

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**LIFE EXPERIENCES OF UNEMPLOYED PROFESSIONAL REFUGEE
WOMEN FROM RWANDA WHO LIVE IN THE DURBAN INNER
CITY: WORKING THEIR WAY OUT OF THE VORTEX**

Winifred Uwabakulikiza

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**LIFE EXPERIENCES OF UNEMPLOYED PROFESSIONAL REFUGEE
WOMEN FROM RWANDA WHO LIVE IN THE DURBAN INNER CITY:
WORKING THEIR WAY OUT OF THE VORTEX**

Uwabakulikiza Winifred
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College)
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**A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirement for the Degree
of Masters of Social Sciences in Community Development Studies**

School of Social Work and Community Development

Supervisor: Dr Sylvia Kaye

Declaration

I hereby declare that this is my original work and that it has never been submitted at any other university. The use of others' work in this study has been acknowledged.

Signature:

Date:

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, to my husband Dr Vugampore JMV and to my sons, Ivan, David and Emmanuel. Thank you.

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Various people have contributed to the accomplishment of this study. My own contribution and knowledge would not have sufficed. In particular, I would like to extend my gratitude to the following people:

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Abstract

Refugees abound the world over due to various factors, such as human rights violations, wars, ethnicity-related problems, political instability and so on. In South Africa, refugees have a high rate of unemployment and no one knows what they are going through. Unemployed refugee women suffer more than men and bear the burden of unemployment. South Africa is a developing country and many of its citizens are unemployed, thus refugees are not protected by refugee laws that exist in other countries. This study aims to explore the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city. Moreover, the research objectives also encompass discovering contributing factors behind their unemployment, as perceived by professional refugee women from Rwanda, and to explore their livelihood and coping strategies in their quest to earn a living.

This study is a qualitative case study. Twelve unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city were chosen by using purposive and snowball sampling methods. In-depth interviews and two focus group sessions were conducted with the same sample. The findings indicated that unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda have diverse experiences resulting from their unemployment and these often overlap. Their life experiences were grouped into three experience categories: psychological, economic and social. Stress, trauma, isolation, hopelessness, despair, low self-esteem, personal loss, the lack of basic needs such as shelter and food, the inability to be a good mother and xenophobia are just a few of their common life experiences. These experiences highlight professional refugee women victimization in both places: Rwanda and South Africa.

The research participants survive by car-guarding and selling commodities at the flea-markets and on the streets. They also get assistance from the Durban Refugee Services Providers Network. The barriers to unemployment include language, lack of relevant documents and xenophobia. These issues need to be addressed so that they may become employable.

List of abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BIG	Basic Income Grant
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ID	Identity Document
JPET	Funded Jobs Placement Education and Training
LHR	Lawyers for Human Rights
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
RPC	Refugee Pastoral Care
RSS	Refugee Social Services
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees
UNISA	University of South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. 1. Background and Outline of the Research Problem

Refugees often settle in countries which already have a high rate of unemployment (Nehru, 2003). South Africa hosts a large number of refugees. The South African laws regarding refugees are not advantageous to refugees. Refugee women suffer more than refugee males because of cultural prejudice in the form of gender-power relations (Uwantege, 2007). Therefore, female refugees have exceptionally high unemployment rates and their experiences are not well understood.

In South Africa, the problem of unemployment leads to a high rate of poverty and inequality. The gap between the rich and the poor is considerable and the poor live in deep poverty due to unemployment (Mubangizi, 2005; Nehru, 2003: 279; Frye, 2006). According to the statistics South Africa regarding unemployment, it is estimated that around 25% of the active population is unemployed, while the extended statistics give a 41.5% rate of unemployment. With the former statistic, an unemployed person is defined as being a person who is without work, is currently available for work and is seeking or wanting to work. According to the latter statistic, an unemployed person is a person who is without work and is currently available for work. The criterion of 'seeking work' is removed (Maugham, 2003).

As stated by Maugham (2003), the number of unemployed people in South Africa is estimated to be 7.7 million, a rate of 41.5%. The fact that the majority of the South African population is black means that most of the unemployed people are black (49,1%), especially black women. The conditions in which they live have an impact not only on their lives, but also on the whole country. South Africa has a high crime rate, attributed to frustration that leads to unrest and lawlessness (Maugham, 2003: 201). Women suffer

most from unemployment because of the social roles they are expected to play at home and the prejudice they experience in the work environment. Their unemployment leads to diverse experiences and the deterioration of their living conditions and social status.

