed his foot and had to go to the hospital, and when he missed his next shift because of the crushed foot, he was given a warning. The safety issues did not stop with improper lifting procedures:

> *"We had a gas leak in our basement the other week, and they didn't tell the customers. They didn't tell any members of staff. A few people knew, so the gas could have gone at any point and they didn't evacuate the pub, they just said, 'Don't go down to the basement.' Which is funny, because that's where the toilets are. There was maggots in the ale line, there was people burning themselves, people cutting themselves. There's lots of glasses for the glass wash that gets done, people cutting themselves on glass all the time."*
>
> *Bar worker, male, 20s, British*

Aside from workplace safety, several participants talked about experiencing little regard for their physical and mental health, particularly regarding burnout. Multiple frontline workers described experiencing burnout themselves and wanting to leave, or working with others who had to quit because of burnout. One bar worker said they took up smoking again specifically to deal with the stress. Another worker described both physical health issues for herself and burnout in others. She was looking to reduce her hours at work as a hotel cleaner because the work was too hard on her body, and she could not perform those tasks full-time

anymore. She also said that, while most of her co-workers were fellow migrants, there was one Scottish coworker she had who seemed to be wasting away at the job:

> *"The lady is losing a lot of weight. The job is taking the best of her, squeezing her, but they remain."*
>
> *Hotel worker, female, 50s, Spanish*

Physical and mental health were receiving more attention than they had in the past. Sometimes this was just through checking in with workers, such as the inn owner who said she tried to accommodate issues in workers' personal lives by adjusting their schedules when she could. Other members of management discussed more focus on positive mental health after COVID-19. For example, one attraction manager was in the process of creating a mental health counsellor role that could help staff members at all levels. While some members of management reported higher levels of sick calls after the pandemic, a migrant hotel worker said this new pattern was positive: people were starting to take illness more seriously and call out when they needed to.

> *"If there's one thing to learn from COVID, it's look after, not just yourself but each other. And I think hospitality is notorious for this, that people need the money. So they just go to work sick and put everyone else in danger. And I just don't think that's a way for us to go. But you know I totally understand, and I'm guilty of it myself, right? So I do think that again it's a bit of flexibility, a bit of giving your employees the ability to stay at home when they're sick without having to worry about what will pay the bills if I'm out for a whole week."*
>
> *Hotel worker, female, 20s, Hungarian*

8.3.3.1 Violence and sexual harassment

A migrant café owner estimated that she had only had to ask two customers to leave in the past four years, and stated that most of her customers were decent. Meanwhile, more than half of the workers described negative customer interactions, citing abusive speech, physical assault, and sexual harassment. Multiple participants said that these violent interactions were the reason for leaving a job. These instances were especially prevalent during football matches and special events such as holiday parties. Several participants said that they reported this behaviour to their management only to have the issue brushed aside, either because it was just considered part of the job, because the customers were not seen as disruptive enough to interfere, or because the customers were indeed highly disruptive but the management did not want to rile them up further by intervening.

Alcohol was a common factor with problematic guests, with workers from bars, restaurants, and events speaking up most frequently about this. As an example, a male bar worker said that he often witnessed customers harassing the female staff and other customers. He told a story about going to management for one such customer, but they would not do anything, instead saying to keep an eye on the offending party and that he would not get served anymore. He did continue to get served and harass other women, and the worker had to keep going back to management until the customer was handled. A restaurant worker who used to work in that same bar said that she often experienced sexual advances from older male

customers there, and that the customers were worse overall because they were drunk and the venue could get very crowded. They sometimes came in with a certain expectation of how their service encounter would go, and if those expectations were not met, they would become angry.

Several interviewees talked about distancing themselves from these events, using terms like ‘resilience’ to describe what they saw as a necessary skill to put up with the inevitable customer abuse. Two participants, both non-binary, had a somewhat nonchalant attitude toward violence and sexual harassment in the workplace, and spoke of the events as funny stories. One said that a guest at their bar threw a jug of cocktail at their head, though he thankfully missed. They also told stories of guests grabbing their rear end and trying to lick them. They laughed as they told these stories, and said that because they were quite tall they were not worried about things escalating beyond what they could handle. The other worker had night shifts at hotels, and told stories of drunk people kicking down doors, breaking windows, stealing items from back offices, as well as guests fighting or having domestic violence disputes. They even told a story about a man who broke into a back office and defecated on the floor. They told these stories with a laugh, saying they adapted a laid-back attitude toward it all:

> *“And if you're the kind of person that gets stressed out over every little thing, you're just gonna be like, you're gonna have a fucking heart attack before you're 40.”*
>
> *Hotel worker, non-binary, 20s, Scottish*
>
> *“Like, we live in a society where being sexually harassed at work and in a bar work is normal. Which, that's unfortunate, but it is true, and I think that I'm let off rather easy, I guess, than other places might.”*
>
> *Bar worker, non-binary, 20s, Scottish*

Participants spoke about how this type of abuse was driving people from the industry or keeping them from applying in the first place. Two of the most egregious examples came from policymakers. A migrant HR policymaker said that he worked in hospitality during his studies, and encountered almost daily xenophobia and racism at that time. He said that that sort of treatment was what discouraged young people from entering the service industry, especially if management did not intervene appropriately. In another example, a union policymaker talked about how sexual harassment was actively driving women away from hospitality, and said that the union was actively working on a campaign related to preventing sexual assault.

8.4 Interaction

Most of the participants described hospitality as a social industry, with somewhat of a mixed feeling: the positive interactions were very positive, while the negative interactions were very negative. One policymaker referred to the social aspect of hospitality as ‘a bit Marmite’: one either loves it or hates it. Multiple participants noted that for people who enjoyed socialising, hospitality could be an incredibly rewarding industry. Several described feeling that way about the industry themselves, including management and frontline workers. The guest interaction, especially meeting people from all over the world, was the part of the job that kept them attached to the industry. Frontline workers who felt this way said that they felt this attachment whether or not they also enjoyed the other tasks they had to perform.

Policymakers often pointed out that technical skills could be taught, but soft skills and genuinely enjoying working with people were inherent parts of someone's personality. Despite this assertion, a fair number of workers talked about how working in hospitality helped with social skills as they became much more confident about speaking with people. Several of them experienced social anxiety, and while it was not a cure, hospitality helped them feel more comfortable speaking with strangers. A few workers who really enjoyed customer interaction as a whole still said it was a bit overwhelming at times, especially when it was busy. In one example, a migrant restaurant worker said that the very busy days with too many customers were her 'personal hell,' and that she far preferred it when things were a little slower so she could chat with the customers instead.

Some of the workers categorised the types of guests with whom they interacted, usually by age or national origin. The workers who specified national origin generally did so with reference to how well they tipped, while age was more relevant to how they acted. For example, a bar worker said that he loved interacting with regular customers who recognised he was doing a job, but despised serving rowdy 'bams' (rude young men) and 'straight old white men' who often disrespected the staff, especially women. Another participant categorised customers in terms of 'quality,' by which he meant wealth. He was a migrant cruise ship worker who was working at a fish and chip shop at the time of the interview, and he said the customers were 'a real struggle' compared to the 'top quality' customers on the cruise ships. While some were nice, he said that they had an expectation of being served that was not quite in line with the level of service available in a fish and chip shop.

A common theme among participants was that the personalised interaction was a key part of the hospitality experience. One tourism policymaker expanded on this, saying he was worried that the industries were looking too hard at technology to fix issues with staffing. He emphasised that visitor attractions were not supermarkets: the way to get people to return was not to have an efficient check-out line, but to make sure they had a fulfilling visitor experience by interacting with an enthusiastic worker.

8.4.1 Manager relationships

Several of the participants discussed communication between management and the workforce. A few policymakers mentioned that communication between management and their teams was crucial for a harmonious working environment, with one saying he felt that communication had greatly improved during COVID-19 due to some people working from home. Workers had differing feelings on the level of communication they had with their management teams, and sometimes management was aware of issues. For example, two of the participants worked at the same attraction. One was a member of management and said that poor communication was listed as one of the issues in several departments in the venue based on their annual survey. The other was a frontline worker who said that there was an issue with a lack of communication from management about things like budgets and event details. He added that his team had meetings where they could discuss issues and grievances, and that he would volunteer to bring those topics up with management later. He had previous positive experience talking to management about issues and also felt more secure because he had a permanent contract:

"And I'm not afraid to speak to different managers or heads of departments. Because why should we be? We should be willing to talk to anybody about what's going on because we want to improve it. We're not there to simply complain. If you have a way to improve things, then we should all be encouraged to speak up."

Attraction worker, male, 20s, Northern Irish

A large number of respondents described positive relationships with their management, saying that they felt cared about and respected. Some of the specific reasons for those positive feelings included asking for suggestions, actively listening to concerns, taking an active role in daily operations by stepping in to help, helping with development, and encouraging professional growth. Accommodating scheduling needs and encouraging use of PTO was also a major reason which especially was raised among female migrants. A few workers, all from bars, said that they really appreciated simply being thanked for a hard day's work. Multiple workers spoke of following their managers to new venues when they left the old one because they knew the new environment would be a positive one. A few members of management and policymakers described workplace events such as nights out, team bonding days, and activity days that helped teams bond together. Workers only mentioned these events in passing, not as reasons for their positive feelings.

Two of the members of management discussed the steps they took to be a good employer. One, an inn owner, said that she tried to make sure she had a positive employer reputation, especially as her workforce was mainly recruited through word of mouth. When customers praised the staff, she made sure to give them that feedback. She also checked in with staff before shifts to make sure they were doing well. Having worked in larger organisations, she felt that this frequent feedback and checking in served well in lieu of formal annual reviews. In another management perspective, a hotel general manager said that he felt like today's workers were only in it for the money and did not feel loyal to the company at all. He said that workers were more likely to leave if they did not feel like they were being treated fairly or disrespected. He tried to foster a good management team that was friendly, listened to people, and calmly talked about issues instead of yelling, because otherwise people would leave. Of note, he described this with a tone of vexation.

A few members of management talked about the surveys their organisations issued, saying that they were looking for metrics about overall engagement and feelings about the company. One manager at an attraction added that they had a question about whether or not employees felt like anything would be done as a result of the survey, and confided that a large portion of the respondents said they did not think any changes would be made. The manager had been at her venue for a long time and said that change did happen slowly, but it might be too slowly for people to notice the changes. Another member of management at an attraction said that she was surprised at a survey result that some departments in the attraction had a 'blame culture,' and that others were simply described as unhelpful. The HR team was looking into how they could address that issue.

One migrant café owner had a unique take: that management were not seen as people by the employees, and that she had experienced bullying and harassment from her staff. Of note, this person was the sole owner of her own business, and did not meet any definition of

the word ‘employee.’ She said that most of the dialogue about employee treatment excluded management:

> *“But there's a lot of things around the staff, making sure the staff's fine, but management often get a lot of abuse and a lot of bullying, like I have experienced bullying myself from staff. And it's very, very difficult, because it's always back on, ‘Well, you need to protect the employee.’ But well, technically, I'm also an employee, like I'm still a person. So yeah, and I suppose that's what I’ve tried to do with my team. I've been vulnerable. And I've said when I've had my own difficulties, for them to see that everyone is a person. The management is a person. But I suppose corporate and traditional hospitality, of like your Spoons and things like that, they are owned and driven by people that are not really seen as people, are just above, they're not involved. So you lose that people connection.”*
>
> *Café owner, female, 30s, South African*

Other participants had a much more mixed experience with their management teams overall. Generally, they got along very well with their direct manager, but other members of the management team were reported as being disorganised or, in one case, ‘really terrible.’ For one example, a migrant restaurant worker said she did not get along with the male Scottish management in her workplace, but she got along well with the migrant HR manager who also happened to be one of the few women in management. In another example, a migrant bar worker said that some of her managers were great to work with, but one in particular created a stressful environment that impacted how she felt about each shift:

> *“But the manager has a massive, massive impact, and they're either able to bring it [the stress levels] down by appearing calm and handling things and being approachable and not getting angry, or then they can also contribute towards it and be the cause of stress for everybody.”*
>
> *Bar worker, female, 20s, Finnish*

A small number of workers and management described mistrust for the other ‘side.’ For example, a manger said that he had often hired what he thought were experienced employees who turned out to be untrustworthy, and a worker said that he never trusted management after having an employer who stole his tips and always took the customer’s side in a dispute. Despite this statement of mistrust, however, that same worker felt very loyal to his current managers because he felt like they listened to him and truly cared about his wellbeing:

> *“They're not gonna screw anyone over, I don't think, like most would. Yeah, I just think the mentality is quite a lot different to what usually you see in hospitality, because they're much more concerned about the welfare and health of their staff, so they'll give you free food, look after you, try and throw all the food in your face.”*
>
> *Restaurant worker, male, 20s, Scottish*

Not all of the participants had such positive interactions with management, which was especially apparent from how often their descriptions of good managers were compared with past management experiences. A member of management at a hotel group said that sometimes people left jobs simply because there was a personality clash with management, but only a few workers described personality issues specifically. Some workers described explicitly hostile management situations. For example, one migrant bar worker mentioned a manager at her workplace that spoke disrespectfully to the staff and regularly made people cry, and another described a situation where he was blamed for a missing bank deposit and treated like a criminal, not even receiving an apology when the investigation concluded.

Other issues with management were more about logistics than personalities. These issues included not being allowed scheduling accommodation for health issues and not providing much-needed renovations to crumbling facilities. Several participants reported that there was a tendency in hospitality to promote people into management who were good at their jobs, but not necessarily skilled at management. A few did not fault the managers for this as they did not receive much training upon their promotion, especially in smaller venues. Others thought the mangers were simply unprofessional, saying the 'managers weren't exactly appropriate' or that they had difficulties understanding exactly what their new role entailed:

> *"Management need to be proper management. Management need to act like management. They're not your mates, they're not working in the pub, they're managers, and they need to manage it effectively."*
>
> *Bar worker, male, 20s, British*

A few workers said that they felt like their management dealt appropriately with problematic customers, though they were often better at addressing outright violence than sexual harassment. Among other respondents, having management simply avoid the issue seemed to be a common theme. Workers spoke of customers who abused and harassed the staff, but when staff went to management, they were told to ignore the customers. Some workers felt like their managers were more worried about poor reviews from customers than they were for their staff's safety and allowed the abuse to continue. A union representative said that this came from a toxic mentality of 'the customer is always right,' with management tacitly endorsing misbehaviour by not addressing it head-on and supporting workers in the face of abuse.

An HR policymaker said that one of the main issues in the UK that his organisation was trying to tackle was management quality. While customers could be aggressive, he said, the way management handled issues greatly impacted how employees felt about the incidents. Management quality was one of the major things he felt could improve:

> *"And then the one thing that we consistently bang on about is management quality and the importance of good people management. I guess the importance of the employee-manager relationship has long, I think, been understated, and it's absolutely crucial to making sure that the employee feels valued, well managed, directed to skills opportunities, directed to be able to use a benefits package, for example, as well. But it all depends on good quality line managers, and the management quality is consistently been an issue across the UK actually compared to some of our*

counterparts and competitors across the Channel. So improving management quality is something we've always emphasised."

HR policymaker, male, 40s, Slovak

8.4.2 Co-worker relationships

From the management perspective, the ideal team was one that worked together. Multiple managers credited a harmonious team environment with retention, saying that people who left the venue voluntarily and those that were let go were often not team players. Workers spoke to this as well, with workers who enjoyed their venues saying that there was a sense of camaraderie and stepping in to help when someone was overwhelmed. Multiple participants, both back- and front-of-house, spoke of people in back of house roles stepping in during busy periods to help out. This sense of pitching in was also prevalent in locations with a seasonal staff rotation, so it was not just year-round locations. This did not mean they were at all without conflict, of course, but they worked together toward a common goal. Each member of the team was vital, and all had to perform their own tasks and help others where needed:

"And in hospitality, you can't have people that you don't rely on, because there is a workload every day, and it's hard work. It's not just dealing with bits and pieces."

Hotel manager, male, 30s, Mauritian

Not all of the participants had positive things to say about the team dynamics in their workplaces. Workers cited reasons such as a 'bitter' atmosphere or highly uneven workloads. Communication issues were also a problem, though multiple participants said that these could be amended when the parties experiencing issues spoke directly with one another. In fact, a policymaker said that hospitality workers were some of the most open people he worked with, and it was easy to talk about issues in the workplace with them in order to come to a resolution.

Some of the participants described having real friendships with their co-workers. They described friendly environments where people shared meals and enjoyed being around one another. Several of the workers said that they spent time with their co-workers outside of work. For some this was a regular occurrence, sometimes multiple times a week, while for others it was more of an occasional night out. Most of the workers who described these social encounters were non-migrants. Other workers talked about not truly being friends with their co-workers, but having a friendly atmosphere that they enjoyed. A few participants said their friends at work were the reasons they stayed in venues they otherwise disliked. For example, a migrant bar worker described a feeling of responsibility to her co-workers, having stayed at her previous job that she hated longer than she wanted to specifically because she felt bad for the people she would be leaving behind if she left.

A few respondents talked about the lifelong connections that they had formed by working in hospitality. Some of these were friendships forged 10 or more years in the past that were still holding strong whether or not the parties still worked in the industry. One migrant worker actually met his wife when they worked together on a cruise ship. A tourism policymaker said that younger people in particular were likely to make a lot of friends in the industry that would serve as a mooring element:

"You're going to make a lot of friends who are part of the reason to go to work, you know, they're part of the reason to enjoy it. So, therefore, that's one of the reasons. And as you progress together through your career, you build up really strong bonds with the people that you work alongside."

Tourism policymaker, male, 50s, Scottish

A number of participants talked about the sense of community in their venues or the industry as a whole. While the workers might complain about their jobs, that complaining could bring them together and help them get through difficult situations at work or learn about new opportunities that they could pursue. A few people talked about their venue feeling like a family: the teams were close-knit and they were often the reason people stayed as long as they did. Other respondents worked in venues that took the 'family' environment very literally. One worker was employed in a restaurant owned by a migrant family, and it was almost entirely staffed by their extended family and friends with a handful of Scottish servers. Two of the other respondents were a mother and son who worked at their family inn. The mother shared that having her children available to work was helpful in the very busy seasons, and added that guests liked the family dynamic. Whether it was literal or figurative, as one hotel worker said, it was specifically the mixture of conflict and closeness that made the environment have a family-like feel:

"I mean, I hate when companies use the term 'family.' That's a whole other topic. But hotels are bit like a family, because we're all so different. You do have your conflicts with people, but at the end of the day they're all in the same boat, so they all kind of feel the same pressures, and that can bond them together as well."

Hotel worker, female, 20s, Scottish

A union policymaker said that this close-knit nature had a downside, especially in her current role: people did not want to formally speak up about problems because they did not want to be fired or labelled as a complainer. In a similar vein, a migrant bar worker said that 'everybody knows everybody' in hospitality and 'word kind of goes around about people.' That could make it easier to find a job if one had a good reputation, she said, but it also made it harder if someone had not yet established a reputation, and then they ended up working in the places where nobody wanted to work.

Not everyone became the best of friends, of course. Several members of management pointed out that there was always conflict, and sometimes people left because of it. This sense of some conflict being inevitable was expressed by some workers as well. One hotel worker said this was because hospitality was a high-pressure environment and, as a result, could easily breed conflict. She said that people would get annoyed and upset about things that seemed trivial, but it was because there was so much tension overall.

8.5 Intensity

A common theme among participants was the hectic pace in hospitality. This was generally not a consistent pace as many venues had specific rushes: meal times for restaurants, for example, or check-in and check-out times at hotels. The participants felt different ways

about this pace. Some preferred the slower periods where they could chat with customers more. At times, the busy periods could be too much to handle, particularly when paired with staffing issues. Frontline participants in these environments described their venues as ‘intense’ and ‘insane.’ For example, a restaurant worker said that in previous workplaces that were ‘chronically understaffed,’ the workload was overwhelming. In that workplace, he witnessed some of his co-workers break down:

> *“They just get completely hammered into the ground. And then there's just no help in sight, so they just start breaking down, and either leaving or just crying a lot, I guess. That’s what happened at the last one. That was a bit grim.”*
>
> *Restaurant worker, male, 20s, Scottish*

Some participants enjoyed a constant fast pace. For example, a migrant cruise ship worker, currently between ship contracts, took a job at a fish and chip shop as a personal challenge to be more hands-on. During the pandemic he worked in a COVID-19 Centre, but he said it was too sedentary and he ‘wanted to be busy all day long.’ This positive feeling sometimes extended to the seasonal hours required of some venues. For example, an inn owner said that she worked seven days a week all summer long, but she liked having five months of intense work and then spending the rest of the year travelling or working in her garden.