The influx of both legal and illegal immigrants into the country has increased the number of people living in poverty and has compounded the problem of unemployment. Although most of these migrants come from Zimbabwe (Deibert, 2008), some of them also come from Central African Countries such as the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda due to genocide and the ongoing wars. Subsequently, the poor, especially blacks, blame refugees for being one of the main causes of their unemployment, because they have to compete with them in the informal sector and for unskilled jobs. Refugees are blamed for stealing jobs, which they often land because of their willingness to work for less than half wages. The refugees accept such working conditions due to the lack of support systems and insufficient assistance from both governmental and non-governmental institutions such as the UNHCR. Refugees are also restricted by South African laws in terms of what jobs they can do. For example, according to an informal conversation with a refugee in February 2009, the researcher learnt that if the refugee status document expires after one or two years, it is not easy to get a well-paying and/or professional job.

This study focused on unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda. Most of them fled their country because of 1994 genocide and political instability, and most of them came with their husbands. They were compelled to flee their country suddenly. As such, they left their belongings behind. Most of them had traumatic experiences due to the genocide as well as on their way to South Africa. These women were formally employed in their home country. When they arrived in South Africa they were unable to find work in the formal economy. It was hard for them to adapt to their new circumstances and to rely on the informal economy to survive. However, they had to earn a living and have done so by becoming involved in various informal economic activities, such as car-guarding, hairdressing and selling commodities at the flea-markets.

Rwandan women involved in these informal economic activities encounter many difficulties, but at least they make some money. Most of these refugee women are concentrated in the Durban inner city, where they can ensure survival through their social networks and their informal activities. The majority of them are afraid to reside outside the inner city due to xenophobia, with good reason. Recently, foreigners residing in the townships were harassed during the xenophobic attacks of May 2008. Refugee women from Rwanda experience a further barrier to job opportunities – they often do not speak English or local dialects because they are from French-speaking countries. Furthermore, they find themselves in a country with high unemployment and are restricted by laws that limit the nature of job opportunities available to them. As a result, they have unique life experiences stemming from their joblessness and cultural struggles.

This research investigated unemployed professional Rwandan refugee women's life experiences in the Durban inner city. All of the research participants were married and both wife and husband are involved in informal economic activities as a means to earning an income.

1.2. The Context of the Study

Refugee women from Rwanda were forced to flee their country of origin for reasons beyond their control and sought protection in South Africa. “They were forced migrants; they did not plan to have to flee their country” (Kibreab, 1987, quoted in Andom, 2004). Refugees from Rwanda exist in African countries and others. Many of them prefer to flee towards overseas countries, notably developed countries, as human rights are generally enforced there and the living conditions are most often better than those in developing countries. Some of those who flee to developing countries are helped by their relatives and friends who stay there, or by religious people and groups. Very few get re-settlement funding from the UNHCR to go to developed countries (www.unhcr.org). When some of the refugees arrive in South Africa, they find that life is hard here and prefer to go back to the refugee camps. Other refugees have no choice and are obliged to stay in South Africa. In an informal conversation with a refugee in 2008, the researcher was told that those that

stayed did so thinking that one day their human rights would be enforced and that their living conditions would improve.

Most of the refugee women from Rwanda are married and have an average of three children. They had properties in Rwanda which they had to abandon as there was no opportunity to sell them, and they adopted the mantle of being poor when they arrived in South Africa. This quote demonstrates one Rwandan woman's hardships when forced into exile:

It is not easy to get here, especially if you have children. It is a long way to go. Furthermore, to cross the borders was not easy for everyone. I did not have a passport. Sometimes, to cross the border I had to crawl through the bush and sometimes jumped the fences, for example in South Africa (March 2009).

At their arrival in South Africa, refugees from Rwanda rely on informal work in order to survive. Friends initiate them into the informal work sector. According to the findings of the research regarding refugees' livelihood strategies, most refugees from the Great Lakes Region, including Rwanda, car-guard, repair shoes, cut hair and sell things at flea-markets. This kind of specialization is most likely a result of their social networks (Misgun, 2006; Amisi, 2005; Hakizimana, 2001; Hunter, 2005). Many of them live on Point Road and in the St. George areas.