Many of the participants with back of house roles, or participants who were no longer in the industry, spoke positively about the fast pace. Sometimes this seemed a bit detached from the reality of the operations, as in the case of the hotel HR manager who said she was always very busy but the frontline workers were able to take breaks during the slow periods. Other times the work ethic seemed to follow them elsewhere, as in the case of the policymaker who said the slow pace of the other types of businesses he had moved on to sometimes frustrated him. There were also participants who had recently moved into back of house roles and still had a hand in front of house operations. For example, a migrant hotel worker with a back of house role said that she was looking forward to December, which was a very busy month for frontline workers but allowed support staff like her some time to catch up on work. Her venue had just opened and much of the back of house team and management had been running around ‘like headless chickens’ helping with frontline work. She conceded that part of this was the nature of hospitality work: the pace could be very slow and explode at any moment when there was an issue or a rush. To her, this was part of the appeal:

> *“To an extent, that’s the beauty of it, because you're like, ‘Oh, what am I gonna do today? So quiet, nothing, nothing,’ and then BOOF! [Laugh] And it does challenge you, and it teaches you so many skills that you don't even know you had or knew you need, you could have.”*
>
> *Hotel worker, female, 20s, Hungarian*

A third of the workers agreed that the environment was stressful and high-pressure. Sometimes this was due to the size or layout of a venue making it difficult to physically address all of the customers within. At other times it was because of a lack of training, abusive customers, or increased workloads due to severe understaffing or task additions like mobile ordering. Some said that the high levels of stress were the reason they wanted to leave their jobs:

"Like, I've done my time in the stressful parts. I'm ready for a quiet life."

Restaurant worker, female, 20s, Scottish

This perception of stress was consistent among migrants and locals, but a few participants discussed their perception that local workers might be more susceptible to stress. For example, a migrant hotel worker said that, while she had worked in many hotels over the years to varying treatment, all of them were hard work, and only people who liked the sector were likely to stay. In particular, she said that she had not worked with many Scottish people, since the work was too hard and they left quickly.

A few workers discussed low-stress roles, describing their work as laid-back, relaxing, or 'chill.' One inn worker described it as 'enough stress to keep you alert,' but not overly stressful. The general pattern for these workers was that their venues had enough staff members to take care of the workload and low levels of customer of abuse, and the workers themselves also had been working in the industry for at least several years. Many of them described their current low-stress environments in direct comparison to previous high-stress environments.

The disparity in these sentiments was indicative of the industry as a whole: while some venues could be a pleasant experience, others could be awful. Several managers and policymakers spoke on this point, stating that the perception of hospitality as a stressful industry discouraged young people from applying, and that those who did apply and had a first experience in a highly stressful venue could be driven from the industry altogether.

Multi-tasking was common in the industry, with many people stepping in to helping other workers or other departments entirely. Some attributed this to a culture of teamwork, but others said it was simply due to the staffing levels. This was especially prevalent among management who had to step into other roles when they did not have enough people. Examples from hotels in particular included management stepping in to help with reception, laundry, and serving breakfast. This need to multi-task restricted them from tending to administrative tasks such as, somewhat ironically, reviewing CVs to hire more staff. This was stressful for the managers and detrimental to their overall work. For example, one attraction worker said that the managers at his venue had too many departments that they were responsible for. While this worker was generally very positive about his workplace, he was very frustrated about the manager not completing the tasks assigned:

"The person that's in charge of the department is also in charge of two others, which means the ball gets dropped a lot. [Sarcastically] And it's not their fault. It's never their fault."

Attraction worker, male, 20s, Northern Irish

While some of the participants bemoaning the heavy workloads of management were in back of house roles with no actual guest interaction, most of the discussion came from frontline workers or front of house management with an active role in their companies. This middle management layer, including supervisors, took the brunt of the work for little extra pay. A policymaker described this as being 'squeezed from above and squeezed from below.' This 'squeeze' was not sustainable long-term for many. One back of house hotel worker felt pressure in her own role, but noted that the front of house management team had a tough time as well:

"And I think a lot of the time they just think, is it worth it? Like, is all this pressure and stress actually worth what I'm getting?"

Hotel worker, female, 20s, Scottish

The general attitude of participants was that stress in hospitality was simply part of the job. Several participants made jokes about what they saw as the inevitable stress. For example, a hotel general manager said that you could tell he had been in hospitality for a long time by the look in his eyes. Others talked about the coping methods they had created, such as working with managers to determine how to prioritise a task list that was too long.

Others said that their stress greatly decreased when they simply stopped caring. For example, a bar worker said that he tried not to be stressed out about the work because as long as he did 'enough,' they would not fire him. He looked at the work as casual, and did not think of his job as defining him: it was a large company, and it did not belong to him. He said that getting too involved could, in fact, make the work far more stressful:

"If you have a really bad night, there's gonna be 100 more, so why feel bad about this one? It's just part of the job, and part of the job is just, when you speak to people who have been there long enough, and you speak to people who are successful in the job, you just realise they don't really care. I think if you do care, you'll be disappointed."

Bar worker, male, 20s, British

Several participants discussed the intensity of work due to understaffing. This especially was an issue in restaurants in hotels. For example, a migrant hotel worker said that she was expected to do far more work and sometimes additional hours, but she was not paid extra for this. The lack of staff could affect mooring as well. A non-binary hotel worker said that they did not leave their prior job due to pay, but due to the unfair workload. They worked in housekeeping and lasted a month and a half in the role, while the average turnover was a week. The hotel cut staff roles but expected the same workload out of everyone, and the level of effort was too much:

"Whereas, yeah, some other jobs, it doesn't matter how fucking hard you try, they don't care. They just want a certain level, and if you don't reach it, even if you do, they'll just give you more."

Hotel worker, non-binary, 20s, Scottish

Sometimes this understaffing was due to so many people being on part-time schedules, especially students who often were unavailable at the same times. This could especially be the case with employers who did not use zero-hour contracts and had no way to fill in labour gaps. At other times, the understaffing was intentional. Several workers stated that their venues staffed the minimum number of workers at all times, which left them floundering if someone called out. A policymaker agreed that lower staffing levels on each shift were a way for businesses to cut costs. This was not always for the financial benefit of the shareholders, however: for example, one member of management at a charitable attraction said that they were not allowed to backfill positions when people left without getting approval from their staffing committee.

In one more unique example, a migrant restaurant worker said that her venue did not have enough workers because they were located in Skye and did not have enough worker accommodation. The workers had to do extra work because of this lack of staff. She was frustrated because she did not have a say in how this was handled:

> *"Because it's stressful and like, why am I stressed about how you're running your business? Like, I shouldn't be taking on the load. It's stupid. But I feel like that's how a lot of staff feels, that it's, you're constantly overworked, and you don't have enough people working with you."*
>
> *Restaurant worker, female, 20s, Canadian*

Some employers did try to rectify the staffing issue. For example, a migrant hotel worker said that her venue had a mass hiring event in the summer to make up for previous staffing issues, and the staff was being kept on permanently, albeit mostly on a part-time basis. This made it easier for the workers, who would not feel like they were 'rushing and running all the time.'

8.5.1 Working time

Several participants talked about very short notice for their rota schedules. While one said her new workplace released the schedules two weeks in advance, her previous workplace only released it two days in advance. This was consistent with other workers who said they received their schedules five or fewer days in advance. In one particularly egregious example, a union policymaker said that when she was actively working in hospitality, they released the rota every week on Sunday nights. She was on a zero hour contract and there was no rota consultation, so she had to wait to plan anything, even medical appointments until the rotas released:

> *"When were like 19 working in the hotel, our rotas were so erratic, and so we weren't able to plan anything. There was 3 of us sat down and realised that we, so were all on the pill, so like something that's completely necessary for us, and we all ended up going basically about 6 months without getting back onto the pill because we had to go to a doctor's appointment, and we couldn't get a doctor's appointment because we didn't know our hours. So we would get the rota on a Sunday night and then try and phone on a Monday morning, being like, 'I'm off Tuesday, have you got any appointments?' And that went on four months, and like things like dentist appointments, eye appointments, basic, basic things like being able to access reproductive care, we were not able to do that because of our hours."*
>
> *Union policymaker, female, 20s, Scottish*

Some workers mentioned just wanting an occasional Saturday off. Others spoke fondly of roles they might take in the future that offered more consistency. They wanted to work more social hours and know which days they would be working far in advance. In contrast, other workers said that their roles were relatively consistent. They either worked the same days each week with slightly varied hours, or they worked mostly the same hours but on slightly varied days. One of those workers still did not see his rota as consistent, however. He worked at a

restaurant and said that all of their shifts ended at 9:30, and they either started at 12 or 2:30. He felt that the lack of consistency because everyone's availability changed each week, so the off days were different. He helped management with the rotas, and said that the main issue was people wanting Saturdays off.

Several policymakers discussed the idea that certain shifts, such as Friday and Saturday nights, were unpopular necessities in hospitality. Having to work those shifts over a long period of time, however, could make workers want to leave the industry because of the heavy impact on their social lives. To support this, a migrant hotel worker said that working long shifts with late end times could 'take a toll on people,' especially the longer they did it. Other policymakers pointed out that these hours were not necessarily indicative of all hospitality, but the perception of antisocial hours for low pay could discourage people from applying at all, opting instead for work in call centres or retail. A union policymaker summed up this sentiment well:

> *"What's the point in work until 1 o'clock in the morning, when you could do a 9 to 5 on the same wage and get home?"*
>
> *Union policymaker, female, 20s, Scottish*

The night shift was a topic of interest. Participants said that jobs that ended very late, such as 2am or later, made it very difficult to maintain a social life or consistent sleep schedule. One participant liked the night shift, however. They fully committed to the schedule and stopped trying to function during the day, instead adopting tactics like getting groceries first thing in the morning on their way home from work. They said the most difficult parts were trying to sleep if it was very noisy outside and trying to go to businesses with more limited hours, like the pharmacy.

Some participants discussed their commutes. An older tourism policymaker said that one of the major appealing points of some hospitality jobs was being able to work somewhere a 10 minute walk from home and not worry about a long commute or its costs. He is the only participant who mentioned a short commute into work; other participants cited issues taking public transit home because it stopped by the time their shifts ended, so they had to spend money on expensive taxis. They did not live in the city centre where their jobs were located.

The topic of flexible working was brought up often. A hotel group manager feared that some workers thought that flexible working meant coming in and leaving whenever one wanted, when for frontline roles it was meant to be about asking for a rota that reflected one's desired days off or daily scheduling requirements. As it happens, all of the workers asked about flexibility used this same definition. They gave examples of requesting certain working hours or days off and being pleased with the flexibility available to them. Some also mentioned simple day-to-day flexibility, such as coming in a little early or late, adjusting the lengths of their lunches, or receiving easier tasks if they were not feeling well. Several managers also spoke of providing this type of flexibility to their employees wherever possible. This was consistent with the message from many of the workers that flexibility had become much more common in recent years.

Working from home was a topic of conversation as well. Policymakers noted that remote work had become rather popular but that it was not necessarily possible with many roles within hospitality. An HR policymaker said that it frustrated him that flexible working had become synonymised with working from home since it ignored the more plausible flexibility

a business could offer, such as stating days or hours one would prefer to have off and receiving a set schedule to accommodate those needs.

A few participants said that they had a severe work-life imbalance, but they liked it that way. These participants worked very long hours in the summer months and then had multiple months of time off, which worked well for them. Of interest, two of these participants were parents. This was a contrast with a tourism policymaker who said that, despite how much he loved the work, the reason he left hospitality operations was because he never saw his family. He said that young people looking at the industry saw the lack of work life balance, and they decided not to work in it because they wanted a life. This was a big point of improvement in the industry, he said: people should not have to choose between working and seeing their children.

8.5.2 Breaks and leave

Several participants talked about working very long shifts, up to 16 hours a day. In one example, a migrant bar worker said that 12 hour shifts were so prevalent among her friends that worked in hospitality that they would simply joke about the nature of the industry when they were assigned one. Others would be scheduled for six or seven days a week. This was exhausting for workers and made the work environment more tense as they could easily snap at one another. Several policymakers pointed toward this pattern as well, noting that it was primarily a result of the staffing crisis after Brexit and COVID-19. The people who remained would be pressured into staying longer to make up for understaffing. One union policymaker said that the long hours were the reason even highly skilled roles like chefs were leaving their jobs. Several of the workers agreed, having left previous roles because of overly long hours.

Shifts could also be regularly scheduled at antisocial hours. Due to the nature of hospitality, this could be as simple as always being scheduled to close the venue at the weekends, but was not always so straightforward. One migrant hotel worker mentioned having very short turnaround during some shifts where she was expected to serve breakfast after her shift ended at 4am the night before. A few workers noted that they had worked very long hours in previous years, but that venues had been improving recently. Some venues never made use of overly long shifts. A migrant café owner said that she made all of her shifts shorter because she was aware that it could be draining to both deal with the public and to be on one's feet all day.

Approximately one quarter of the workers said that they worked the right number of hours. For some, this was a part-time schedule to accommodate studies. For others, this was a stable full-time schedule that did not surpass 50 hours. One inn worker said he chose to work 50 hours because he only worked in the summers, so this number was right for him. It is important to note here that he was the son of the owner, which may have skewed his experience. He did note that he was not interested in taking over the inn specifically because of the time commitment required.

A third of the workers did not feel like they had enough hours in their current roles. These contract hours included zero hour contracts, 8 hour contracts, and 25 hour contracts. The workers with very light contracts were bitter about this, but the worker with a 25 hour contract said that he was aware there were only so many shifts to go around, and he thought that management distributed them fairly. Fair distribution of hours was not universal, however. A

union representative spoke of a case where one of the union members was being dismissed early because of his race and immigration status. He wanted to work more hours, but noticed that white Scottish workers had the best shifts and were kept on longer, while migrant workers and people of colour were often dismissed early when it was slow.

For some, part-time schedules were specifically desired. Two participants wanted them for health reasons: they physically could not work full-time hours but did still want to work, so they wanted reduced schedules. Of note, neither of their employers were willing to give them the reduced schedules they wanted. In another example, a migrant hotel worker noted that many of their new employees were interested specifically in flexible, part-time work, though she was happy with full-time hours herself. A number of participants stated that they enjoyed the flexibility of hospitality while working on their studies. On the other side of this, a few managers said that a large portion of their workforce were students and it could be difficult to coordinate schedules, particularly around exams.

Several participants talked about flexibility specifically as it related to parental duties, specifically noting the ability to accommodate school drop-off and pickup times. One of the roles showing this flexibility was in hotel housekeeping, the hours for which often aligned with typical school schedules. A union representative noted that these housekeeping roles were taken frequently by parents and predominately by women. This flexibility was noted by participants who were parents themselves. Three different managers said they took advantage of the flexibility in hospitality to care for their children. Two male managers adjusted their hours around their partners' schedules, while the female manager reduced her hours to act as the primary parent and then resumed a full-time schedule when she was ready. Of note, one migrant hotel worker was not yet a parent, but said that she would no longer be open to working frontline roles when she did, preferring instead a role where she would be able to leave precisely at 5:00.

Split shifts were not common among the interviewees, but two migrant participants who were scheduled for them had different feelings on whether or not the split constituted a 'break.' One was a restaurant worker and felt like the split shifts ruined her sleep and social life. The other worked on cruise ships where he did not have full days off, so the daytime period when customers were on shore were the closest thing he had. He liked this schedule and found the daytime period restful.

Some interviewees described issues with taking their breaks. For example, one migrant worker said that her previous workplace did not have a break room or staff toilet, so there was nowhere to go during breaks. A different worker said that his work place did have a break room, but it was so far from his working location in the venue that by the time he got there, there would be no time to actually take a break. A few participants described a concerning pattern of not getting breaks at all, even in shifts over six hours long. Sometimes a five minute break could be taken if explicitly asked for, but in other cases the workload had to be complete before any breaks. Others were scheduled in such a way to avoid breaks entirely: a policymaker said that his daughter, who was only 16, worked five hour shifts in a restaurant and was not offered a break during that time.

Holiday and leave policies depended on the employer. Some workers expressed challenges with requesting leave, especially if it was during a busy period such as summer or Christmas and other workers wanted time off as well. Sometimes there was not a clear reason

for the resistance from management. For example, an attraction worker said that he was able to use his holiday time, but 'it was if they had to do me a favour.' Other workers reported that management was very accommodating to time off requests. One migrant bar worker especially liked her current job's use of an app to request holidays because everything was clearly communicated and it was easier to get time off. She said this was especially important as an immigrant, since seeing one's family would take a couple of weeks. A few manager participants said that they encouraged time off when they were able to accommodate it because it ensured that their employees were not overworked.

8.5.3 Emotional and aesthetic labour

Multiple workers discussed the need to manage their emotions at work. This was generally in the guise of maintaining one's calm when customers were upset or rude. The workers described this emotional management as donning a 'mask' or putting on their 'customer service face,' which was exhausting after a while. One restaurant worker did add that this had the advantage of sometimes cheering her up when she was in a bad mood, but only for a limited period of time. A migrant bar worker said that she felt additional pressure to behave a certain way in order to appease customers, and that this was just the way things were in hospitality:

> *"And then, yeah, there's definitely things are just accepted silently, like the way women have to commodify themselves when in service industry, and how you have to…[laugh] it feels so wrong to say 'sell yourself,' but you are a part of the experience, you are a part of the product, and that's kind of made clear to you by everybody who is above you."*
>
> *Bar worker, female, 20s, Finnish*

An expectation of servitude was a common theme among some of the participants in higher-end venues. Examples included everything from general abusive behaviour and complaining about small things, to more specific issues of customers snapping their fingers for attention or wanting to be spoken to 'like royalty.' Management generally did not mention this expectation, though two management participants did address it. One, a migrant café owner, said that her venue intentionally moved at a slower pace as part of her personal ethos that the café was a community space, and being part of a community meant acknowledging that both the staff and the customer were people with their own stories, and thus deserving of a meaningful interaction. Conversely, a hotel general manager had an expectation of servitude from both his staff and the staff he interacted with in his personal time. He said that he and his family rarely went out to eat because 'there's no service anymore,' bemoaning the lack of 'personalities' and 'banter' in restaurants.

A union policymaker expanded on this expectation: the service industry was designed to make customers feel like they owned the workers for a period of time while they received their service. This was exacerbated by employers buying into the 'customer is always right' mentality, because if employers refused to intervene when a customer was being abusive to the staff, then the customers would continue to believe that they were entitled to behave in that manner. He said that this was especially rampant in hospitality, as customers would never be so bold in, for example, the transportation industry. Instead, they felt like they could get away with abhorrent behaviour because managers would not reprimand them in fear of a poor review.

8.6 Fulfilment

A common theme among the interviewees was a feeling of fulfilment gained from interaction with customers. They liked being able to help people have a nice holiday and make their day better. Some felt like the interaction was the key feature of the hospitality experience, especially when they worked with tourists. Others felt a sense of pride in their company and themselves when they were able to provide exemplary service, especially when they were able to do so in a challenging and busy environment: there were set tasks to be accomplished and a set time frame in which to accomplish them, and completing those tasks in an often hectic environment could give one a sense of accomplishment. Being the best at those tasks could be very fulfilling:

> *"I know I can do my job really well. I master my job."*
>
> *Hotel worker, female, 50s, Spanish*

Beyond pride, the positive interactions could be the difference between a job and a career for the respondents. For example, when asked if his work was meaningful, a migrant cruise ship worker emphatically answered that it was: while guests on the cruise ship might enjoy the locations they visited, some of them had been travelling all their lives, and the ship itself was not special. They often got attached to the crew and would hug them and cry when they left. This is what made him feel like his work was meaningful. The meaningful interactions did not always make respondents feel so positive about their work, however. As an example, one migrant bar worker said that it felt nice when she was able to be a part of making someone's day special, but said that this was not a feeling she necessarily had to be at work to encounter:

> *"And I do feel…Yeah, it's nice whenever some customers clearly have a good time, and I can be a part of that and just make someone's day. But I can do that on the street by being nice to a stranger. I don't have to be making money for some rich dude."*
>
> *Bar worker, female, 20s, Finnish*

Other participants did not feel a sense of accomplishment or as if they made a difference. Their jobs were just something to make money, whether it was something temporary while they worked on a degree or something long-term. Several respondents started working in hospitality while in university, and while the ones who had risen to the management level felt positively about the industry, the ones still working in frontline roles sometimes felt like they were wasting their time. Others said they felt a small sense of fulfilment from completing their tasks, but that the work was not fulfilling overall. Either way, a few respondents felt that anyone could do their job:

> *"I know someone else could do my job. I am easily replaceable. I, personally, don't make a difference."*
>
> *Bar worker, non-binary, 20s, Scottish*

A third of the workers, half of them migrants, described themselves as passionate about their work. This passion was attributed to the interactions they had with co-workers and customers, the travel perks their industries offered, or a family history of working in the industry. Several policymakers and managers described themselves as passionate about the

industry as a whole, generally because of the strong connections they made with customers and co-workers, but noted their issues with the antisocial work hours in frontline roles. A few participants defined their own passion as part of a larger group, using 'we' while talking about their passion. For example, a hotel worker said that she felt hospitality workers in general loved and had faith in the industry, though they also complained about it a lot. One member of HR management, who had always been in hotel HR and not in a frontline role, said that the passion was all about wanting to help people:

> *"So I would say that hospitality and having that hospitality in your blood, it's almost like a vocation rather than a skill. It's the desire to help, support, and serve."*
>
> *Hotel HR manager, female, 40s, Scottish*

Several participants did not describe themselves as passionate, but did use that description for their teams and co-workers. For participants at charitable attractions, that passion was about the mission of the venue. Others said that passion was due to the communities they had in their individual venues and in the industry as a whole. Multiple policymakers noted that this sense of community could largely be due to a culture of support from management.

Conversely, some participants expressly stated that they did not feel passionate about their work. Two male bar workers, one migrant and one local, had this sentiment. One said that he had initially been passionate about the work, assuming he would be cultivating a relaxing and fun community space, but that his passion faded when he realised that customers thought of his bar as a place to get drunk. The other never felt particularly passionate about his work because they were not passionate about him. For another example, one hotel general manager said that he specifically found workers to be lacking in any passion over the past few years. He said they did not have any expertise and were just there for the job, and noted this both in his own venue and in venues he visited.

8.6.1 Tasks and skill use

A few workers said their tasks were fun, citing assignments liking mixing cocktails, arranging plates, and chatting with customers. Some participants had particular tasks that they enjoyed the most. For example, one hotel worker said they liked doing night audits, though they added that this was not a task others typically enjoyed. An inn worker said that he liked all the customer interaction he had over the course of the night, and they only task he found dull and repetitive was cleaning at the end of the night.

Others simply loved always being busy, especially managers and policymakers. They had many things to do and it did not feel like they had to do the same things every day. Not everyone enjoyed this fast pace, however. For example, one restaurant worker spoke about how her job was physically and mentally exhausting as she had to deal with frustrations from the kitchen staff and customers while running up and down stairs all night. She was looking forward to a less stressful job that did not have such time pressure.

A few workers in bars and restaurants brought up the idea of micromanagement. They did not enjoy having to follow very precise specifications on how they performed actions like preparing drinks or speaking with customers. One migrant worker said that his venue's

management required them to follow a script when they spoke with customers. He had a large amount of customer service experience prior to this position, so the micromanagement felt especially frustrating.

Several participants described the tasks as monotonous or boring, with the same tasks being repeated each day. Even when they enjoyed the tasks, they became monotonous after a time. Of note, one person who described the daily tasks as boring was a café owner. She said that baking and serving drinks all day, the tasks her workers performed, would be very repetitive and boring. Boredom could also be tied to the lack of learning new things, an idea raised by several hotel workers and managers. For example, one migrant hotel worker said that the only reason she would want to leave her job was if she stopped learning new things, and a hotel manager stated that he left his previous position after 14 years for that exact reason.

In contrast to the workers speaking of monotony, quite a few participants talked about how much they enjoyed the variety: no two days were the same. They spoke positively of the sudden busy periods and how they balanced nicely with the quieter periods. A tourism policymaker said that one venue he worked with allowed the staff to try out different tasks within their roles to see what they liked to do, and he said it greatly helped with worker retention.

A few participants said they were able to use skills from their formal education in hospitality. One hotel worker said that both her undergraduate and master's degree were related to hospitality and tourism, and she felt like both degrees were relevant to her current role. She worked in front of house roles at first and then moved to a back of house role. Several policymakers also had formal degrees in hospitality management and used those to attain their current positions, though they did state that others they graduated with worked in different industries now. Of note, at least four additional workers had higher education backgrounds in hospitality management, but did not talk about being able to use skills derived from that education.

The question of being able to use skills learned on the job had a mixed response. Some workers felt proud of being able to perform their tasks well, while others said they did their best but did not feel like what they had learned to do was anything special. Participants outside of frontline roles were more complimentary of the skills required there, and especially highlighted the transferrable nature of those skills. For example, one hotel manager said that, while they may not have formal educational requirements, frontline roles required people skills, organisation, and being able to think outside the box, and that the people who worked in these roles were very skilled and used those skills every day. In another example, a policymaker said that the skills he had gained in the industry, particularly time management and working quickly under pressure, served him well in other roles he had.

8.6.2 True Self

A third of the workers, mostly non-migrant, said that they felt like they could be themselves most of the time, though they specified that this still meant they had to bite their tongues on occasion when customers were annoying or rude. Two female restaurant workers said that they felt this way at times around co-workers, with one clarifying that there was no particular issue with her co-workers but she simply did not feel up to socialising sometimes:

"Because, especially in hospitality, I feel like there's just an expectation to have good banter with your co-workers, like to just be joking around all the time, and sometimes I just can't be bothered with it."

Restaurant worker, female, 20s, Scottish

While nothing was asked about this topic specifically, several workers volunteered their LGBTQ identities and talked about how they felt about being queer in the hospitality industry. This topic generally arose after the question, 'Do you feel like you can be your true self at work?' Two participants were transgender non-binary, one participant was a gay man, and one migrant participant identified herself as queer. Two of those participants also identified themselves as polyamorous. It is possible that more participants had a queer identity but did not disclose this to the researcher. Two of these LGBTQ participants reported feeling as if hospitality as a whole had a higher queer population and was more queer-friendly than other undustries.

The cisgender queer participants said they felt as if they could be their true selves with their co-workers, but they generally concealed their queer identity from customers. Of note, both worked in bars and reported that abuse and sexual harassment was common from their customer bases, especially on football match days. Of the non-binary participants, one felt as if they could be themselves with people from other departments, but they did not feel this way in their own department as those co-workers were not terribly progressive. The other said their transition was somewhat awkward with management and customers, but their co-workers accepted and adapted to the change immediately. They stopped correcting regular customers because it was too much hassle:

"He has not ever called me [Name] again, he always calls me [deadname], and I just kind of…Now I know I'm leaving now. [Laugh] I don't need to bother. I can't be bothered correcting you and going through the emotional turmoil of coming out every day."

Bar worker, non-binary, 20s, Scottish

8.7 Hiring Practices

Participants discussed their companies' hiring practices from several points of view. Most of the participants who discussed hiring methods said that they used social media and job aggregate boards such as Indeed. The exceptions who used word of mouth were an inn owner who used it to hire and a union representative who used it to find work for herself. Hiring was generally done in large batches prior to busy periods. In an interesting note on timing, an inn owner said she had to plan the right time to reach out to potential workers in university, because if she tried to contact them too early or during exams, they would not have time or energy for her.

Despite the common narrative of students working in hospitality, a few participants talked about the challenges that came with hiring students. Most of these challenges included students all having the same availability, particularly around exam times. There was an exception of one migrant café owner who said she did not like hiring students at all because she wanted long-term commitment and they only wanted a summer job.

Internal hiring practices were also a topic of conversation. Two attraction managers said that they generally hired internally before posting the roles for external hires, and they usually went to external hires only if there was a particular skill that was needed. In hotels, different workers said that their venues advertised roles internally and externally simultaneously. One worker said that her venue prioritised internal hires in this process, but another said that their venue lost employees who applied for internal roles only to lose out to an external hire.

Four different tourism policymakers discussed the need to employ non-traditional workers in hospitality, with 'non-traditional' simply meaning anyone other than young students. Some of the targets of this marketing were older workers, unhoused people, former convicts, and people who were looking to returning to the workforce, such as new parents. They said that these people might not necessarily see hospitality as a path, but that this more diverse hiring would be especially beneficial in more remote areas with lower populations. One point of interest was how to make these non-traditional candidates comfortable in a workplace where they were not the typical applicant. A policymaker noted that some of these targets, notably mothers finishing maternity leave, would need some flexibility in their schedules for school drop-off and pickup, but could do well in the work if accommodated. An inn owner said that she employed more older workers than the typical hospitality venue, and she said that it was easier for her to attract older workers because there were already people there of a similar age so they would not feel awkward and out of place.

Participants were asked about the 'ideal worker' and the responses had a large overlap. A tourism policymaker brought up the idea of 'recruit for attitude, train for skill,' saying that many venues he worked with preferred someone inexperienced but enthusiastic. Several workers supported that idea, saying that their venues hired for attitude first. Other participants said that people skills were the specific skill they were looking for. They wanted good communication, patience, teamwork, positive attitudes, and what one hotel HR manager phrased as 'the desire to help, support, and serve.'

This is not to say that the ideal candidate was one who only had people skills. Some venues were looking for skilled chefs or high-end bartenders and wanted experience workers with a specific skill set. A few policymakers said that digital skills were in high demand in the sector, as the people who had them often looked for jobs in other industries. A hotel worker said that her venue was not necessarily happy to hire inexperienced workers, but that hiring inexperienced people reflected the reality of the market at the moment. She added that COVID-19 made many young people lose their opportunity to try out hospitality jobs as minors, and older workers retired:

> *"So it is quite hard to kind of tap into the market that have the experience because they don't tend to exist anymore."*
>
> *Hotel worker, female, 20s, Scottish*

Conversely, there were two participants who expressly did not want highly-skilled applicants. One was the aforementioned tourism policymaker who felt that people looking for a foot in the door did not actually want a job working with the public. In another example, a hotel general manager said that he was looking primarily for trustworthiness and honesty, but he found 'experienced people who think they know everything' to be dishonest.

Participants generally agreed that there was a severe labour shortage, notably in frontline roles. This was an issue in other customer service venues such as retail as well, but hospitality was having a harder time filling those vacancies during recovery from the pandemic. A migrant HR policymaker said that almost half of employers reported a hard time filling vacancies. Workers noted this challenge as well, citing venues that were chronically understaffed. There simply were not enough workers for the number of positions open. This was especially the case in rural areas. For example, one inn owner said she was struggling to get enough staff to return to opening for dinner seven days a week:

> *"Sometimes you feel like you're the most powerful as an employer. I certainly didn't feel that last year. I had to bend over backwards to get people to work."*
>
> *Inn owner, female, 60s, Scottish*

Not everyone was having hiring challenges. A few participants said that their workplaces had improved workplace conditions with measures such as paying the living wage or letting workers try different roles according to their interests. These workplaces had little issue with hiring and retention. Other workers said their venues still had staffing challenges, but they were able to fill some of the gaps by accommodating more flexible schedules.

Some participants said that their hiring targets were, frankly, warm bodies who would show up. For example, a hotel HR manager said that sometimes the venues would be guilty of 'panic-recruiting,' where they hired people because they desperately needed staff but would hire someone who was the wrong fit. She said that the wrong fit might include someone with the wrong skills or who 'hopped jobs too much,' or simply who did not actually want to be there but accepted a job because they were desperate for work themselves.

8.7.1 Hiring migrants

The ability to sponsor roles was severely curtailed due to Brexit, and the participants who spoke about providing sponsorship were part of larger organisations, usually international. Even then, the sponsorship was limited to niche skill sets they were unable to fill within the UK, such as chefs or senior management positions within international chains.

A migrant hotel general manager said that the number of migrant workers they had at the hotel had dwindled after Brexit because there were fewer available. Most of the migrant workers they had were international students who worked part-time. A migrant hotel worker said that her venue hired a lot of people from Ukraine after the war. She said that there was sometimes a language barrier, but they were working on that. Both of these participants said that the migrants in their hotels primarily worked in housekeeping.

A migrant restaurant worker talked about a hotel she had previously worked at in her home country of Canada. She was in housekeeping and only stayed for three weeks because the work was incredibly exploitative. She said that the only people who stayed longer were migrants from Asia or domestic migrants from a distant province who could not return home easily:

> *"So like, what are they gonna do? It's not like they're gonna go home. So it was insane, and I feel it's very similar to here, like you get a lot of out*

of country workers, and you can kind of do whatever you want with them to be honest, because what are they going to do? You're kind of stuck here. It's just how it goes. And I know there will always be more. So you kind of do whatever you want."

Restaurant worker, female, 20s, Canadian

An inn owner said that she had multiple migrant workers who worked for her each summer, but most of them had dual citizenship. She said that she used to receive emails from travellers in Europe asking for work for the summer, but she stopped receiving those emails after Brexit.

On an interesting note, a migrant café owner said that she did not hire migrant workers because they did not have enough experience and did not speak fluent English. Prior to this, she said that the main skill she was looking for in a worker was teamwork. She did not mention migrants who spoke English as a first language, like herself or the researcher.

8.7.2 Expectation of turnover

Turnover was not always a negative thing, as several managers and policymakers explained. Sometimes it was simply not a good fit, and it was better for people to leave than insisting they stay and be miserable. In other times, people left when they were starting to get bored. In the best cases, people left after a set period of time, such as finishing university. In those instances, they may have been at the same location for the full duration of their studies, contributing well for several years before leaving the industry with a positive view. One policymaker in particular had a very strong positive association with turnover. He had past experience with hiring international chefs, and felt that the only way to get an experienced chef was to help chefs get experience: if they only wanted to work for a year, he was fine with that and could plan around it. He felt that the key factor was the labour stability index, not the overall turnover percentage:

"And I've used it in previous businesses where I moved to sit and say, 'It's unhealthy for businesses to have turnover of less than 5% or 3% with a stability factor of above 86%. Because you're sitting going, 'There's not enough new ideas coming in. There's not enough sharing of knowledge and experience.' Because you're looking to try and create an environment where change is fairly constant and credible and acceptable, etc."

Policymaker, male, 50s, Scottish

Not all policymakers agreed on the positivity of turnover, however. One policymaker noted that very high levels of turnover were not indicative of a successful business, as a strong base team would be needed to stabilise the environment. A union policymaker looked at the issue in a different way: management had relied on high turnover for years, he said, viewing their staff as disposable. The labour crisis made them realise that that was not necessarily the case anymore, and that they would have to work to retain their workers. He said that said that leaders were looking at the labour crisis and talking very seriously about the need for change:

"Because, and I see this first hand in these leadership groups, employers are talking to themselves, saying we are fucked if we don't offer better

conditions. If we don't stand out as the kind of fair employer of the sector, we're screwed."

Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish

8.8 Upheaval

No questions were asked about the cost of living crisis, but several participants discussed the topic. This was mostly in relation to questions about Brexit and COVID-19, but some participants also brought up the idea after questions about pay and increasing job quality. The rising costs and low pay left hospitality workers in a tough position, even with the increase in the minimum wage. As a union policymaker noted, while minimum wage was not enough to live on in normal times, the cost of living rise made it especially difficult. She gave the example of doing the maths to determine that a worker at a coffee chain's pay increase to the new minimum wage, when compared with the inflation rate of 14%, was only a 2.8% pay rise in effect. Several migrant participants reported living paycheque to paycheque. Some policymakers seemed somewhat disconnected from this reality, with one acknowledging the cost of living crisis but saying that people would trade higher wages for the chance of career progression, and another saying that one of the venues he worked with provided one free meal per year at their venue over the holiday season to help with cost pressures. That a single meal was expected to help with cost pressures was not commented on.

About half of the policymakers said that the perceived insecurity of the hospitality industry was due to the cost of living crisis. Policymakers reported that customers has less money to spend and were going out less often, so less income was coming in. The cost of ingredients and materials increased with inflation, making it more expensive to run a business. The cost of utilities in particular was of note. A tourism policymaker told the tale of one of the businesses he worked with that was facing a shocking energy price increase. They had a large venue and their energy cost the year prior had been £18,000 per their previous contract. Their contract was about to end, however, and their new quote for a year's worth of energy was £108,000. They would only be able to afford such an exorbitant rate for four months before they would need to close their venue. They were not the only venue he spoke to that was struggling with increased costs. The venues could only pass so much cost onto the consumer, so more were considering recruitment freezes or permanent closure:

"If there is no solution to an energy crisis, and we do not see a gradual come down in prices, then you're going to see more and more visitor attractions go bust, or seek to get rid of their attraction and pass it on to someone else who can afford it."

Tourism policymaker, male, 50s, Scottish

Policymakers and members of management confided that businesses began cutting back on labour to find savings where they could. The increase in the minimum wage at the same time as the higher utility cost meant that many venues employed the bare number of people they needed to operate. Businesses focussing on survival had no extra time to invest in things like management training or workplace improvements. With fewer shifts available and more work to do during those shifts, hospitality as a whole struggled with recruitment and retention more than usual, as some participants disclosed.

8.8.1 Brexit

As one migrant policymaker noted, the point of Brexit was to end the freedom of movement and restrict access to EU labour, and that was precisely what it did. Other policymakers noted that access to a European workforce was one of the major reasons that the hospitality sector had grown in the past few decades. With that workforce mostly gone, a pivot was necessary, especially as UK workers did not necessarily find the field appealing. Businesses, even larger ones, could rarely sponsor visas, and without an incoming European workforce, there simply were not enough workers. Some policymakers talked about a need for different hiring strategies after Brexit, particularly focussing on the local market, while others talked about a new focus on retention. In the past, workforces that may have taken cheap migrant labour for granted now had to look into topics like pay rates, flexible working, and overall remuneration package improvements. A union representative gave the example of Pret a Manger, a café chain that had heavily relied on migrant workers. They instituted pay above the living wage, offered a minimum of 15 hour contracts, and improved their sexual harassment policy to make themselves stand out as employers.

Several tourism policymakers discussed the way in which Brexit affected Scotland in particular. One tourism policymaker added that Scotland was dependent on migrant work because of the aging population, and that tourism and hospitality had been hit particularly hard by Brexit. This was especially challenging in rural areas, where there were already fewer workers available. The lack of accommodation made staffing with even domestic migration more difficult, compiled with issues with public transit to those areas.

Prior to the implementation of Brexit, some venues tried to retain the migrant workforce they already had. A few participants from hotels and attractions said that their venues provided assistance during Brexit by helping with paperwork and answering questions. One hotel HR manager said that this was challenging since so much of the information was released last-minute by the government, but they conveyed that information as soon as they had it.

Some members of management noticed a change in their migrant worker populations, though it did not necessarily affect their overall staffing levels. For example, an attraction manager said that she had previously gotten plenty of applications from researchers on the Erasmus programme, and an inn owner in Orkney used to be contacted by migrant workers looking for a place to work with lodging. After Brexit, those positions were still full, but only with UK-based workers. Other managers said that they had a major change in their staffing levels. An example was a migrant hotel general manager who said that almost all of the lower-skilled frontline work, 90% to his estimate, was held by migrant workers. After Brexit, most of their applications now were from UK workers who were primarily filling out the applications just to seek universal credit, and they often did not even show up for interviews.

Brexit did not have much personal impact on a few of the migrant participants. They generally had the right to remain in the UK, as did their friends and family members. One migrant bar worker from Finland said that she felt like the people in her circles tended to forget anything was different after Brexit until something went wrong, such as the energy crisis or shortages. Then they remembered that those were the results of political decisions.