Once asylum seekers are considered refugees and obtain refugees status, they can apply for the maroon ID which expires after two years. With these documents, refugees gain more opportunities and some of them can upgrade their activities. That could explain why some of the refugees from Rwanda are studying at tertiary institutions such as UKZN, UNISA, Durban University of Technology and other colleges. UKZN recognizes refugees by offering them university loans to cover their tuition fees as well as a little extra money for food and accommodation. Refugees must have an ID (refugees' ID) in order to access this loan. Those who do not have an ID but who are able to get sponsors or to pay for the fees are accepted at UKZN and other tertiary institutions (informal conversation with a refugee, 2009).

Some refugees who finish their studies in South Africa are then employed by the Health Department (mostly those who finished nursing or pharmacy studies). A few are also employed by the Department of Education (in roles related to primary, high school and tertiary education). Some refugees from Rwanda work as security guards for security companies and in other similar occupations (informal conversation with a refugee, 2009). However, not all refugees from Rwanda gain access to further education and subsequently get better jobs; the majority of them rely on the informal economy for their livelihoods. Generally, fewer women are able to further their studies than men (from researcher's observation). Some obstacles particular to women's integration into tertiary education and society at large include language-related problems, the non-acceptance of their original certificates, the lack of social networks with local people who could inform them about the job opportunities and so on.

Due to xenophobia, most refugees do not communicate with local people, especially black people. Some South Africans think refugees deliberately come here to take available jobs, despite the fact that they flee here because they often have no choice. Refugees have to earn a living by competing with local people for the available job opportunities. Subsequently, both refugees and locals grow angry with one another because there is a lack of social networking between refugees and local people. Refugees generally stick to themselves and only network with other refugees, who also have limited information regarding job opportunities and other vital information. The xenophobic attacks of May 2008 have worsened the parties' desire to communicate.

1.3. Research Design

This study was conducted with twelve unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city. The research questions for this study aim to highlight the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city; to find out what they think are the causes of their unemployment; and to find out their livelihood and coping strategies in their quest to earn

a living. This was a case study and a qualitative research approach was used. As stated by Marlow (1998) and Schurick (1998: 20), “qualitative research refers to research that underlines meaning and patterns of relationships and enables one to obtain rich in-depth information on experience and behavioural perception”. The sampling technique used in this study was the non-probability sampling technique: purposive and snowball.

The methods of data collection used in this study were in-depth interviews and focus group sessions. Twelve unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city were interviewed. The researcher conducted the interviews in their homes and this allowed the researcher to make her own observations, which is also relevant for the study. Two focus group sessions were used for the same sample to find out unemployed refugee women’s views about what should be done to empower them. A tape recorder was used after obtaining the permission from the research participants.

The collected data was then transcribed and analyzed using a qualitative data analysis method. The researcher first analyzed the interviews by using a constant comparative analysis. Focus group sessions were analyzed in the same way. Ethical issues such as confidentiality were considered. The validity and reliability of the study were also considered.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study was to investigate the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city. For the purposes of this study, unemployed refers to a refugee who has professional skills, is not formally employed, and is looking for formal employment. For example, a refugee who is qualified as a teacher but is car-guarding to survive is considered as unemployed by this study.

Research objectives were the following:

- To explore the experiences of unemployed refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city;
- To discover factors that refugee women consider contributory to their unemployment;
- To explore their livelihood and coping strategies in this situation;
- To suggest what can be done to empower them; and
- To influence and change the perception of the public, policy-makers and people dealing with refugees' issues, as the researcher intends to publish this study.

1.5. Research Questions

The key questions were the following:

- What are the life experiences of unemployed refugee women from Rwanda living in Durban inner city?
- What do they think are the causes of their unemployment?
- What are their livelihood and coping strategies in their quest to earn a living?

1.6. The Significance of the Study

Different studies have been conducted on the experiences of refugees who live in Durban (Gebre, 2007; Amisi, 2005; Misgun, 2006; Gema, 2001; Hakizimana, 2001). This study is significant because it adds to existing knowledge and builds from previous studies, addressing issues not dealt with by previous researchers.