Others felt much more impact on their personal and work lives. For example, while one migrant hotel general manager from Mauritius did not have a change in his own migration status, it did impact that of many of his workers and social circle. He saw a large reduction in the number of applications to work at his venue as the majority of workers there had previously been migrants. Many of the people he knew felt worried about their status, or angry that they worked so hard and were no longer welcome. A lot of those people had never planned to go back to their home countries, but did so because of the tense post-Brexit atmosphere. They felt like there was not a future for them in the UK:

> *"Say, 'We are working here, we're paying our tax, we're doing everything else like anybody else, and at the end of the day we are the one getting pushed away.'"*
>
> *Hotel manager, male, 30s, Mauritian*

Some migrant participants who were allowed to stay still felt unwelcome, and said that many of the people they knew left due to this unwelcome feeling. This feeling could be due to their particular country of origin; for example, one Scottish policymaker said his Irish wife and the other Irish people they knew were culturally similar enough that they did not feel a need to leave. He added that people who had immigrated likely already had family members or other connections that meant they did not want to move. Even for those who stayed put, though, there was a sense of tension. For example, a union representative said that the people she knew who remained felt like they needed to keep their heads down:

> *"I do think the kind of hostile environment that the Government wanted to create has definitely seeped into, 'I'm just here. I'm just here to work, I'm not here to cause trouble, because no one's on my side.'"*
>
> *Union policymaker, female, 20s, Scottish*

One point that was raised was that migrant students from the EU would now have to pay university fees, which could make them choose to apply elsewhere in Europe. This would have a large impact on the student-filled hospitality industry. For example, a migrant hotel worker said that she felt like she was lucky that she was part of the European cohort who did not have to pay university fees in Scotland. If she had to pay the fees, she thought she might not have felt as welcomed.

Several participants noted that it was likely the combination of Brexit and COVID-19 that made migrants want to leave or actually do so. When migrant workers lost jobs in the UK, moving back home with family was the logical thing to do to save money, but also to not feel so alone. Distances felt further when they were not able to visit freely, and those without the right to remain had to count their days out of the country carefully. Multiple migrant participants expressed frustration with the logistics of counting their days on holiday.

8.8.2 The impact of COVID-19

A few participants talked about the additional safety measures needed as part of reopening after lockdown, including masks, social distancing, and more thorough cleaning procedures. There was a feeling of nervousness at first as businesses worried that they might be following the guidelines incorrectly and be inspected by the government, but guests largely

followed procedure once it had been implemented. Some mentioned that policing guests about masks and social distancing, especially when those guests had been drinking, could be difficult, and guests would at time become aggressive when challenged. Several participants said that the enhanced cleaning procedures implemented during COVID-19 were still in place. Standards became higher for both customers and for businesses. This was a challenge in some venues when the additional cleaning duties did not merit additional staffing, as one bar worker noted.

Businesses were able to learn a few things from the pandemic, notably the importance of adaptation, flexibility, and the use of technology. Managers talked about prioritising tasks with a smaller workforce, looking into flexible scheduling to accommodate people who suddenly had to take care of children on the clock, and revisiting their sick time policies to avoid outbreaks. One migrant hotel worker said that her venue extended this flexibility to the guests, allowing them more flexible cancellation terms if they had COVID-19. Some participants spoke of improving their social media presence or feedback methods while they worked from home. A hotel HR manager said that COVID-19 highlighted how quickly things could be handled when they needed it. Prior to the pandemic, if the management team had been told to plan for a global pandemic, it would have taken a project management group 'months and months and months' to find a solution. Instead, their hotel pivoted within two weeks.

There were lessons for the workers as well. A union representative said that the post-COVID-19 cashless society highlighted issues in wage theft, particularly for tips, that had not been addressed in the past. With everything being paid for by card, it was much more obvious to workers when they did not receive their due. This transparency encouraged the workers to go to the union and have their tips paid out. A few participants reported higher levels of sick time usage after the pandemic and how they felt like it was more acceptable to take, especially in contrast with people coming to work sick prior to COVID-19.

Some members of management said that their workers experienced health anxiety as a result of the pandemic. Strictly following social distancing and cleaning measures helped with this, but not fully for workers with underlying conditions. This was a particular challenge when reopening from lockdown and sometimes eased over time, though they had to look into roles with less public interaction for people who still felt anxious as time went on.

In addition to health anxiety, mental health became a bigger topic overall. Multiple participants in a variety of roles expressed issues with changing roles, higher workloads, and longer hours as they returned from lockdown. Burnout was not uncommon before the pandemic but the rates seemed to increase afterward, especially with fewer people to share the load. A hotel HR manager looking into burnout in her own company said that there was a lesson to be learned from the measures they had taken to cut back during COVID-19:

> *"What do we learn from COVID in terms of what's important and what matters? How do we prioritise? How do we say no? How do we stop swirl? And how do we continue to do what matters in order that that pace is reasonable and humane?"*
>
> *Hotel HR manager, female, 40s, Scottish*

Two participants talked about the morality of remaining open during a global pandemic. For example, while talking about the Eat Out to Help Out scheme introduced by the

government, a policymaker said that it helped a lot of smaller businesses continue to operate but likely contributed to some of the spread of COVID-19. A restaurant worker noted this ethical dilemma, saying he felt somewhat guilty about his venue being open before home testing was even available.

Participants noted that hospitality was a people-industry, with socialisation and personal interaction at the heart of everything, and there was a feeling that that socialisation was highly missed during lockdown. Despite the interaction being crucial to the industry, after the pandemic customers did not seem to appreciate it as much. There was not much understanding of lower staffing levels, and any good will toward slower service evaporated when it continued for months. One union representative attributed this to customers having less money to spend out and wanting more for what they spent. Another tourism policymaker said that, from what he gathered from in-depth interviews with hospitality workers, customers simply became significantly ruder after lockdown lifted, making hospitality a less pleasant job:

> *"But you'd always imagine people would be delighted to be back, would be extra polite, nice to their servers. But instead, people seem to be a little bit more sort of arse-y about things. And maybe that's a vicious circle. There's less staff, people are leaving, it's not pleasant, so the service levels go down, but the customers get even more rude. So yeah, there's maybe a few knock-on effects of COVID that we're still seeing, I think."*
>
> *Tourism policymaker, male, 50s, British*

8.8.2.1 Furlough, reduced staffing, and increased hours

Multiple participants said that the furlough scheme helped businesses hold onto staff in the short term. For some businesses, this meant they could keep most if not all of their core staff. For example, a migrant café owner said that she was only unable to keep one ineligible staff member, but every other member of her staff was able to be put on furlough. Other managers said that when they shut down their businesses, they furloughed as many workers as possible and prioritised bringing back the workers they had to let go of as soon as they opened up again. Even with furlough, many participants had trouble making ends meet. A migrant hotel general manager personally experienced financial hardship: he did not work at all for the first three months of lockdown, and then only worked two to three days a week. The hotel only kept a skeleton crew to deal with maintenance issues.

Some participants spoke of furlough as an opportunity to think about other options. Having a moment to reflect made them think about the hours they had been working and the pay they had received. For example, a union representative phrased it as people 'sitting in [their] house doing nothing' having the time to consider how low their pay was. In a more optimistic spin, a tourism policymaker said that for people who worked in hospitality, COVID-19 could be seen as 'a chance to maybe broaden their horizon, do something different.' One participant, a hotel HR manager, bizarrely looked at it as a sort of enforced vacation, saying that people 'sitting at home' on furlough 'felt a little like outsiders' since they could not contribute. She perhaps felt this way because she was considered essential and had to take on extra work. It should be noted that her company furloughed approximately 80% of workers and then cut the overall population by 30%; their feelings on furlough were not commented on.

Not every business took advantage of the furlough scheme. Two different migrant workers said that they did not receive furlough because their employers did not apply it correctly to their workforce, either citing that the worker had not been employed there long enough or, in one case, asserting that a worker who was on holiday had actually quit his job and thus was not eligible. Other businesses furloughed workers initially and then laid them off. For example, one migrant bar worker said that his former workplace had such a poor reputation after getting into legal trouble for firing all their workforce during the pandemic that they changed the name of the parent company.

In venues such as this, workers were often replaced by cheaper workers after lockdown or not replaced at all. Venues that reduced their staffing during lockdown sometimes maintained those lower staffing levels upon reopening after lockdown. Two different workers said that their venues did this, and they were simply expected to take on extra work at their current levels. The resulting burnout encouraged workers to quit. A union representative said that the staffing crisis could have been lessened, with many of the lost jobs preserved, had employers made different choices:

> *"We lost 600,000 jobs to mass redundancy. 680,000 people lost their job in the hospitality industry between March 2020, and the end of 2022. Almost 3 quarters of a million people who could have been retained under the job retention scheme, and employers chose not to, because they used COVID as an excuse to save on labour costs."*
>
> *Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish*

Several participants talked about migrant workers leaving during COVID-19 and not being able to come back to the UK because of Brexit policies. Hospitality shut down, so migrants went back to their home countries to be with their families. When they were ready to return, Brexit had been implemented and they could not come back. A migrant HR policymaker gave a personal example of many of his friends going back to their home country after Brexit because they no longer felt welcome, and others returning during COVID-19 because they wanted to be with their families. A migrant hotel manager also had an example of this, saying that many of his migrant staff left during the pandemic layoffs and did not return afterward, either to the industry or to Scotland.

Sometimes the workers might have been able to return, but chose not to. Two members of hotel management gave specific examples. One mentioned that his venue post-Brexit particularly noted the lack of Eastern European workers. The other said that they had a fair number of migrant workers, particularly from Poland, Romania, and Hungary, who had pre-settled status and the right to work in the UK, but they went back to their home countries during COVID-19 and stayed there because they realised that their whole support structure was outside of the UK in case of, say, a catastrophic global pandemic.

The lower staffing levels after the pandemic lockdowns was a topic of conversation for several participants. In addition to having fewer migrant workers available because of Brexit, older workers were retiring, and workers in general were leaving because of a perception of the industry being a health risk. Back of house workers left for higher-salary jobs in the tech sector, and front of house workers looked for roles where they would have less risk of catching COVID-19, such as call centres. A migrant HR policymaker said that even in early 2023, half

of the hospitality employers he spoke to said that they were struggling to fill vacancies. Some of the participants spoke on their choices to leave their own positions when things changed during the pandemic. The reasons they cited for leaving their former employers included a change in tasks, neglecting to invest in the venue or the staff, or availability of promotions in other industries that were not having a hiring freeze.

These lower staffing levels contributed to working what a union representative referred to as 'insane' hours. Multiple policymakers pointed to understaffing as the key reason for the frequent burnout in the industry: the work still needed to be done, and with fewer people to do it, those who remained had to work longer hours or take over other shifts entirely. Some workplaces were working hard on fixing their staffing issues. Multiple participants from hotels said that their venues were focussing on large-scale hiring initiatives to, as one worker phrased it, 'claw their way back' to a normal roster.

Several participants, all in hotels, talked about how the pandemic made them realise a need to improve their work-life balance. They cited 70 hour work weeks and poor sleep schedules before lockdowns began, and once they had a taste of living a more normal life, they did not want to return to what they had before. For example, one hotel general manager was working in restaurants during the pandemic and said that the late shifts available after lockdown ended 'destroyed everyone,' but he stayed on for a year because he needed a job. When he could leave, he did so, and other workers did as well:

> *"I think it changed everyone's mentality. I think people came back thinking, 'There's more to life than working again.'"*
>
> *Hotel manager, male, 30s, Scottish*

Members of management said that those who had been able to pivot to remote work during the pandemic did not necessarily want to return to long commutes and working in the office, especially as some people had relocated during lockdown. Some of them pointed out that hybrid and remote work was not possible for a large segment of the hospitality workforce:

> *"I mean, you can't be a hotel general manager or hotel operations manager or reception manager or chef working from home. It's just not possible. And you still get that, 'I want to work from home.' It's like, how can you work from home if you're a chef? It's just not possible. You're there to cook food."*
>
> *Hotel HR Management, female, 40s, British*

8.8.2.2 Job and industry security

Even with all these cost-cutting measures, some businesses still had to close seasonally or permanently. Two business owners, one new and one established, said that financial support from the government was what allowed them to continue operations. A fair number of participants in both frontline and management roles said that while there were perceptions of instability after the redundancies in 2020, now that some time had passed, people no longer felt insecure. There were more jobs available than could be filled. One tourism policymaker noted that international tourism had resumed and was higher than previous years, likely because of the lower value of the pound sterling. Still, they noted that people who were new to the industry

or those who had been laid off might not feel as confident in the industry anymore. For those who remained, there was a feeling of faith in the industry, a sense of resilience: they had already seen the worst and made it through, and they could do it again. Conversely, a union representative said that there was a new distrust of the industry, paired with furlough payments being late or stolen:

> *"[…] I never ever thought I would ever be made redundant as a hospitality worker, I didn't know what redundancies were, I didn't know that it was possible, I'd never heard of anyone in the industry ever being made redundant. And then it was, there was like 100,000 redundancies in hospitality, and Scotland. Like everyone knew someone from hospitality that was made redundant, and I think, because everyone thought it was such a sustainable industry. Now, any kind of change, people are concerned about that. And this kind of first thought that you get is redundancies. It's almost like a PTSD kind of thing, like you go straight to, Oh, something's changing, this is what happened before. Is this gonna happen again? When it was announced that minimum wage was going up to 10.42 we had members ask us, 'If my business can't afford to do that will they make me redundant?' So it's a word that's now really commonly used in the industry, whereas in 2019, I don't think anyone thought of it or said it."*
>
> *Union policymaker, female, 20s, Scottish*

Other participants also disagreed with that feeling of resilience, even if they themselves remained in hospitality. A union policymaker said that seeing businesses close down caused workers to further lose faith in working in the hospitality industry: why would they choose to work in that industry when their venue could close at any time? They noted that hospitality was the first business to shut down during lockdowns and the last to reopen. Workers noticed that businesses were lower-staffed than they were before and did not trust that businesses would not lay everyone off again, or would cite cost-cutting as a reason to keep their venues understaffed. The people who were on furlough or who eventually lost their jobs had time to think about what kind of position they would like, often opting for customer service opportunities with more stable operations and hours such as retail or call centres. As one tourism policymaker phrased it:

> *"But from the point of view of being somebody who worked in that area, I would probably think, 'Well, there are more secure ways I can earn £20,000 a year, let's say, that are not as fragile as this industry is, because how long is this restaurant going to stay open? Why would I want to be so loyal to that?'"*
>
> *Tourism policymaker, male, 50s, British*

8.9 Migrant Experience

Many of the participants spoke about their experiences as migrants, and even local participants discussed the experiences of their migrant friends and family members. Several of the migrant participants talked about why they moved to Scotland. One participant visited on

holiday and loved it so much that she returned six months later with a Youth Mobility Visa. Two others said they were unable to find suitable jobs in their home countries, but Scotland had jobs available that would treat them well. A couple of European participants cited university and specifically the lack of fees. The educational costs were a strong mooring factor: one migrant participant with settled status was interested in returning to Bulgaria given the current economic climate in the UK, but his daughter was about to start university and he wanted the benefit of free Scottish higher education.

One British member of management from a hotel group with locations throughout the UK said that everyone who applied with them wanted to be in London but did not express a desire to work in Scotland. She attributed this to it being 'cold and wet and damp up there.' Of note, she was the only participant who currently lived in England. The migrant participants in Scotland told a different story. The people of Scotland were described as being friendlier, more down to earth, and more straightforward than people in England. A Hungarian migrant said that in Scotland, inappropriate comments and behaviour came from ignorance and could be solved when Scottish people became better acquainted with foreigners, which she did not feel was the case for England.

English use, particularly accented English use, came up as a topic of conversation from some of the participants. Reactions included amusement at people guessing the wrong source of the accent, self-consciousness about sounding out of place, and feeling as if they were being patronised. A migrant bar worker from Finland said that she disliked when unrelated conversations would turn to her accent. While this felt more like an act of solidarity when it came from a fellow migrant, it became exclusionary when it was from a Scottish person. This was especially frustrating for her because she felt like Glasgow was her home:

> *"So it's pretty crazy when people then like, try and kind of take that away from me based on my accent, and kind of try and assign me some other nationality because of the way I speak, and then they make assumptions."*
>
> *Bar worker, female, 20s, Finnish*

Speaking multiple languages was generally seen as a bonus, particularly in hotels, though some participants noted that there were difficulties when mostly English-speaking departments and departments that largely spoke other languages, such as kitchens and servers, had to communicate with one another. A lack of English language skills entirely, however, could make life more difficult for the migrant workers. A migrant hotel worker from Spain, the only participant who did not speak English, detailed her experience with this. In her personal life, she talked about struggling to get a doctor's appointment and then having a difficult time during the appointment itself because she could not communicate with the doctor. At work, she knew that her employer offered a website with online classes for promotional opportunities, but she could not use it because it was only in English. She had to rely on her co-workers to know what the signage around the hotel said. She was not invited to staff meetings, and while she was not entirely sure why, she presumed it was because she did not speak English. She said that she stayed in the sector because she liked the work, but she also did not feel like she had much of a choice to work elsewhere.

There was an emerging theme of social separation between Scottish workers and migrants, even if they had a positive working relationship overall. Multiple Scottish frontline

workers said that the social groups did not spend time together, though they attributed to this to reasons other than country of origin; for example, one restaurant worker said that the migrant kitchen staff were all older and had limited English, and an inn owner said that the migrants lived together in work-provided housing so they naturally spent more time together. It should be noted that in both of these cases, the migrants and locals worked in separate locations as well. At other times, this segregation was intentional, as in the case of a hotel group manager who said that one venue grouped workers according to the languages they spoke. Sometimes this segregation may or may not have been intentional. For example, a migrant hotel worker said that most of the Scottish workers in her venue were in the kitchens and the migrants were more dispersed, while a restaurant worker said that most of the Scottish workers were front-of-house and the back-of-house staff were all migrants.

Some migrant workers expressed being friendly but not real friends with their co-workers. In one case, a migrant bar worker said that she was the only non-Scottish member of staff, and her co-workers occasionally made comments that were not intended to be xenophobic but did fall under the category of microaggressions. In another, a migrant restaurant worker said that her current venue was predominately other migrant workers, and she did spend time with them, but her Scottish co-workers had almost all grown up together and they formed cliques that she could not truly be a part of:

> *"It's very small town, though. So, like everyone's very friendly, and I get along with everyone mostly, but you'll never really be like in the loop, like you're not a part of the town, you know? You're just kind of there."*
>
> *Restaurant worker, female, 20s, Canadian*

On an interesting note, even a Scottish policymaker expressed a similar feeling of not fully belonging to the local area; when he moved to the Central Belt, he felt that the locals did not see him as one of them despite living there for a long time:

> *"Neither of them really see you as local, and they kind of know that you're from somewhere different."*
>
> *Policymaker, male, 50s, Scottish*

Most participants, migrant and local, said that they did not find hospitality to be a discriminatory industry, and many of them lauded the diverse environments. One migrant hotel worker said that she sometimes heard horror stories about racism and xenophobia, but she and her friends had not experienced those things themselves, so she was not sure how much of it was exaggerated 'through the grapevine' in the way that she felt hospitality stories sometimes were. Multiple members of management said that they felt like their venues were still diverse, but not as diverse as they were before Brexit and the pandemic. Of course, what they considered to be 'diverse' might be questionable. For example, a hotel general manager said he had 'a good mix' of people from different countries, counting off people of different nationalities on a single hand. He also noted that the majority of workers in reception were Scottish, 'which is good.'

A few participants said that their venues were almost entirely staffed by white Scottish people. In an interesting note, two participants who had worked at the same bar had different perspectives on the diversity in that venue, with the female participant saying almost everyone

was Scottish and white, and the male participant saying that it was a veritable melting pot. Other participants discussed a much more integrated environment, to the point where it seemed as if they might simply enjoy listing the multitude of different nationalities in their workplaces. Hotel workers cited co-workers from multiple countries across Europe and Africa, as well as a few from South America. Two migrant hotel workers were especially proud to mention their venues' focus on hiring people from Ukraine after the start of the war, including hiring a translator to help with the transition.

One attraction manager had a unique perspective on why her venue did not have more migrant workers and migrant guests. The attraction was focussed on animals, and she said that there was a mental image that the worker at that sort of attraction was a white man. She felt that other cultures might not be as familiar with that sort of venue as a typical family day out, and perhaps that was why they did not make up more of both the employee and guest count.

Some migrant participants had a somewhat negative view of local workers, saying that they did not have as strong of a work ethic as migrant workers or were simply incapable of working as hard. A migrant hotel manager expressed frustration that most of the job applications he received from Scottish workers were mostly to seek universal credit and that they did not actually want to work, often skipping scheduled interviews.

Several participants noted mistreatment from customers based on migrant status. Of interest, this mistreatment was largely reported from participants in bars and restaurants, not participants in hotels. Mistreatment included outright xenophobia and racism, comments about English language skills, or simply refusing service unless it was from a Scottish worker. Others from a wider variety of venues discussed unfair treatment they received from their employers because of their migrant status, citing higher work loads or less desirable shifts. For example, one migrant restaurant worker said that when she returned from holiday, her company informed her that she had been moved to a new location down the street and would now be working split shifts. A British worker who had started at the same time as her was promoted at the old location, and she thought she might have been moved because he did not want to have conflict with her. As it happens, the venue she was moved to had more migrant workers than any of the other venues combined and the only migrant member of management. All the other venues had managers from the UK.

This was not the only instance of workplaces with a largely migrant workforce and almost exclusively British management. Both migrant and local participants said that, while their workplaces had a large migrant workforce overall, most of the members of management were white men from the UK. One migrant worker posited that this might be because local workers had higher English language skills, but another migrant participant who had been passed over for promotions was a native English speaker. A union representative had a similar tale and said that, while hospitality had a higher proportion of diversity with regard to migrants and women than other sectors, that diversity did not extend to promotion opportunities:

> *"But in an industry where 60% are women, where 25% are migrant workers, why the hell are all the general managers white men? Like, by and large. I can't remember the last time that a senior manager in a hotel was both a woman and a migrant worker. It just, it's so rare."*
>
> *Union policymaker, male, 30s, Scottish*

A union representative shared a story from one of the union members: her migrant client noticed that shift extensions were only offered to white Scottish workers and got a few other marginalised workers together to call the union. The union tried to gather other people in the workplace who felt that they had been mistreated because of their race or nationality, but nobody wanted to put their names down on anything official since they did not feel like speaking up was worth the risk:

> *"Because if you're white British, and you're not happy with your workplace, and you fight it, even if you do get made homeless or something, if you lose your job, you lose your flat, you can maybe stay with your family. Like it's still stressful, but you don't lose everything. You don't lose your status. You would have connections. You would have someone that you could use for a roof over your head, whereas I think, if your roots aren't here, then that's a lot, you don't have as many protections around things like that."*
>
> *Union policymaker, female, 20s, Scottish*

8.10 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the findings from the interviews conducted with multiple stakeholders, organised according to tenets of the Mooring Net Model established in this thesis. Illuminating quotes were provided where relevant, but these findings are standalone statements and disconnected from existing theory. The following Discussion chapter looks into more detail on the findings from these interviews and puts them into context of the existing literature.

9.0 Discussion

This chapter considers the findings in Section 8.0 Findings with comparisons to the literature. The discussion is arranged according to the sections of the Mooring Net Model. Where relevant, there are also comparisons with the findings from the Fair Work Convention's (2024) hospitality inquiry, which was completed in Scotland at the same time as this research with similar methods and covering similar topics. The results of that report were published as this thesis was being completed. Because of this overlap, and because both this research and the hospitality inquiry had smaller sample sizes specifically for interviews, it is useful to compare the results: while smaller-scale studies are generally not widely applicable, multiple smaller-scale studies with similar results might point more solidly to trends. While the inquiry did not specifically look at mooring factors, it did look at issues in the sector as a whole and noted which elements were likely to lead to increased or decreased labour retention.

9.1 Incentives

Incentives as defined by this thesis include monetary compensation, benefits, and reputation, and there was a disparity in views on how prevalent all of these incentives were. Policymakers and management, all paid relatively well, would generally concede to lower pay and sometimes poor reputation, but felt that the benefits were excellent. Conversely, the lower-paid frontline workers almost all felt that the overall incentives were poor, and offered more insight into exactly how they failed.

All of the workers said that the industry did not pay well, with many specifying that they were not currently paid well and that pay was an important factor in whether or not they kept a job. The exact importance of pay varied, especially among migrant workers, but the general feeling was that living paycheque to paycheque was not enough pay. This is not surprising. The Fair Work Convention (2024) report notes that hospitality has the lowest pay of all sectors, to the extent that one of its major recommendations for the sector is for all businesses to provide the real living wage rather than the minimum wage. The frontline participants in this study who cited pay as a reason they had left jobs in the past or would leave current jobs said that they were making the minimum wage and were unable to do much beyond simply paying their bills.

This low pay was prevalent regardless of migration status. Studies such as those by Park (2015) and Irimiás and Michalkó (2016) note that sometimes migrants live in poorer conditions than locals, but the frontline participants of this study were experiencing financial hardship regardless of national origin. One migrant worker said that she would just like to be paid enough to avoid being on benefits, which is an interesting echo to the Goethals (2019) study where migrant workers stated that they did not want to be associated with benefits tourism. There was not a specific number noted as being 'enough' for annual salary among any of the participants, but it is important to note that none of them demanded particularly high wages: they simply did not want to live paycheque to paycheque.

To add to the low pay, workers do not always get what they are promised. Studies such as that by Goethals (2019) cite widespread wage theft in the industry, and this was the case among participants as well. This was sometimes tip theft, which the union representatives as well as frontline participants confirmed was still occurring in certain venues, only stopping

under firm institutional protections. Interview participants noted that cash tips were rarer after the pandemic and it was easier for tip theft to occur with credit card tips. There were also issues in specific sectors paid by the piece, such as housekeeping. Studies such as those by McDowell et al. (2007) and Smith (2019) said that workers were usually fine with the arrangement as long as it was maintained, despite the extra workload this caused, but there were issues with workers being told they would be paid per room, working extra, and then actually paid hourly. This was reported by the participants as well.

The managers and policymakers questioned about the low pay in the industry often said that working in hospitality was about more than the money, but fulfilment and opportunity do not pay the rent. The higher-paid managerial participants who touted the opportunity available and bemoaned short-sighted departures for another venue paying 50 pence more per hour were all aware of the cost of living crisis, and they spoke about its impact on their own businesses and personal lives. Somehow, though, they did not see the extension of its impact to the frontline workers who made considerably less per annum than they did, or perhaps chose not to see it. This was particularly egregious from the two managers who complained of a lack of loyalty and work ethic and also said that a free hot meal was a major perk of their businesses since the workers could not always get one outside of work.

Not every manager expressed this sentiment, of course, and others were significantly more empathetic to their frontline workers and admitted that their pay could not always meet their needs. These managers also had a more understanding approach to turnover within their organisations: they understood that workers would leave for something higher-paid in another venue or industry, but their labour budget was their labour budget. As noted by Rowley and Purcell (2001), labour is often the highest cost in running a hospitality business. Improvements in technology touted to reduce labour costs, such as ordering kiosks or mobile ordering, were mentioned by some of the policymakers, but other policymakers emphasised that people are still needed to interact with the technology. The union representatives stressed that mobile ordering, a specific technological innovation meant to reduce labour costs, created more stress in the workplace that caused further turnover; the labour costs were certainly lowered with that turnover, but the savings were at the cost of the service. More than pure labour costs, people are the heart of the hospitality experience: what is being lost if they are replaced?

Policymakers, regardless of their enthusiasm for the industry as a whole, noted that hospitality's low pay was a reason for people to leave. Would hospitality be able to raise wages enough, especially with a cost of living crisis affecting the businesses as well as the workers? One of the policymakers mentioned that bigger businesses were able to retain workers with their better benefits packages. Other policymakers emphasised the importance of benefits packages in retention, particularly the larger packages available at bigger businesses and Scotland-specific perks like ASVA membership. In terms of actual benefits, such as parental leave and employee assistance programmes, these were only mentioned by members of management in larger businesses, with one in particular who said that she stayed with her organisation because of their excellent maternity package. Perks were more commonly brought up by workers, generally discounts in their workplaces or associated workplaces, and even then there were issues with their use. Rowley and Purcell (2001) note that benefits are not entirely realistic if people are not able to use them. Several of the workers interviewed worked in the same hotel chain, but only one of them mentioned company travel perks as her reason for staying in the industry. In fact, she was the only one employed there who mentioned personal

travel at all. She was working in a higher-paid back of house office position, while the others were in lower-paid frontline roles. It is uncertain whether or not they could afford to use that perk.

One of the interesting benefits that arose was the subject of worker accommodation. Only a few of the participants were from rural areas where worker accommodation is more common, but they spoke at length about that accommodation. The Fair Work Convention (2024) report touched on the particular incentive of rural businesses that provided accommodation to workers, asserting that tying housing to employment puts workers in a vulnerable situation. This resonated with the migrant worker in this study who lived in Skye: her reliance on her employer's housing was one of the very clear instances of a negative mooring factor, and her co-workers who no longer had housing through their employer generally left the island entirely. The island inn owner participant in this study knew that a large portion of the interest in working in her establishment was that it provided housing. While somewhat on the border of this thesis, housing as a mooring factor in rural communities would be a rich topic for further study.

As noted in studies such as that by Wright et al. (2019) and echoed by participants in this research, hospitality does not necessarily have a positive reputation as a whole, but individual venues may have a stronger reputation, either as a more glamorous place to work or as a place that treats their workers well. The Fair Work Convention (2024) report cites that the sector's negative reputation is one of the reasons people are no longer joining the industry, though this is exacerbated by the changes in immigration policy reducing the number of migrant workers and, in particular, migrant students. The Treuren et al. (2019) report that migrants had difficulty with not having enough local work experience to enter the local workforce was reflected in this study by one frontline worker who said it was about on par with moving anywhere new: without a local network, one would not necessarily know which workplaces to avoid. Meeting other people in the industry helped with learning the best workplaces to join.

There was also the idea from almost all of the participants that hospitality was something one did as a student. This was a pervasive thought from frontline workers, management, and policymakers, even from people with degrees in hospitality management. This dovetails with another observation from the participants: hospitality in the UK did not have many older workers. The older workers in this study were mostly in management,, but the frontlines were predominately young people. There were young people in management too, which was a major point for the pro-hospitality policymakers. The people who were most positive about the industry's penchant for quick promotions brought up the idea that the lowest-ranking frontline roles were not the roles someone would have forever, but in fact something one did for a short period of time while studying or as a stepping stone to something better. With even the most enthusiastic proponents of hospitality work looking at those positions as temporary, how could one expect the workers in those roles to feel moored? Treuren et al. (2019) refer to hospitality work as refuge jobs: work that someone can have regardless of skills or education. One of the bar workers referred to it as exactly this. While she was happy to leave hospitality, she was also happy to have the skills to fall back on if she needed work.

Christensen Hughes and Rog (2008) note that strong company brands may be an incentive, but this sentiment seemed to depend on job status within the company. Participants

might have strong feelings about their brands if they were in management or HR, but the frontline participants generally felt that their favourite reputation was no reputation, unless it was a reputation for paying a higher wage. With regard to mooring, poor reputation was generally raised as a reason people would not like to work in particular venues. Those who worked in venues with poor reputations were not ashamed of working there, however, but in fact boasted of how long they were able to 'last' in such poor conditions. Of interest, studies such as that by Kikon and Karlsson (2020) note that the perception of hospitality can be improved when compared to other jobs, such as farm labour. In the case of this study, the participants tended to have an improved view of their current venue if they previously worked in another venue with worse conditions. Comparison may be said to be the thief of joy, but in this case it can also be the creator.

There was also a sense of pride among some management and especially among the tourism policymakers. The hotel HR manager said that she felt that organisational pride was one of the main reasons that people stayed in the company, in addition to a feeling of being a family. Some of the tourism policymakers spoke about pride not in a particular venue, but in Scotland as a whole. They were proud to be a part of the industry because they were proud of their country, and the industry encouraged people to visit their country.

The perception changes entirely when one considers ownership of a hospitality venue. The migrant café owner participant mirrored the Holland and Martin (2015) study in which hospitality business owners felt a sense of satisfaction in owning their businesses but disdained the work itself. The owner in this study referred to the work her frontline employees did as dull and repetitive. Conversely, the inn owner found both the ownership of her venue and the work itself stimulating and had a high perception of her venue, though she said the work felt overwhelming at times. Not everyone can own their own business, of course, but if pride of ownership becomes a mooring factor to the industry as a whole, perhaps there is a way to pave a path for frontline workers to gain the skills and experience and capital needed for eventual ownership.

9.2 Opportunity

The perception of training quality differed greatly between participants, especially those who worked in learning and development. Those participants spoke at length about the training provided and the details of the programmes, but when pressed for details, those in-depth training programmes were reserved for management. Management also felt that, in general, their overall training programmes were robust. Frontline workers, on the other hand, described the training they received as basic, usually online modules that were legally required. None of them cited training as a mooring factor.

A study by Maxwell and MacLean (2008) pointed to management who were hesitant to invest in training when the talent would eventually leave them, and several of the policymakers in this study noted that management they had spoken to were also hesitant about this. The managers in this study, however, did not mention such sentiments, even in cases where they noted that their most skilled workers would leave for something that paid more or aligned with their skills. One might think that this means there was a discrepancy between the policymakers and managers in the worry that people would leave, but instead this pairs well with the earlier observation about training: specialised training was reserved for management,

who were already rather entrenched in the organisation. The managers were not worried about frontline workers leaving after training because the training was only the bare minimum required.

One interesting aspect of formal training was the idea of hospitality schools. Several of the participants in this study had degrees in hospitality management, and they were very positive about the experience overall and felt that it helped them obtain the jobs they had. The policymakers and managers, however, said that they would not hire someone with just a hospitality management degree, and were upset that graduates seemed to feel entitled to a management role without the hands-on experience. Of note, even policymakers with hospitality management degrees felt this way. The consensus seemed to be that a hospitality management degree could be a helpful step upward for someone who put in the time on the frontlines, but was useless on its own.

Studies by Joppe (2012), Treuren et al. (2019), and Yaduma et al. (2015) noted that migrants may be unable to get a job in their host country because their home qualifications were not recognised, leading to frequent deskilling in the industry. The deskilling was present in this study but for a different reason. Other than a migrant worker who felt she was unable to take a job outside of hospitality because of her limited English language skills, the main issues confronting the migrant workers seeking jobs that matched their qualifications were general competition for entry level roles, and in one case specifically entry level roles that provided visa sponsorship. This may be muddied by the fact that most of the migrant participants in this study had, or would soon obtain, degrees from UK universities, and were thus not trying to convert foreign credentials.

This difficulty in their job search was shared by the UK participants of a similar age and educational background: it was simply a very hard market to break into, and temporary hospitality work became much more permanent than expected. This was the case for several industry veterans in management and policymaking, who said they expected to work elsewhere after a short-term stint in hospitality. The key difference, other than the age of the participants, was that these people found their niche in the industry that matched their skills. The policymakers highlighted the many different roles available in hospitality, especially as they had found something that aligned with their interests: there are more than frontline and management in hospitality, with roles like marketing and data analysis available in larger companies. How could they make entry level workers aware of all the paths they could take?

Several of the participants talked about how they were excited to stay in hospitality for many years because there were so many opportunities, sometimes meaning within their current company and at other times meaning the industry at large. These participants were both migrants and locals, but the ones who had that sort of enthusiasm had all been promoted beyond frontline roles. That upward career pathway was the missing link in hospitality as noted by some of the HR management and policymakers: positions were available, but they required relocation or job tasks that did not align with worker interests. Even if they did, the promotion ceiling was often lower than expected, as in the case of chefs mentioned by a few participants. Once a chef reached a certain level in their organisation, the only next step was to take the experience and leave.

The idea of hospitality as a ‘stepping stone’ arose among several participants, with frontline workers saying that they had previously worked or were currently working in a

position with the intention of using the experience to apply for something with higher pay or more in line with their experiences. While some of the managers disliked this for what they saw as disloyalty, policymakers noted it was the only realistic way for workers to gain the experience needed to be promoted. The particularly interesting insight was a policymaker who said that during his time hiring at an historical attraction, he specifically would not hire people who wanted a stepping stone into a different part of the business if he wanted someone for, say, the gift shop. But if workers show passion for the industry, and the only way into the industry is to start on the frontline, is denying them the chance at the frontline not ruining the chances to have a person with a lifelong passion working for one's organisation?

The Fair Work Convention (2024) report notes the same discrepancy found in this research: employers tout a high number of opportunities for progression while workers are able to see a clear ceiling. This research found that the training opportunities described by participants were usually reserved for management, not frontline employees, and the report found the same circumstances. This is not to say that there were no opportunities for workers to gain skills, as the report notes that the high number of students means that the industry is an ideal place for people to gain their first work experience. As stated by both the participants of this research and the report, however, the poor reputation of the industry means that younger workers might want to take their first steps into the labour market elsewhere.

The Fair Work Convention (2024) report also brings attention to the fact that while there are many women and migrant workers in hospitality, that diversity seems to be lacking in management. Where those opportunities are available, the report says that workers do not necessarily want them after seeing the greatly increased pressure on their management with little additional compensation. This was a recurring topic in this research as well, especially noting the staffing shortages that were some of the reason that management had such intense conditions.

The participants in this report that did not desire to be a part of management expressed similar concerns about the workload, discussed further in Section 9.5 Intensity, but some said as well that they were not the type of person to be promoted: they refused extra hours or pushed back against policies. Kalleberg (2011) mentioned that full-time workers might not speak up about issues because they felt lucky not to be temporary. This was mirrored somewhat by the frontline worker at the charitable attraction, who said that his temporary co-workers did not speak up about poor conditions because they wanted a full-time role and did not want to be seen as negative. This sentiment also arose from frontline workers and policymakers who said that the types of people who were promoted were yes-men who worked overtime and did not question policies. If the people who try to change things for the better in terms of worker protections and work-life balance are barred from promotions, that does not make the industry look welcoming.

9.3 Security

The insecurity of work hours was a frequent topic among participants. To management, this was a normal cost of doing business: flexing labour costs was par for the course in hospitality, as there were busy seasons and slower seasons. This flex was a necessary part of keeping costs down, but it came at the expense of security for the frontline workers. Many participants were quick to decry zero hour contracts, but as one union representative noted,

even when a worker had a contract with a firm number of hours, there was an average of 16 hours disparity between contractual hours and the hours actually worked.

Kalleberg (2011) notes that shorter hours can be positive in locations with social welfare where people are using the extra time to spend with their families. The participants in this study did not need to worry about private healthcare costs, and flexibility was often desired to work with university and childcare schedules, so the primary concern was with having enough hours to pay for their daily needs. The flexing hours could work if they were dependable, such as the case of the inn owner who had workers return each summer for a heavy workload before being off the rest of the year, but that was not the case for the typical frontline worker. Working days and hours shifted weekly for many of the participants, often at the last minute so they could not plan ahead. This was a key mooring factor, as many participants described wanting to leave or having already left a job that had them working 8 hours one week and 50 the next.

As found by Alberti and Danaj (2017), knowing one's rights did not necessarily lead to speaking up about them among either migrants or locals. The participants in this study reflected that study's findings. Some workers had a fear of being replaced or passed over for promotions, as mentioned in Section 9.2 Opportunity, and did not want to be seen as a complainer. Others knew their rights well but simply did not care enough about their role to speak up about it. This was the especially the case among frontline workers who had experienced terrible work conditions before and were currently in positions that were tolerable. They were aware that something was wrong with their contract, pay, or hours, but they did not pursue it because the work was otherwise stable. This highlights the lack of security in the industry: even if the workplace has a blatant issue, it is worth overlooking to these participants as long as they are less exploited than they were at their previous job.

Baxter-Reid (2016) and Goethals (2019) both discuss a widespread feeling of being replaceable throughout the hospitality industry. This feeling was absolutely shared by the frontline workers in this study, who did not feel like they were a key element of their workplace. Of interest, some of the management expressed that they felt the frontline workers saw their companies as replaceable. While they talked about frontline workers simply walking across the street for another job if they did not like the one they had, this did not seem to be the case in the current climate. The mass layoffs of the pandemic made job security more important to the frontline workers, and they wanted to keep a stable situation if they had one. Not all of the workers felt this way, but those that expressed a more relaxed view about their job security had just finished university degrees and did not see themselves in hospitality long-term anyway.

Outside of a few local workers who did not want to leave what they felt were secure and stable environments, the participants who described the most stability in their workplaces were members of management who had been in their roles for five or more years. A policymaker said that the industry as a whole was stable: there would always be a tourism industry in Scotland. Following the pandemic, not everyone felt quite as secure in Scotland's tourism industry. All of the workers and members of management who were employed in 2020 discussed the mass layoffs that happened across the industry (and, to be fair, across all industries) after the pandemic. While none of the workers in this study left the industry because of the pandemic, that does not reduce its import as a mooring factor, and in fact suggests the

opposite: that it was such an important mooring factor that people had already left, particularly migrant workers, as described further in Section 9.7 Upheaval.