This study revealed the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city and suggests what can be done to empower them. Thus, the study benefits the refugee women by highlighting their life experiences and possible solutions to overcome these. It is hoped that government and institutions dealing with refugee issues will gain insight from this study to guide them in planning and executing effective strategies to address the problems faced by refugees. This study can

influence policy-makers, the public and institutions centred on assisting refugees. Hence, current policies relating to refugees have been reviewed and strategies to empower them will be considered in this dissertation.

1.7. Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The assumption was that few knew about the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city. If institutions dealing with refugees as well as the public knew what refugee women experienced, they would hopefully adapt their practices to be more supportive of them. The current policies regarding refugees should be reviewed.

The limitation of this study related to the sampling technique used. Only twelve unemployed professional refugee women were interviewed. This is a small sample size within which to work. The researcher originally chose to interview four unemployed professional refugee women whose husbands were also not working. The latter had all lived in Durban for more than two years and ranged between 25 to 50 years of age. These four interviewees referred the researcher to other refugee women with the same characteristics. As a result, the participants may not be representative of most of the constituents in the target population.

Due to the traumatic situations that most of the refugees had experienced, they did not want to share their experiences unless it was with a view to affecting a positive change to their circumstances. Indeed, telling their stories, they felt exploited.

This study aims to influence and change the attitudes of institutions dealing with refugees, but the limitation is that the small sample size may not render sufficient scope for these institutions to effect policy changes. The sample for this study was not representative and therefore could not be generalized. The study was also conducted in their mother tongue, Kinyarwanda, meaning that the translation into English may not be

entirely accurate. That said, the researcher endeavoured to keep the meaning intact while conveying their thoughts and ideas according to accepted English norms.

1.8. Structure of the Thesis

Chapter one provides an introduction of the study and discusses the background, context, purpose and objectives of the study as well as the assumptions and limitations of the study. It also provides an overview of the research design, research questions and the significance of the study.

Chapter two presents the literature review and focuses on unemployment in South Africa and the experiences of unemployed people; the effects of unemployment; the general rights of refugees; refugees in South Africa; refugees from Central African countries who live in the Durban inner city, their experiences and so on. This chapter also presents the conceptual framework and the theoretical framework.

Chapter three presents the study's methodology, which encompasses the description of the population, sample and sampling methods, methods for data collection, data analysis and the ethical issues considered during the research process.

Chapter four presents findings and discussion of the study.

Chapter five presents the conclusion and implications of the study.

1.9. Conclusion

This chapter presented the background to and outline of the study's research problem. The study focused on the unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city. The context of the study, the objectives and the research

questions have been explored above. Further, the rationale, assumption as well as limitations of the study have been considered. The following chapter comprises the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter describes unemployment in South Africa; the refugees' experiences of unemployment; refugees in South Africa; the general rights of refugees; experiences and difficulties faced by refugee women in South Africa; the livelihood strategy of central African refugees in Durban and services offered to them. This chapter also presents the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework.

2.2. Unemployment in South Africa

As mentioned earlier, South Africa has an exceptionally high rate of unemployment, with roughly 7.7 million people, or 41.5% of the population, currently unemployed (Maugham, 2003). Unemployment is far higher among black people: 36% of black people versus 6% of white people are jobless. According to Nehru (2003), the official unemployment rate exceeded 50% among black women compared to about 40% among black men in South Africa. Most of them are uneducated black women living in rural areas. The Western Cape has the lowest rate of unemployment while the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo have the highest rates of unemployment (Nehru, 2003: 212). The majority of unemployed people (60 to 80%) survive through remittances from employed family members or friends, or family members/friends who receive a pension. Others are involved in various forms of income generation (19 to 53% of the latter actually consider themselves as unemployed). Some unemployed people do benefit from the government's special job creation and training programmes, employment services, and SMME support development services, although the impact is relatively small. The rest (20%) are not reached by any of the abovementioned services and do not have a supportive network. Social security benefits apply to only a small number of unemployed

people (Maugham, 2003: 210). Unemployment insurance only covers those who have worked before and only covers them for a set period of time.

2.2.1. Definition of Unemployment

A simple definition of unemployment would be that “it exists whenever the demand for labour (DL) in an economy is unable to match the supply of labour (SL) in that economy” (Cawker and Whiteford, 1993). As Maugham (2003: 202) states, “an unemployed person is one who is without work, is currently available for work, and is seeking work or wanting to work”. However, there is the distinction between the strict and expanded definition of unemployment.