9.4 Interaction

Customer interaction was a fraught topic. As discussed further in Section 9.6 Fulfilment, being able to positively impact a customer experience provided a sense of purpose and meaning to some workers, and the workers who did not describe a feeling of fulfilment generally mentioned that guest interaction could be fun. One migrant manager said that guest interaction was specifically what kept him moored in the industry. While it is often felt that social skills are inherent, Kikon and Karlsson (2020) indicate that they can be developed. Several participants who initially felt awkward said they did a much better job with customer interaction over time, and appreciated the boost in confidence they gained from working in hospitality.

These positive stories of guest interaction were outweighed by the severity of the poor interactions. The stories about negative guests were filled with incidences of violence and harassment, especially in bars and other venues that provided alcohol. One migrant bar worker specified that the customers were the reason she wanted to leave the industry as a whole. Others laughed off their more horrific encounters and did not say the guests were the reasons they wanted to leave, but they also did not list them as reasons to stay.

Choi et al. (2017) mention that hospitality workers have a sort of trauma bond to one another formed by the working conditions and the guest behaviour, and the participants in this study seemed to reflect that. Policymakers pointed out that, despite the issues, hospitality attracted and retained workers because it was a fun sector where they could make meaningful connections. The policymakers who had worked in frontline and management roles prior to their career shifts mentioned maintaining friendships from their earliest jobs. They said that those friendships could become the reason to remain in the sector.

Frontline workers with more experience in the industry also talked about those lifelong connections. Almost all of the frontline workers, some of them migrants, attributed their positive feelings about their workplaces to them having friendly work environments. These were positive relationships whether they were true friends or simply friendly with one another. Even the workers with negative experiences in their workplaces said that their co-workers were the one positive aspect of an otherwise negative experience. The Fair Work Convention (2024) inquiry participants also reported strong bonds with co-workers and within the industry as a whole.

As influential as co-worker relationships might be on the decision to stay in the industry, manager relationships might be even more influential. Rowley and Purcell (2001) indicate that people with strong relationships with their management are more likely to remain in their jobs, and that was reflected in this research. Both local and migrant frontline participants expressed that their relationships with management were the reason they stayed in or left jobs, either presently or in the past. Some followed their managers to new venues when they were given the opportunity, and others stayed in venues they otherwise disliked because of loyalty to the management team. Some of the workers said that they felt moored in their current workplaces because, compared to other workplaces, they felt as if they were respected

and seen as a person. The participants from management who said they had lower turnover described environments that listened to workers and accommodated their work-life balance. In those cases, turnover usually resulted from issues with incentives or opportunities.

The workers who spoke most harshly of environments with high levels of sexual harassment and violence from customers also said that management did not handle those situations correctly. Conversely, the workers who encountered unacceptable guest behaviour that was handled correctly by management had a positive view of their management team, and they felt more attached to their workplace despite the harassment. In some cases, the management might not have actually known how to handle the guest situations properly. Several of the frontline workers, almost all of them migrants, noted the tendency to promote workers with tenure in the venue without providing additional management training. They said that this was the reason management was often ineffective and acted unprofessionally. Nishii and Mayer (2009) suggest that feelings of unequal attention from management could increase turnover intention, and while the participants did not specifically mention wanting to leave because of it, they certainly noticed special treatment for those who befriended management. The strong mooring that workers felt because of effective management was inversely proportional to the unmooring they felt with ineffective management, and they often expressed a desire to leave those places if they had not already done so.

Interaction was a focus of the Fair Work Convention (2024) inquiry as well, with participants mirroring this research in sentiments about positive relationships with co-workers and managers serving as mooring factors in both individual venues and the industry at large. The report also touches on issues with communication, specifically with workers feeling unheard my management, and some of the participants in this research reported similar incidences in their venues. More pressing were the significant issues of bullying and harassment; participants in this research spoke more about this type of mistreatment from guests, but the report cites it for both guests and management. One of the most important mooring elements with management in this research was whether or not management correctly handled instances of guest harassment, and the inquiry suggests that this is because there are not clear procedures for management to follow in these instances.

9.5 Intensity

Intensity arose time and time again as the reason for people to leave their jobs. Participants talked about burnout, emotional and aesthetic labour, mental and physical distress, understaffing, too many hours, and poor work-life balance. Sometimes they talked about their own experiences with these things, and other times they spoke about their colleagues leaving the industry over the years. Even the most enthusiastic policymakers admitted that intensity was the reason more workers did not join the industry and often the reason they left.

Frontline workers often described having to maintain a neutral face despite poor guest behaviour. Emotional and aesthetic labour are definite skills and can be very draining (Warhurst and Nickson, 2007). While participants did not mention appearance standards often, many of them expressed feeling like they were wearing a mask while interacting with guests. This was particularly common with introverted workers, but even the outgoing workers who liked social interaction could only handle so much of the often performative nature of customer service.

Some of the participants mentioned their tasks being repetitive or physically tiring, but they generally did not list them as a specific reason to leave. Instead, not enjoying tasks seemed to exacerbate more pressing reasons to leave. For others, the intensity of the tasks themselves made them need to leave a job they otherwise enjoyed. McDowell et al. (2007) reported workers who experienced physical degradation from the work they performed, and several participants echoed this experience, especially in housekeeping. Physical degradation also occurred when workers were expected to work too many hours at too fast a pace, as multiple participants noted happening to themselves or to co-workers.

The pressure was much more of a problem and specifically mentioned as a mooring factor. Participants who were very happy in their roles compared the workloads they currently had to ones they previously had, and people who were mostly happy with their roles, especially in hotels, said that one of the reasons they would leave that particular venue was if they were expected to complete too much work in too little time. The Fair Work Convention inquiry (2024) found that there was the feeling from some participants that some areas, like kitchens, were just generally high-pressure environments at all times, which this research found as well.

As one migrant restaurant worker noted, there would always be people who were desperate for a job who would endure those conditions. MacKenzie and Ford (2009) note in their study that the soft HRM practice of hiring vulnerable groups can increase diversity, but it can also mask cost-cutting procedures. The policymakers who spoke of hiring non-traditional workers, such as felons and the elderly, spoke of doing so both as a way to increase the labour pool in hospitality and also to help underrepresented groups find work. One could also look at this, as some of the other participants did, as an attempt to find a group that will put up with poor treatment.

While some of the members of management talked about having the same pressure to complete work, they also conducted their interviews at work and on company time, as opposed to the frontline workers who were interviewed during their personal time: those workers were not allowed to spend working hours talking to a researcher. This does not mean that they did not have pressure on them, however; in fact, both workers and front of house management talked about the additional work that management had to take on in order to make up for staffing shortages. Yaduma et al. (2015) demonstrated that moving people to different departments had a negative impact on both financial and physical performance. The suffering of physical performance with understaffing can be seen from the stress the workers endure and the worse guest service they are able to provide because of it. The worse financial performance may be less obvious, but paying management higher salaries to cover frontline roles is unsustainable.

Section 9.3 Security discusses workers who were not getting enough hours, but hospitality also has issues at the other end of the spectrum: workers getting far too many hours. This was definitely the case with the rampant understaffing occurring at the time of the interviews. Several migrant workers discussed being scheduled for far too many hours. All levels of participants talked about how management especially was expected to work an unreasonable amount of hours. As one policymaker asked: if a company is asking people to work antisocial hours, are they paying them more accordingly? In the case of salaried management, the excessive hours were not compensated any more than their regular work days.

9.5.1 Work-life balance

The ability to arrange time off was important, with some workers saying they were able to do so easily and others saying it was more difficult. This was not necessarily a mooring factor outside of the case of one migrant bar worker who said that being able to arrange time off was important to her as an immigrant. Two members of management stressed the importance of their workers taking time off as an overall factor of work-life balance, saying that the balance was important for retention.

One of the more common themes to arise in the discussion of intensity was work-life balance, and specifically a desire for stable hours at more social times. Receiving rotas a week or less in advance left workers unable to schedule anything from social events to medical appointments, and constantly varying hours left sleep schedules in shambles. This affected everyone in front of house positions, migrant or local. The Fair Work Convention inquiry (2024) also points to uncertain rotas causing difficulties for workers planning things in their personal lives. Those researchers suggest providing clear and predictable schedules to workers in order to improve work-life balance. Of note, while some of the participants in this study said that they would like to have a free Saturday or work that ended at 5:00, most of them simply wanted to have a consistent schedule from week to week regardless of the exact hours. Two of the participants had very hectic schedules where they worked full days seven days a week for several months, but even that was predictable in its way: they knew they would have time off in the slower months.

Both the Fair Work Convention inquiry (2024) and the participants in this research also touched on another point about schedules: while flexible schedules were a major selling point of the industry by employers, flexibility seemed more likely to be provided to managers rather than frontline workers. The participants who were most positive about the industry had steady schedules and usually office jobs. This was especially evident in caring responsibilities, where management participants in this research said that a primary reason they stuck with the industry after having a child was the ability to schedule around childcare. Robeyns (2017) notes that caring responsibilities often fall more to women. Of note, the managers in this research who were enthusiastic about flexibility for child care were male, but other participants noted that caregiving schedules were a driving force for women choosing hotel housekeeping roles, which were generally performed during school hours.

The expectation of work-life balance seemed to depend highly on a person's life stage. Attending university was one of the most common reasons cited for both starting and leaving jobs in hospitality, with multiple participants talking about things like hiring during term time, scheduling around exams, and losing workers around the same time period. The workers themselves had often started roles while studying and held onto them for a while after graduation as they searched for something related to their degrees. Of note, most of these workers talked about how the schedules neatly fit their studies. When they no longer fit, or when their studies ended, the jobs were no longer needed.

The work-life balance, or lack thereof, was specifically stated as a mooring factor by several participants, regardless of migration status or position. They spoke of leaving previous jobs because they did not have that balance, and they would leave current jobs that they otherwise liked when they needed that balance in the future. The most interesting note is the

disparity in who specifically had that balance. The lowest-level positions had the flexibility for shorter shifts, and the highest-level positions had longer shifts but could arrange their schedules about their childcare needs, but what of the people in the middle? Sevel participants noted that people who were unwilling to extend their hours were unlikely to be promoted or to be offered more lucrative contracts. Like one policymaker noted, there was still a choice to be made between seeing one's family and work.

A major impact of the pandemic was providing the realisation that workers had terrible work-life balance and no longer wanted to live like that. Some specified no longer wanting a long commute or unstable working hours, especially after realising that working from home was possible for some roles. Policymakers and management pointed out the truth of the much-desired flexible work arrangement: not everyone could work from home, and *someone* had to work the weekends. But the same people also talked about different kinds of flexible arrangements, such as workers being able to choose a schedule that worked for them. The workers who were happiest with their hours had schedules that worked for their needs, whether it was accommodating their university studies or working nonstop during busy periods in exchange for longer holidays. For those who did not have such accommodating schedules, roles in retail and call centres offered similar pay for much more stable arrangements.

9.6 Fulfilment

In a somewhat unique situation, four of the participants worked in not-for-profit venues with a charitable mission: one for people with additional needs, one historical organisation, and two participants from the same charitable animal-based attraction. These participants all said that they felt that their work was fulfilling because they strongly believed in the mission behind the organisation, and that many of their peers felt the same. These venues had lower turnover despite having lower pay than the private sector with the same job tasks mostly because of that passion.

Not every venue can have a deep charitable mission behind it, of course. Baum et al. (2020) posited that the downtime from the pandemic would likely cause people to reconsider whether or not their work was meaningful, and this was definitely a topic of conversation for the participants. Policymakers and managers noted the trend among frontline workers, and the frontline workers expressed this sentiment themselves. The workers who described their work as just a temporary job that they did not care about were also the ones who said that their workplaces did not respect them. This lack of care seemed to inspire a lack of care in return. Curiously, this could either lead to lower retention as workers desperately tried to leave, or higher retention as they gave up. One bar worker said that the people who lasted the longest in his workplace were specifically the ones that did not care.

Some of the participants did feel that their work was meaningful, specifically making sure that a guest had a good experience. For some frontline workers this feeling lessened over time, but for others it persisted for years. A few made the important distinction that while making someone's day was meaningful, they did not have to be at work to do that, so it did not necessarily make the job itself meaningful. Of interest, the satisfaction of good guest service was also expressed by some back of house management and policymakers who did not interact with guests on a daily basis. It seems they found it fulfilling that someone else was doing that work. Back of house participants were also keen to say that they liked the task variety of

hospitality, which contrasts with the frontline workers who almost unanimously described their tasks as ranging from mundane to poor. It is unsurprising that people with a choice over their tasks enjoyed them more than people who had no choice.

Other than venues with charitable causes, the strongest fulfilment-related indicator for wanting to stay in the industry was that people had always been in the industry. Several of the participants attended hospitality school, and several others grew up in families that owned inns or restaurants. These participants were all enthusiastic about the industry and wanted to stay. They did not necessarily want to stay at the same venue, but they did not to work in any other industry.

Another unique factor was the aspect of LGBTQ+ identity that arose during the interviews. The participants were asked if they were able to be their 'true selves' at work, and while this question was intended as an introduction to a discussion about emotional and aesthetic labour, several participants volunteered a queer identity, and specifically how welcome they felt in their workplaces. In an increasingly volatile world, especially for transgender individuals such as two of the participants, this feels especially important to note. Hospitality may have its issues, and all of the queer participants spoke about them at length, but they still felt like they were able to be themselves in their workplaces.

9.7 Upheaval

Baum et al. (2020) noted that COVID-19 did not create new problems for the industry, but rather exacerbated existing issues. The industry had already been seen as insecure, and while some of the policymakers touted the resilience of the hospitality industry, other participants said that the mass layoffs made it look like even less of a stable career choice than before. The people who remained were under incredible pressure to take on the workloads of the people who had already left, and businesses did not bring staffing back to their pre-pandemic levels. Whether that was because of the need to compensate for other rising venue expenses, as one policymaker said, or because they found that it was a convenient way to cut long-term costs, as another suggested, is not certain. Perhaps both are true. Baum et al. (2020) said employers who tried to mitigate the damage might be more likely to retain talent, and that was absolutely the sentiment among participants. Those who were working during the pandemic took note of their employers' actions during furlough. In many cases where employers did not do enough, they became former employers.

As Portes and Springford (2023) note, it is difficult to know the exact impact of Brexit due to the simultaneous impact of COVID-19. As many of the members of management and policymakers stated, migrant workers returned to their home countries to be with family during the pandemic and then were unable to return to the UK because of the implementation of Brexit. The European participants in this research had pre-settled status, settled status, or dual citizenship, and the non-EU migrants had established residency prior to Brexit's implementation through work or through family. This means that while the migrant workers interviewed were still subject to exploitation, they were not subject to a layer of vulnerability that many of the workers in migration literature experience. Only one of the migrant workers in this research was on a visa, though it was not tied to her employment. It is difficult to tell what effect this precarity would have on migrant workers since so many in the most precarious positions had already left.

Local management employed at the time of the Brexit vote noted that their employers helped current EU workers with their paperwork. Studies like that of Gawlewicz and Sotkasiira (2019) noted that even when the vote was more recent, some EU migrants did not feel as if Brexit applied to them because they felt like they were established enough in the UK that there was no serious risk that they would need to leave. This applied to at least two of the migrant workers from the EU, which was especially interesting as one of them exceeded the maximum allowed length of time outside of the country by a few days and needed to modify dates on their application in order to apply for settled status.

While they were not active at the time of the interviews for this research, the new visa income requirements implemented in early 2024 would have an impact on hospitality and tourism for both migrant and local workers. The income threshold is simply too high for skilled worker visas, and while they are rarely awarded for hospitality work, skilled positions with shortages, such as chefs, could become too costly to consider at all. Businesses with employee housing might consider paying the wage threshold and charging 'rent' equivalent to the salary increase, but this loophole may still be too costly for the business, and one might argue that it is not entirely ethical, especially considering that the purported idea of the salary requirement increase is to reduce exploitation of migrant workers.

Ferris et al. (2018) noted that some hospitality managers were worried about recruitment and staffing as a result of the vote and planned to hire fewer migrants because they were worried about the cost. Managers in this study did have recruiting and staffing issues and they hired fewer migrants, but that was because there were simply fewer migrants to hire. Smith (2019) noted the interdependence of migrant workers and business owners: the owners needed affordable labour, and the workers needed accessible work. With the market upheaval at the time of this study, that dependence shifted more in the favour of the worker.

The change also has implications beyond the skilled work visa. Much of the workforce is composed of younger people, often students. Some of those interviewed in this study said that hospitality was not their plan forever but was fine for the short term. Migrant students may choose to study elsewhere entirely if they do not see a path to stay in the country afterward, but for those that come anyway, they may feel pressured to find work in an industry that will be able to promote them above the income threshold when it is time to apply for a skilled work visa in the future. While the discouragement for students to enrol in UK universities was raised in the studies such as that by Amuedo-Dorantes and Romiti (2021), most of the literature focussed on the UK as a whole. Scotland has a unique problem as raised by some of the participants: the university fees were significantly lower or non-existent through Erasmus, which was one of the major incentives for migrant students to study in Scotland rather than England. With that incentive gone, the appeal of Scotland might fall even lower than that of the rest of the UK, even with the perception of a more welcoming nature.

This would leave only British youths to work in hospitality, but as the higher income threshold also applies to marriage visas, any young British people who happen to fall in love with someone from another country may feel similarly disinclined to put years of effort into an industry that will not allow their partner to join them. Perhaps the number of young British hospitality workers with foreign partners is negligible, but in an industry already facing shortages and likely to soon face more, it seems risky to discount the possibility. There were

multiple British participants with foreign partners in this study alone, let alone the industry as a whole.

The fact that the cost of living crisis came up time and time again despite not being asked about directly shows its strong impact on the industry. Policymakers discussed the rising costs of electricity and mortgage rates causing venues to reduce their hours or close. Management talked about the propensity now for workers to change jobs for small increases in pay. Workers pointed out that even the increase in the minimum wage was not enough to make up for increases in the costs of daily goods. The low pay in hospitality as well as the labour-intensive costs to run the venues are not new issues, but the cost of living crisis, much like the pandemic, exacerbated already precarious situations.

9.8 Migrant experience

The reasons the migrant participants stated for their migration to Scotland was as varied as the literature (for example, Janta and Lugosi, 2022) suggests, including economic opportunity, university, adventure, being with family, and simply enjoying a beautiful location. Gawlewicz and Sotkasiira (2019) noted that Scotland was perceived by migrants as being more welcoming, and this was stated by some of the migrant participants as well.

The majority of migrant participants were fluent in English, and most had completed university in Scotland, which requires English language fluency for admission. The barrier of language skills noted by Piso (2016) was still an issue overall, however, especially as described by two of the participants. The only migrant participant who did not speak English did not improve her skills over time and was not put in a position to do so during work hours, as she worked in housekeeping with other migrants who spoke her language. There was also the migrant café owner who would not hire other migrants and stated that this was because of language fluency, despite most of the migrants in her city being university students who, as aforementioned, must be fluent in English in order to attend university in the UK.

Language segregation, such as that mentioned by Janta et al. (2012), was definitely an issue as well, though the participants did not describe it as such. Several frontline workers described restaurant environments where the English-speaking staff were in the front of house while the workers in the kitchens all spoke a different language. This segregation seemed to extend beyond language and into friendships. While all of the local participants were very enthusiastic about the other migrants in their workplaces, they did not necessarily spend time with those migrant co-workers outside of work like they did with their local co-workers. It should be noted that their enthusiastic response in their interviews may be partially due to the researcher also being a migrant herself. Janta et al. (2011b) discuss migrants being more willing to make friends with locals than the other way around, and it is uncertain whether or not that is the case here. The local workers who described a segregated workplace where they were not friends outside of work with their migrant co-workers said that this was because they did not have much in common. The migrant workers who said they did not socialise with the Scottish workers did not seem to feel strongly about it.

That does not mean there were not negative aspects: for example, one migrant worker only realised during the interview that all the migrants in her multi-property company were grouped together in a single venue. Other migrants described feeling othered for their accents

or English language skills at work, though they were positive about their workplaces overall. These are not indicators of an inclusive environment, though the workers may not complain openly. Paradox is present here: the workplace is positive and inclusive according to the migrant workers, who also experience othering in the workplace because of their migrant status.