According to the Alternative Information and Development Centre (2005: 4) and Maugham (2003: 208), the ‘official’ (strict) definition of unemployment classifies a person as unemployed “if that person is not in paid employment or self-employment, if he wants to and is available for work and has taken active steps in finding work in the previous week or month”. The shortcoming of this definition is that the criterion of having ‘taken active steps to look for a work’ is not always realistic in a developing country. If very little work is available, unemployed persons might have lost hope of finding a job and for that reason do not take active steps to seek employment, even if they desperately want to work. In addition, active steps to seek employment often necessitate expenses such as transport costs, phones calls, computer usage and so forth. As such, unemployed persons will simply not take active steps and they will be regarded as discouraged jobseekers. Expecting unemployed persons to actually look for work would therefore understate the true unemployment statistics.

Hence, the ILO developed a standard definition of unemployment that can be applied by relaxing the criterion of seeking work (ILO, 1982; Rao and Mehran, 1984, cited in Maugham, 2003). Indeed, the expanded definition of unemployment simply excludes the criterion of ‘taking active steps in seeking work’. Accepting the expanded definition of unemployment increases the number of unemployed people. According to Maugham

(2003), the expanded definition of unemployment increased the number of unemployed people from 25% to 41.5%.

Further, the strict definition of unemployment excludes many rural people because it is generally hard for them to take active steps to find a job and they are therefore not officially counted as unemployed.

For the purposes of this study, the definition of an unemployed refugee will refer to a refugee who has professional skills, is not formally employed and is looking for formal employment. That refugee does, however, earn money through informal activities such as car-guarding.

2.2.2. Types of Unemployment

In order to understand unemployment one needs to classify various types of unemployment. This gives an indication of the possible reasons for unemployment and how unemployment should be successfully tackled. Mafiri (2002), Terreblanche (2002) and Maugham (2003) identified four types of unemployment: frictional, cyclical, seasonal and structural.

Frictional unemployment arises from normal labour turnover that occurs in any dynamic economy due to the time lags involved in the re-employment of labour. Frictional unemployment usually is of relatively short duration (Maugham, 2003: 202). Cyclical unemployment arises from periodic downswings in the business cycle, namely when the output is below its full-employment level (Maugham, 2003).

Seasonal unemployment occurs due to normal and expected changes in economic activities during the course of a single year. It is found in many sectors and agriculture probably is the best example (Maugham, 2003: 203). Structural unemployment is the type largely experienced in South Africa. It refers to the overall inability of an economy to provide employment for the total labour force even at the peak of its business cycle

because job opportunities do not increase fast enough to absorb the labour market growth (Maugham, 2003: 203). As argued by Frye (2006), poverty and unemployment are structural rather than cyclical in nature. To address the issue of poverty and unemployment, effective policy solutions need to be informed by the historical causes of inequality as well as the ongoing impact of intergenerational poverty and dispossession, and need to address class as well as racial inequalities (Frye, 2006).

2.2.3. Possible Reasons for the Decline in Employment in South Africa

Some of the reasons for the decline in South African employment are discussed below.

Apartheid Legacy

As argued by Gathiram (2005), “the structural barriers of apartheid have left a legacy of underdevelopment, poverty and inequality”. According to Terreblanche (2002: 386-387), “the state used the Group Areas Act to drive African business people out of the central business districts. Discriminatory legislation deprived Africans of opportunities to gain skills and undergo professional training. As a result, they were condemned to low-paid and unskilled work”. There was under-investment in the education of black people. During 1982, the total spending on education of black Africans by the government was less than half that spent on whites, despite that there were more than 4,5 times more Africans than whites. Most job opportunities created since 1970 have been in the services sector, but because of their low level of education, Africans have not been able to compete for these jobs to the same extent as other population groups (Terreblanche, 2002). As a result, these communities remained poverty-stricken even in the post-apartheid regime, becoming poorer and therefore less employable.

Low Educational Levels

The majority of South Africans still suffer from detrimental spin-offs of the apartheid regime. Education, particularly that of Africans, was seriously neglected and the country is today still experiencing the consequences thereof, with educational inequalities likely to persist and serve as a growth constraint for many years (Cawker and Whiteford, 1993).