Microaggressions can be common against migrant workers (Goethals, 2019), and this was reported by several participants. The instances of negative interaction in the Fair Work Convention (2024) report were heightened with migrant participants, who were more likely to be working in lower-level positions and less likely to report issues. They reported harassment based on their skin colour and accent. In this research, half of the migrant workers were in back of house positions, including management roles, and most of them were white. The only directly reported harassment related to migrant status was from a frontline worker about her accent. With that said, several of the frontline migrant workers said that they did not feel like they had the opportunity to advance. Whether or not this was related to their migrant status was not stated.

The manager perception of migrants as hard workers cited by MacKenzie and Ford (2009) persists, and it extends to the migrants themselves as well. Multiple frontline migrant participants said that local workers were not up to the hard work that they could do themselves. Managers also stated that local workers simply did not want those sorts of jobs, echoing the sentiment in the research (see Alberti and Danaj, 2017, or Rolfe, 2017). Of interest, the issue of migrant frontline workers exerting control over exploitative situations by stealing from their workplace as noted in McDowell et al. (2007) was reported only by local workers.

In fact, several points that the literature mentions affecting migrant workers instead reflected on frontline workers as whole. Lawthom et al. (2015) note that migrants often find work through their social networks in new countries, and Treuren et al. (2019) state that this is the case with finding hospitality work in general. One of the migrant participants in this study said that establishing that network was more difficult as a migrant, but once the network was there, they had the same knowledge of the good workplaces as the locals. The Fair Work Convention inquiry (2024) found that migrant workers were unsure of their rights regarding time off and avoiding wage theft, but confusion with these issues was stated by both migrant and local workers in this research, and in fact some of the migrants were more aware than the locals. Smith (2019) states in her study that the migrant workers she spoke to looked at their situations as being temporarily exploited until they were able to find a better job, but this was the same outlook shared by most of the frontline participants. The situation for migrant workers in hospitality is similar to what Baum et al. (2020) describe for the effect of the pandemic on hospitality: it was always precarious, but the one additional factor, in this case being a migrant, exacerbated that precarity.

Anderson (2010) notes that there is a time limit on how long a person can be a ‘good migrant,’ working despite exploitative conditions, but this applies to frontline workers as a whole. The workers who left their previous jobs for exploitation were both migrant workers and locals. There was a limited window of tolerance for working long hours or in the worst locations regardless of where one was born. Industry veterans referred to this as paying one’s dues, working the hard shifts with the worst people, and seemed to take it as a necessary part of the hospitality experience. But what happens when people no longer want to pay those dues?

9.9 Turnover and mooring

While the managers and policymakers thankfully did not express harmful stereotypes about people based on nationality and gender as was evident in some of the literature (see, for example, McDowell et al., 2007), they did have an idea about who the ideal worker would be. They were looking for workers with people skills, and they wanted workers who had experience but not so much experience that they felt like they knew everything, and they should not have job-hopped too much to gain said experience. They wanted workers who were loyal to the company with long-term intentions who were focussed on promotion opportunities rather than wages, but they should also pursue the promotion opportunities that were readily available and be realistic about their chances. The opinion on students was mixed, with some people saying that they were conveniently available for nights and weekends and generally for a four year period, and with others saying that their schedules were difficult to work around and that they would leave eventually. This brings up paradox once again: students are reliable and unreliable, flexible and inflexible. The perfect worker has few skills and many skills and is ambitious but not too ambitious.

As for the inevitability of turnover, the viewpoint of this varied. Tourism policymakers, notably people who did not need to deal with staffing a venue, felt that turnover promoted new ideas and it was healthy to have some of it, though what they considered 'high turnover' was wildly different. Almost all participants said that a high degree of turnover was expected in hospitality, though what was considered a fast or unacceptable rate of turnover was different to each participant. Some of the workers described themselves as having been in the industry for a long time, by which they meant one or two years. The charitable attractions all said that they did not have a problem with turnover in general, though people did leave on occasion. Managers and workers in hotels described a staffing crisis, though this was more related to bringing workers in than keeping them in roles.

What is clear from the interviews with participants is that, at the time of the research, there were not enough frontline workers, whether from people leaving the industry or not joining it in the first place. Turner (2010) notes that when the migrant labour pool dries up, employers need to offer more in order for local workers to take notice. The management participants reflected this, discussing more flexibility and higher pay as incentives, but there were simply more jobs than there were applicants. While frontline participants spoke positively of the flexibility, the pay was still often not even the real living wage, and the lower numbers of workers at their venues meant more work for everyone else and an unbearable amount of pressure.

This discussion of turnover was, of course, tied to mooring as a whole. Did workers need to stay in their roles forever? Was it necessarily important that workers felt moored in their locations? What about feeling moored in hospitality as a whole and feeling like it was a viable career? According to the policymakers, it was fine for workers to just try out the industry for a while and then leave. Moon (1995) says that at times nothing might really tie a person to a location, and they simply stay because they cannot think of a better alternative. This was echoed by a fair number of the frontline workers, even when they actively described mooring elements: they did not feel strongly about their jobs, but were just doing them until something better came along.

Even that neutral sort of mooring might eventually turn into something positive in the long-run. For many of the policymakers, in fact, they had tried out the industry when they were younger and stayed it in, albeit moving to much more highly-paid roles that did not deal with the public. They all described positive mooring factors during their time in the industry, namely elements of Opportunity and Interaction, and sometimes Incentives. They may rightly point out that not everybody has to think of it as a career, but if everyone felt that way, there would not be anyone left to move upward into management roles. And, speaking logistically, workers need to stay long enough to be worth the expense of their recruitment and training. Even if they do not care to stay in the industry long-term, they need some sort of mooring to make the job 'good enough for now.'

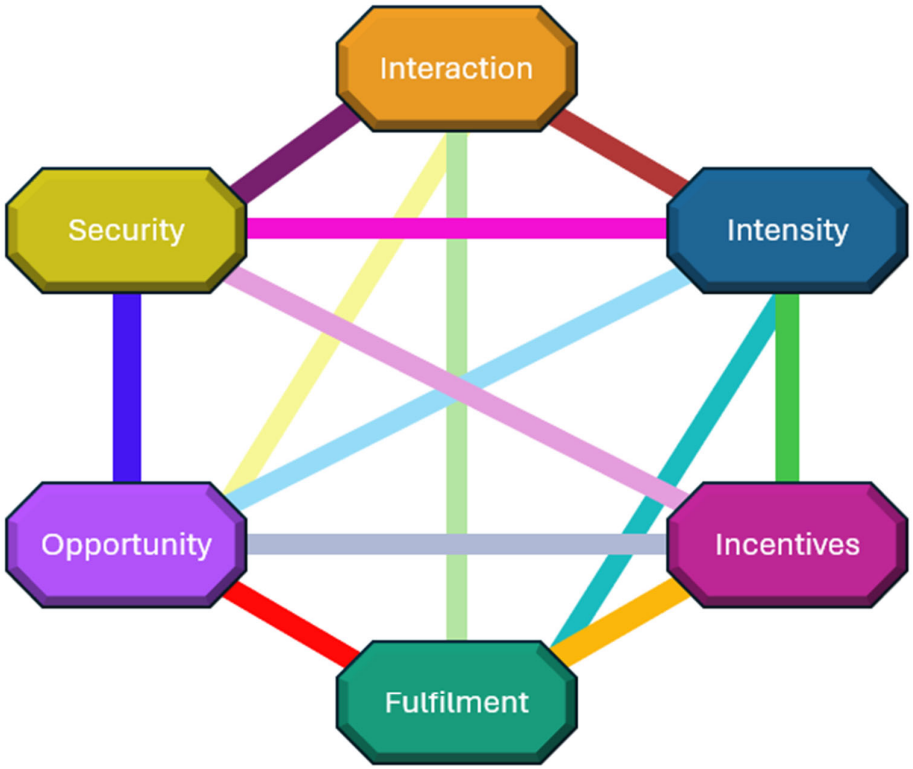
Most of the participants framed their feelings about their current jobs in relation to past jobs. Kalleberg (2011) refers to this as problematic rewards work value: the things a worker had the least of is what they valued most later on, such as a person with a history of unstable work strongly valuing stability. Bad jobs may give the overall industry a bad reputation, but they certainly helped establish mooring in the good jobs that followed. Kalleberg also discusses reinforcement work value where workers adjust to rough realities, such as always assuming the pay will be low. These two work values combine in hospitality, as exemplified by many of the workers in this research saying that hospitality always has low pay and intense conditions, but at least their current role provides something their previous role lacked.

The fact that each element could be seen as positive, negative, or neutral is a paradox in itself, but even more baffling is that they were sometimes all three at once. The pay was too low, but it was enough to get by, but it was higher than other places so it was good. Hadjisolomou et al. (2025) noted this same pattern in their research on dignity: workers felt dignified despite undignified treatment from guests as long as they were treated with dignity by management. Even the issue of turnover as a whole is paradoxical: it is a neutral element of business that must be planned for, it is a positive change leading to a shift in thinking, and it is a catastrophic event that is ruining the industry.

The sections above discuss the individual mooring elements, but they overlap. For example, speaking to guests is a key element of Interaction but can also provide Fulfilment to some workers, while that same Interaction might cause a worker to go through the Intensity of emotional labour. While these connections were mostly described with cross-references to overlapping sections, Figure 9.1 below displays these connections on a modified Mooring Net model. Fittingly, this makes it look more net-like. Kalleberg (2011) notes that jobs can compensate for poor performance in one area with strong performance in other areas, but this has limits. To extend the net metaphor, a frayed strand may be supported by a strong one, but carrying the load indefinitely will make the whole thing snap.

While this thesis initially proposed an issue with negative mooring elements, these were not as large of an issue as imagined. Where they did arise, however, they were largely with migrant workers. There was one incident of feeling tied to the workplace because there were not better opportunities (negative mooring: Opportunity), and another of a worker in a rural area needing to keep her job until she could find better accommodation (negative mooring: Incentives). The closest item to a widespread negative mooring element felt beyond single cases was not leaving a toxic work environment because of a strong personal connection to management or co-workers (negative mooring: Interaction). Instead, the issue was more like

as described in Section 6.2 Push and pull factors: the same topic could be positive or negative depending on how it was handled. For example, the Security-Interaction connection of management handling negative situations could be a positive mooring factor if the handling was done well, and could push a worker away if done incorrectly.



Security Incentives	Contracts and wages
Interaction Fulfilment	True Self Making someone's day
Opportunity Intensity	More hours, more opportunities
Security Interaction	Management handling situations
Fulfilment Incentives	Travel perks Workplace pride
Opportunity Fulfilment	Progression speed
Intensity Incentives	Overtime Using perks
Security Opportunity	Contracts
Interaction Intensity	Guest Behaviour
Opportunity Incentives	Promotions, wage increase
Security Intensity	More hours, better contract
Opportunity Interaction	Promotions through manager relationships
Fulfilment Intensity	Enjoy being busy

Figure 9.1 Mooring Connections

9.10 Conclusion

While many factors of the Mooring Net model might be listed as things that were nice to have (or nice to avoid) in a job, the main actual mooring factors as described by workers varied. Workers in charitable attractions found Fulfilment to be their major mooring factor even at the expense of low wages and sometimes limited promotional opportunities. Opportunity for both training and promotion were cited as factors by management and policymakers, but not by any workers. A small number of participants listed Incentives as their mooring factors, specifically the discount perks of working in hotels or benefits packages with items like generous maternity leave. Brexit and COVID-19 were not mooring factors in and of themselves, but they affected other factors.

The most major impacts on mooring were Interaction and Intensity, the latter with overlap from Security. The positive relationships formed with co-workers and guests over the years were raised by participants at all levels as a wonderful aspect to working in hospitality. Likewise, some workers talked about having strong relationships with managers to the point that they followed them to new venues when the managers left. Conversely, negative interaction frayed the mooring connection, with unsupportive or abusive management listed as a major reason to leave a job. Intensity and Security had a close link with contract hours and work-life balance. Workers were often asked to work varying, often antisocial hours with little advance notice, leaving them without a consistent, dependable income or the ability to plan their lives outside of work. Even with a stable weekly schedule, they were pressured to take on additional duties as a result of understaffing, a pressure which extended to management as well.

There was some disconnect between what frontline workers thought of as mooring factors versus what higher-paid, established managers and policymakers assumed. This was most evident in the role of Incentives and Opportunity. For Incentives, management was dismissive of workers who would leave for small increases in pay, but workers revealed more nuanced reasons such as being offered the minimum wage for supervisory roles or being able to rent a nicer flat for a slight increase. In all cases, they were not asking for a large amount of money, but just enough to do more than live paycheque to paycheque. For Opportunity, managers and policymakers often touted the bevvy of promotional opportunities available in hospitality, but this may be confirmation bias as they were promoted in hospitality themselves. The reality seems to be that there are certainly promotional opportunities available, but they are not available to everyone, generally require working overtime to prove oneself, and often have a defined upper ceiling even for the most skilled positions like chefs.

Paradox sprouted in each element. The interaction was fulfilling and overwhelming; the industry was secure but on the precipice of closing; the pay was too low to live on but too high to increase staffing levels; everyone and nobody got promoted. Some of this paradox can be attributed to the disconnect between the frontline and management, but often the participants would share these conflicting viewpoints about their own positions. It was seen as inevitable: hospitality was just the way it was.

Migrant mooring elements were, overall, not terribly different from those of local workers. It is important to note that the migrants in this study were not indicative of migrants

in the UK as a whole: almost all of them had leave to remain in the UK, spoke fluent English, and were white. Most of them attended university in the UK. They experienced some challenges with workplace integration and sometimes with their accents, but generally were either positive about their workplace or confident in their ability to find another job. All of them described forming a network in Scotland, a mooring factor that was outside of their workplace and tied more to the traditional roots of mooring literature related to migration. The key difference for migrant workers is that the same mooring factors were more impactful by nature of the workers being migrants. Insecure work and low wages were more intense if they did not qualify for government support or have family to turn to if they could no longer afford their rent. Guest harassment was aimed at every frontline worker but migrants had one more element of themselves that could be used against them.

As the Fair Work Convention (2024) completed their hospitality inquiry covering very similar topics at the same time, the findings of that report were compared to the findings of this research. This identified issues in the industry that strongly overlapped with those in this research, particularly issues with increased pressure on workers and management, the value of management connections (especially in the face of issues with guests), and a disconnect between frontline workers and long-time members of management and policymakers about the availability of opportunities and the suitability of wages.

10.0 Conclusion

Hospitality is a paradox of an industry, as noted by Baum et al. (2024) and Hadjisolomou et al. (2025). The jobs are flexible and inflexible, the promotion opportunities are endless and limited, the personal interaction is life-affirming and soul-crushing. This paradox appears when comparing industry news with academic literature and it appears when speaking to people within the industry. One might assume that the most effusive statements only come from people who are far-removed from the most difficult frontline roles and looking at their younger days through rose-coloured glasses, but they come from current frontline workers as well. While some people may be somewhat naïve, nobody is lying: hospitality is all of these things simultaneously because of huge variations in how each venue is operated. It is often described as a people industry, and it is the people who make up these variations: the people running the venues, the people working in the frontlines, and the people consuming the end product.

This research focussed on a particular moment in time: shortly after the COVID-19 lockdowns ended and after the implementation of Brexit. The aim of this research was to explore the experiences of migrant workers in Scottish hospitality and tourism to understand causes of labour turnover and retention. The objectives of this research were: to explore the factors that impact the length of stay at a job; to investigate relationships between wages, development opportunities, workplace socialisation, and labour turnover; to compare the differences between the experiences of migrant and local workers; and to understand any potential changes in the perception of hospitality work after COVID-19.

The findings were that migrant turnover, at least among these participants, is very similar to local turnover. While cultural values and perception of events may differ, a poor job is a poor job regardless of where one was born. There were additional challenges for a few of the frontline migrants with regard to harassment over accents or access to opportunities, but these seemed to be based on particular workplaces rather than a generalised experience, and some of the migrant participants in fact had excellent experiences within the industry. With that being said, the migrants interviewed for this research were almost all highly-educated, some specifically with degrees in hospitality management, and likely had more opportunities than other migrants without higher education.

The literature often describes low-skill migrants and high-skill migrants, but what of migrants with a ‘high-skill’ UK university degree working in the ‘low-skill’ industry of hospitality? On the surface one might look at this as deskilling, but many of the participants, both migrant and local, had degrees specifically in hospitality management, and thus were working in the exact field in which they had obtained university degrees. They were using their trained skills, and thus were not deskilled. The migrant workers who were less interested in the industry as a whole had degrees in other subjects and were simply waiting for the right opportunity to arise. Those migrants could also be seen as deskilled, but they would not be seen as such while they were still obtaining their degree and working in that job.

The COVID-19 pandemic overlapping with the implementation of Brexit meant that many of the workers in the most precarious situations had already left the country. All but one of the migrants in this study had the right to remain in the UK, removing another layer of precarity present in migrant literature. There was an initial intention to look at the differences

in experiences and turnover between EU migrants and non-EU migrants, but almost all of the migrants were from the EU. Of those who were from outside the EU, only one did not have the right to remain in the UK, and she was on a Youth Mobility visa so she did not have to worry about the precarity of having her visa tied to her employment like people on a Skilled Worker visa might.

The intended length of stay in a venue is highly dependent on the individual. The effect of wages, development opportunities, and workplace socialisation were examined as part of the Mooring Net model (outlined in Section 6.5 Mooring Net Model) along with other potential mooring factors. While all of these factors had impact on one's mooring to a company, workplace relationships had the largest impact of the three anticipated factors. This was followed by job security and work intensity, particularly related to predictable scheduling and work-life balance.

Wages were not necessarily a mooring factor on their own as long as salaries were within an acceptable range, but that range needed to be enough for workers to do more than just pay their bills. Wages were paradoxically too low for workers to afford living but too high for businesses to afford paying. While perks like company discounts were considered to be nice, they were not usually mooring factors in themselves, with notable exceptions for people who worked back of house in hotels and had the money to travel. Actual corporate benefits, such as enhanced maternity leave and additional health benefits, were only talked about by members of management aligned with HR, and then mostly if they used those benefits themselves.

Opportunity was perhaps the most contentious topic, with higher-level officials saying that it was the most important draw of the industry while lower-level workers said that there were not as many opportunities as they would like. This could be a paradox once again, that there are many opportunities available but not enough, but could also simply be confirmation bias as the higher-level officials had been promoted themselves. Some workers were able to use hospitality work as a foot in the door to better career opportunities, but for many people it just led to more hospitality work. Promotions were more likely to go to workers who were friends with management or those who opened themselves to exploitation. Training was available, but this was mostly focussed on management, especially senior management, and not on frontline workers who would arguably benefit from it the most.

Interaction was one of the major mooring factors for workers and also the factor most likely to push them away from the industry. Friendships made in the industry were often life-long, and co-worker relationships became a mooring factor, if not one that was as strong as other factors. Turnover intention was strongly tied to manager relationships, particularly with managers who made workers feel valued and who properly handled incidents with guests. On that note, guest interaction was listed as both the most positive and the most negative aspect of interaction. This is yet another paradox, but an ongoing one: guest interaction requires people, and people are not a constant factor. There will always be pleasant people acting as pull factors and unpleasant people acting as push factors, and sometimes they are seated at the same table.

Intensity was one of the other strongest reasons for turnover intention. This was strongly tied to the chronic understaffing and hiring issues following the pandemic, leading to higher hours and a heavier workload for all workers but especially for managers. The burnout that often occurred from this was one of the major reasons for leaving the industry as a whole.

The other was an intense work-life imbalance. This was somewhat anticipated given the literature on the antisocial hours in the industry, and having a terrible sleep schedule was cited as one reason for leaving. The bigger impact was the unpredictable work hours, especially with rotas only given out a week or less in advance. Workers were unable to plan their lives, which was especially difficult for those with caring responsibilities. There is flexibility in the industry, but that flexibility was more likely to be given to members of management or those who only needed to work on the weekends. The people in between found the industry to be highly inflexible.

Job security was also a mooring factor, particularly having a stable contract with the right amount of hours. Workers who felt that their jobs were secure were more likely to overlook other less pleasant aspects of their jobs. With that said, the appearance of stability in the industry was greatly impacted by the pandemic and the mass layoffs that occurred at that time. The participants in this study either were able to weather furlough and return to their jobs, found new jobs, or entered the industry after the pandemic. It is difficult to know the perception of security in the industry from other perspectives as those people already left. Some participants said the industry was stable and resilient while others said it was unstable and unpredictable. This sounds like another paradox but would be closer to different layers of reality: the industry is demonstrably unstable, with businesses closing every day and many others on the brink. This was the case before Brexit, COVID-19, and the cost of living crisis as well. The participants calling the industry resilient had themselves survived business closures and layoffs and seemed to equate their own survival in the industry with stability.

Fulfilment was not something experienced by all the participants, but for those who did feel it, it was a strong mooring factor. In what is perhaps a factor particular to Scottish attractions, there was also a high sense of fulfilment in charitable attractions, as the satisfaction of the mission overrode the lower pay levels. Other aspects of fulfilment were more widespread. Industry veterans liked the variety of tasks and the guest interaction, though it should be noted that the people who claimed the most satisfaction from those elements were often no longer in the frontlines. There was a higher sense of fulfilment for people who grew up in the industry, especially for those whose parents owned or operated a venue.

The perception of the industry overall was that it was both an unstable place for a student job and a stable choice for a long-term career. This paradoxical nature of the industry is a major blockade for its overall improvement. The people with decision-making power believe there are opportunities for promotion because they were promoted, that scheduling is flexible because they have flexible scheduling, and that the incentives are generous because their incentives are generous. A vague reminiscence of a struggle when they were younger makes them think that a large part of hospitality is ‘paying one’s dues’ despite a significantly worse economic situation for today’s entry-level workers. It is hard to focus on all the fine career opportunities available and the blossoming of lifelong friendships when one cannot afford to purchase a meal or heat their home. The frontline workers who are actively ‘paying their dues’ know that the work conditions are not good, but they shrug this off when they pale in comparison to previous unpleasant positions they held.

A cynic might say based on this information that the overall poor quality of jobs in the hospitality industry is the best way to make one’s own venue look like an excellent workplace by providing the bare minimum. Certainly nobody desires to be the lone island of mediocre job

quality in a sea of abusive environments, though. Many of the participants showed great passion for the industry. They genuinely loved and believed in it. With that in mind, how can the industry improve its reputation, lowering turnover and increasing retention? Baxter-Reid (2016) noted that worker shortages can spur employers to improve conditions, as evidenced by some of the steps taken by businesses during this study, but there will not always be a worker shortage. As one of the participants noted, hospitality was on the bottom of the proverbial job-quality barrel. Improving conditions in the industry could have widespread applications to other industries as well. Rather than falling back to poor habits when hiring is easier, what can businesses do to set themselves for long-term success? What are workers able to do with the resources they have available?

Incentives are the first topic to be brought up and often the first to be dropped due to infeasibility, but businesses should strongly consider what they are offering and what they might be able to offer. Surely any business interested in improving retention would already be ensuring that their workers receive all their wages and tips, but there is more to incentives than avoiding wage theft. If the venue does have some financial flexibility, they might consider the cost of living and what their workers are able to afford. Would a small increase across the board make a major difference in the lives of the workers to the extent of avoiding homelessness? Would that difference be worth the profit loss? Another expense for businesses that could make a major difference in the worker experience was ensuring appropriate staffing levels. Workers and managers were both significantly more satisfied when they had an appropriate workload. Higher staffing levels are more costly, but have the dual benefit of avoiding burnout and providing better service to the customer since there are more workers available to help.

For smaller financial adjustments, businesses might consider their perks. The previously-assumed baseline of a free meal during one's shift in a restaurant had shifted to a children's meal, a coffee, or one annual holiday meal in some locations, according to the participants in this study. This was a drop in morale and worse for workers who might struggle to afford groceries. A venue that produces food might consider that the loss of profit on one full, adult-portioned meal could be worth higher worker morale and productivity. Venues outside of food service may not provide meals, but they might consider partnering with other venues to offer reciprocal perks. For example, two hotels in different locations might each offer discounts to workers from the other hotel. Each hotel gains a customer it might not have otherwise had, and the workers feel like the place they work is valuable for the perks they receive. This is already a well-loved perk of ASVA membership, but there is no reason that it cannot extend outside of attractions.

As managers and policymakers repeated, the work is not just about the incentives. Some management reported workers leaving for similar roles that paid 50 pence more, but the workers in this study revealed a desire for stability and a positive work environment: they would not leave a role with other positive elements even if that role was not very well-paid. The workers leaving for a small increase elsewhere were not otherwise moored. The managers who strove to have a positive work environment overall did not have an issue with retention. If the work is about more than the incentives, then the elements outside of incentives should be a focus.

Workers were happier with predictable schedules. Hours and days of business fluctuate due to the nature of hospitality, but there were ways to increase predictability. Releasing rotas

further in advance allowed workers to plan appointments and social events, as did knowing the general number of hours they would be working. Flexibility was also key, but not in the sense of working from home or coming in whenever they wanted, as some management implied. Workers appreciated the ability to have certain days off per week or adjust their call time by an hour to accommodate an appointment. The managers who provided this sort of flexibility had little issue with retention. It may sound paradoxical to say that workers appreciated both stability and flexibility, but they were not asking for much: they wanted the same consideration typically given to salaried management.

There is a massive gap in the perception of opportunity within the industry that needs to be addressed. If management sees endless opportunities for advancement and workers see a clear ceiling, there is something missing. Venues might look at what they have available for their own workers. Workers might like to try their hand at administrative tasks or marketing. Mentorship programmes where they are able to shadow roles outside of their own can let frontline workers see another path they might take in hospitality. Of note, these should not be additional tasks for no additional pay, as that could easily lead to burnout. It can be as simple as allotting an hour in the day to a side project. If venues have the funding and structure to implement a management training programme where workers may apply and receive training to move into supervisory roles, that may avoid the issue raised by participants that some management was promoted beyond their skill set.

Strong managerial talent is important as relationship with managers was a key mooring factor. Good managers encouraged workers to stay in venues they otherwise disliked, and workers followed those managers to new venues when the managers moved on. These were the managers who listened to worker concerns, spoke to workers respectfully, tried to accommodate scheduling needs as much as they could, and stood firmly against poor guest behaviour.

Turnover is negative when it is because of poor working conditions, and generally expensive for the employer because of its frequency. This does not mean that an absence of turnover is the ideal situation. Retention is not always the goal, and turnover is not always negative. It can mean that a fulfilled worker is leaving with a new set of skills and making way for a new worker to be trained in their place. Some managerial participants thought of themselves as a stepping stone in a positive way. Developing a reputation for being a place to develop skills and move upward would reward them with the pick of the most ambitious employees. In this way, planning for turnover can involve developing workers so that they will leave when they are ready for a new opportunity.

10.1 Contribution to knowledge

The major theoretical contribution of this thesis is the creation of the Mooring Net model. Push and pull factors alone can be seen as highly objectivist, but human values on those factors are subjective in nature. Moon's (1995) addition of mooring gives additional reason to why one might stay, but does not address the neutral or negative elements of mooring, and is also centred more on migration. The Mooring Net theory shows the way that push and pull factors interact with one another in a business setting and how the interaction of those factors might result in mooring. These mooring elements can be examined through a multi-focal lens of the capability approach, where one might look at what one is able to do with what they have;

though critical realism, where one might look beyond the empirical to find the real; and through paradox theory, where multiple things can be true at once, and those simultaneous truths can provide a deeper understanding of mooring as well as a path to a better workplace.

One might wonder how such a personal model could have more widespread applicability, but the fact that such a personal model repeatedly highlighted the same mooring elements as strong or weak despite being applied to different people in different work contexts demonstrates the importance of those mooring elements. In this research, the framework is used to examine the interaction of all mooring elements to see how they interact as whole. Future research could also use this approach to judge the strength of individual mooring elements, or could instead use this framework to examine the strengths of specific mooring elements of interest: for example, as the years pass and COVID-19 becomes more of a memory, it would be of interest to see if job security is as strong of a mooring factor with people who were not furloughed, or if the connection between Security and Interaction is less important if the industry takes a stronger stance against abusive customer behaviour.

The primary empirical contribution of this research is its unique timeframe during the combination of Brexit and COVID-19, followed by the cost of living crisis. Field work began in early 2022 and completed mid-2023. The first COVID-19 lockdown was in March 2020, with various restrictions applied through late 2021 and some, like vaccine passports, lingering until early 2022. Freedom of movement between the EU and UK ended in January 2021, restricting the flow of new migration to the UK after many migrants had already returned to their home countries during COVID-19. The hospitality industry was strongly impacted by both of these events, with venues closing permanently during COVID-19 and reopening with fewer staff members, sometimes as a cost-saving measure and sometimes as a necessity given the smaller labour pool. To add to this, the cost of living crisis impacted both businesses and workers. Inflation, mortgages, and energy rates soared beyond the reach of the slight increase in minimum wage. Some businesses closed entirely. Workers were left to attempt to find the highest wages they could in order to survive, often outside of hospitality. With the state of hospitality at the time of this research, the question of what makes a worker stay in or leave a job is more pertinent.

Turnover can be neutral, but the situations described by the participants are not neutral. Workers are unmoored from the industry because of poor conditions. That these factors lead to turnover is costly for individual businesses in terms of recruitment and hiring costs, but it is also costly to the industry as a whole: talent is leaving because of the conditions and new talent is not joining because of the reputation, so who is left to work in the industry? Anyone left will burn out doing the extra work of the positions left open. This is not even to speak of the ethical concerns of running a business based on the endless churn of workers. As the staffing crisis has shown, those workers are no longer endless. Businesses need to enact change soon, and they need to enact that change based on the actual experiences of workers instead of the perceived needs through the lens of people who are no longer on the frontlines.

Another contribution is this research's explicit focus on Scottish hospitality as opposed to London or the larger UK. The cost of living is significantly lower in Scotland than England as a whole, but the low wages were still keenly felt. In addition, similar research was being conducted in Scotland at the same time as this field work. Qualitative studies based on interviews have smaller sample sizes by necessity. The Fair Work Convention launched a

hospitality inquiry in 2022 and published results in 2024. The Inquiry follows many of the themes of this research, though of course focussing on the Fair Work Framework rather than the Mooring Net model. At a glance, the Inquiry is extremely similar to this research, following many of the same themes and questions, though it is not a piece of academic research. The researcher even spoke to some of the members of the Fair Work Inquiry team. The Inquiry had a larger number of overall participants and spoke to more migrant workers. What, then, is the value of this research when the Fair Work Inquiry exists?

Instead of looking at the two pieces of research as competitors, the researcher believes that the Inquiry findings can be used in tandem with this research to obtain stronger results. The Inquiry was funded by the Scottish government and had multiple researchers with extensive interpersonal networks, and while it also included a large-scale survey, video diaries, and case studies, it had slightly fewer interviews than this research. The fact that this research covered a similar topic in a similar time frame is hugely beneficial: the participant recruitment methods were different and it is highly unlikely that the participants overlapped, and a larger pool of participants saying the same thing about the same topics lends more emphasis to the findings. The Inquiry looks specifically at hospitality workers, while this research uses a multi-stakeholder approach. The fact that some of the questions are along very similar lines, and indeed overlap at times, can help provide insight to any similarities and differences in the answers given. Both studies attempted to find participants from a variety of roles within hospitality, and both have similar limitations, especially regarding participants of colour.

This research also strays from the core mission of the Inquiry by way of the research questions and the Mooring Net model. The goal of the Inquiry is to look at the current status of fair work in Scottish hospitality and make suggestions for improvement. The goal of this research is to find the reasons for labour turnover and retention in migrant populations in Scottish hospitality, focussing on not just fair work but good work. Both the Inquiry committee and this researcher do share a common wider goal: to make suggestions for the wider UK hospitality industry using deeper insight into a smaller population of workers. In this, having two very similar pieces of research at the same time can only strengthen the findings. Research by Ladkin et al. (2023) supports this idea. While much of the research in hospitality can be repetitive, they argue, context is key for new understanding in tourism research. This also applies to the attention to attractions within hospitality. The many different aspects of the industry could be said to be too difficult to study, but Ladkin et al. (2023) state that this instead provides ‘a diverse range of exploration and knowledge accumulation’ (p. 23). While restaurants, bars, and hotels may be far more numerous and well-studied, attractions offer a key context within overall hospitality research. The participants in attractions in this study were far more moored to their workplaces, not just the industry as a whole, than the other participants. There were too few participants from attractions in this study to point to a larger pattern, of course, but their feelings on their work illuminate the importance of context: if they feel differently about their work despite the same tasks and pay, what about those workplaces might be transferred to other venues in hospitality?

10.2 Limitations

Access to companies and employees was a major barrier. It was initially thought that access to employees themselves might be a barrier if the businesses did not agree with the

initial proposal to conduct interviews during the workers' shifts, preferably paid. The hope was that this would increase trust from the participants but also to increase their participation in general, as participation rates would likely drop if the interviews must take place on the employees' own time. As it turned out, the barrier to accessing the employees through the businesses was, in fact, the lack of employees. The goal was to complete the field work by April 2022 and avoid busy summer holidays entirely. This did not take into account the extreme staffing challenges faced by the organisations.

When using the survey approach, the researcher was confident in a high response rate and was surprised that the actual response rate was so low. The researcher attempted to post the survey on Reddit as she had seen many surveys there in the past, and when she reached out to the people who posted those surveys, they described a very high response rate. One of the subreddits she attempted to post on stated that they did not allow research posts due to too many students posting surveys. This may have also contributed to the high number of downvotes on the post, which decreased visibility to other users.

The researcher leveraged previous experience with a company with international name recognition in the hospitality industry, and it was hoped that this might help gain initial access. While this company was mentioned in every initial research invitation and sometimes received an excited response, it did not actually assist in the research. Much advice about soliciting businesses for research suggested framing the experience as a bespoke analysis for their company, especially from a researcher with previous corporate experience, but this did not seem to be effective. During the initial consultation, most companies revealed that they had their own internal analysis tools for employee satisfaction and turnover likelihood. While none of the businesses said as much directly, they seemed to perceive the research as only student research, and framing it as an analysis tool was viewed simply a marketing technique by a desperate student.

When pivoting to the interview-only method, an entirely different approach was taken: instead of mentioning her previous big-name employer, the researcher simply introduced herself as a PhD student who would like to interview someone about labour turnover. The response rate for this method was still very low; as mentioned in Section 7.2.4 Participants, the majority of participants were found through extended networks, not through cold contact. Echoing the participant who said that it was harder to establish networks as a migrant, this migrant researcher relied heavily on a very small network to find participants. The key difference is that every positive response through network connections resulted in an interview, in contrast to the former approach that received a positive first response but no further contact. A similar tactic was used when approaching potential participants who were suggested through networking and snowballing, with the addition of the name of the person who suggested contacting them.

While there was initial hope that highly-researched hotels could be compared against rarely-researched attractions, very few attractions were able to participate in the research. Three participants worked at an attraction, and those attractions were all based in the third sector with a charitable mission. This is largely representative of attractions in Scotland as many of them are funded by the government, but perhaps not indicative of attractions in the wider world. Five additional participants were tourism policymakers who worked closely with attractions throughout Scotland but had not worked in the attractions themselves in some time.

Eight of the people interviewed identified themselves as graduates of a hospitality programme. Their feelings about their work environments were largely positive and they expressed a fondness for the hospitality industry as a whole. Some did mention previous bad experiences with employers and customers. Of note, most of these graduates were in back-of-house office positions at the time of the interviews. Had they been in public-facing positions still, their responses may not have been as positive.

It was anticipated that language barriers would pose a problem, but this did not present an issue for unexpected reasons. It was initially thought that workers with high English ability would be able to take the surveys and participate in the interviews without issue, but those with more limited abilities may need translation assistance or would not be able to participate. As workers with limited language ability may be in a more precarious working situation, their voices would be important to hear. In reality, only one participant with limited English language ability participated with the assistance of an interpreter. This participant and the interpreter were both recommended by one of the policymakers, who put them in contact with the researcher. This person had excellent insight into the workplace that greatly differed from that of the other participants specifically because of her challenges with the English language, and more subjects with similar experiences would have greatly enriched the data.

Similarly, the findings would likely be very different with a less homogenous group. Only two participants were people of colour. It was suggested by peers of colour that this may be because of a lack of trust in a white researcher, even a migrant white researcher, which is especially understandable given the sensitive nature of the questions being asked. This is also reflected in the overall hesitance to participate in the study. When the researcher asked for assistance from her networks, some people reached out to members of communities they were part of and received a positive response that did not extend into an interview. One example of this was a Bulgarian peer asking for research participation on behalf of the researcher, and doing so in a Bulgarian Facebook group with a post written in Bulgarian. Three people responded with interest, but only one participated in the research upon learning that the actual researcher was not Bulgarian. If the same study was conducted by a person of colour or from a particular migrant group, the makeup of the participants may reflect that researcher. Instead, while none of the participants were from the same country as the researcher, almost all of them shared her skin colour.

This researcher was a migrant without the right to remain in the UK but still had difficulty gaining trust from other migrants. This was a paradox in itself: the researcher could not gain access to vulnerable migrants because she was uncomfortable revealing herself as a vulnerable migrant. During the field work portion of this thesis, the researcher was facing her own UK visa vulnerabilities related to her pregnancy. The field work was conducted from November 2022 to July 2023, and the researcher gave birth in September 2023. While any participants she met in person were aware of this condition, especially later on in the process, most of her participants were gathered online. She was not comfortable with putting the specifics of her condition into writing at the time, and thus the participants could not know about the vulnerability and feel comfortable sharing their own. To make matters more difficult, her physical condition made it difficult to go out and meet additional migrants in person. With a more established social network, these trust barriers might be able to be overcome more easily.

This thesis initially sought to look at sociocultural immersion as a factor in retention, but this was rendered somewhat moot by Brexit and COVID-19. The pandemic forced migrants to make a choice between staying in the UK and being with family, and the timing and restrictions from Brexit made it likely that they could not come back. The only migrants coming in after Brexit were students, people who were able to marry a citizen spouse with a high income, and those who could obtain sponsorship: as established, not something common in hospitality. Immigration laws changed three times over the span of this research alone. It does not matter if one feels immersed in the country if one cannot legally stay. This is admittedly a personal issue for the researcher as well, as she was a migrant who had to leave Scotland because of immigration restrictions. A welcoming community and fulfilling work will not overcome a governmental blockade. How can you be moored somewhere that does not want you?

10.3 Further studies

Further studies on migrants might be best conducted by researchers belonging to specific targeted groups. While this researcher was a migrant, she was white and spoke English as a first language, both of which could lead to distrust and contributed to difficulties in finding participants. People may be more willing to speak to someone who looks and sounds like themselves. In addition, a researcher who speaks another language would be able to talk to more migrants with lower English language skills; the one such participant in this study revealed that she was in a more vulnerable position because of her language skills. Another group for further study are migrants without the right to remain in the UK. Even though the researcher fell into this latter group, the visa vulnerability made participants hesitant to formally record their experiences, and this hesitancy extended to the researcher herself as well. Being able to learn from and represent those groups is incredibly important for workplace equality, especially as tightening immigration rules can make the migrant workforce even more vulnerable.

While it was somewhat outside the scope of this thesis, the particular circumstances of hospitality workers in rural areas would be a topic for further study. The Fair Work Convention (2024) does report on this topic as well, citing the vulnerability noted in this research when a worker's housing is tied to their employment as well as additional issues with transportation and access to public services. The rural venues in this study employed migrant workers as well as local workers, but there seemed to be a clear divide between locals and migrants both socially and with access to opportunities. Case studies on these venues would be very illuminating. The threat of losing one's housing would be a very powerful negative mooring factor.

One especially important topic for further study is examining what, if any, changes are made over time as a result of the Fair Work Convention's hospitality inquiry. The report uncovers many of the same issues as this research, and goes further into topics such as union involvement. As the Scottish government encouraged and participated in the inquiry, it is expected that the results will be provided to employers. This research looks at what makes a workplace good, but will employers start by making the workplace fair? Repeating the study several years down the line and examining how closely employers did or did not follow the recommendations in the inquiry will reveal how much farther the hospitality industry needs to

go to be the exemplary industry that employers claim it is. It is clear that there are many people working in the hospitality industry who love it dearly and believe in its future: will they take the steps to make it meet its potential?

11.0 References

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12.0 Appendix



Figure A1 Worker Questions



Figure A2 Management Questions