Due to unequal distribution of resources (particularly in rural areas), inadequate living conditions and an unfavourable educational environment, schools are not able to supply the type of skills required by the South African economy, which leads to labour shortages in certain skilled occupations during most phases of the economic cycle. There is currently a critical shortage of engineers, natural scientists, technologists, computer scientists and artisans. South Africa's previous education and training inequalities have hindered these sectors and bred employment inequalities. The unemployment rate is higher among Africans than whites, is higher among African women than African men, and more widespread among women in rural areas (Cawker and Whiteford, 1993; Marshall, 2003; Maugham, 2003; AIDC, 2005).

Urbanization and Internal Migration

The South African urban unemployment rate has reached crisis point (NALEDI, 2000) and the urban population growth is among the fastest and largest in the world (Knight, 1982). Lewis (1954, cited by Cornwell and Inder, 2004) argued that the rapid movement to urban areas reflects the desire of rural inhabitants to improve their economic situations. However, the rural-urban migration is regarded as the major factor contributing to urban unemployment problems. As a result, migrants create their own employment through informal labour-intensive services and production. In the absence of unemployment benefits, this informal sector provides the much-needed income for those unable to find work in the formal sector (Cornwell and Inder, 2004). Most of the unemployed people try to make a living through informal trading, sewing, door-to-door selling, occasional jobs, domestic work and so on. Their families depend on the remittance of small amounts of money from them and have no other income.

2.2.4. Efforts Made by the Government to Address Poverty and Unemployment

This section describes the efforts made by the government to address problems of poverty and unemployment.

Black Economic Empowerment

When the new government led by African National Congress (ANC) came to power in South Africa in 1994, it identified Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) as a major vehicle for addressing the economic injustice of apartheid (Balshaw and Goldberg, 2005). The successful implementation of the BEE strategy, as reported by Burger (2005), will be evaluated against the following policy objectives: (1) a substantial increase in the number of black people who own and control existing and new enterprises; (2) a significant increase in the number of black-empowered and black-engendered enterprises; (3) a significant increase in the number of black people in executive and senior management positions.

Social Security

Since 1994, the South African Government has made major progress in improving the lives of the poorest of the poor through the delivery of social services. One of the key anti-poverty strategies adopted by the government is the provision of social protection for specific groups of people, namely through foster care grants, pensions, disability grants, care dependency grants, child support grants and grants-in-aid that remain the basic income of the majority of South African families, especially in rural areas. According to Lombard (2005: 209), “to date, over 7,7 million of the poorest of the poor now receive social grants at the total cost of over 34,98 billion per annum”.

The partial means tested grants, according to the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI, 2001, 2002, cited by Sewpaul, 2005), close the poverty gap by 23% but exclude those poorest households that do not have members receiving UIF, state pensions, disability grants or have children qualifying for grants. Within universal coverage, a basic income grant (BIG) – through a system of progressive taxation and thus constituting a non-threatening means of redistribution – would close the poverty gap by about 74%. As argued by Sewpaul (2005) and Frye (2006), the poorest households are still not reached by grants. Hence, a basic income grant should remedy the poverty gap.

Skills Development Act

The Skills Development Act seeks to develop the skills of the South African workforce and thereby increase the quality of workers’ working life, improve productivity in the

workplace, promote self-employment and improve the delivery of social services. The Act also seeks to encourage employers to use the workplace as an active learning environment. A special focus of the Act is on the improvement of the employment prospects of previously disadvantaged persons through education and training (Maugham, 2003: 259).

One of the most important vehicles to implement the skills development strategy is the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) system. SETAs deal with education and training and they help to implement the national skills development strategy and to increase the skills of people in their respective sectors. To achieve these objectives, SETAs have, among others, duties to develop and implement a sector skills plan, to develop and administer learnerships and to undertake quality assurance (Maugham, 2003: 260).

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action in South Africa is associated with policies and practices implemented by the new government in order to redress social, economic or educational imbalances and inequalities caused by the apartheid regime. According to du Plessis *et al.* (2003: 82), “Affirmative action measures ensure that suitably qualified persons from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce”.

Affirmative action does not reduce poverty and unemployment. In redressing the situation of disadvantaged people, it does not increase economic efficiency because the best person for the job is not necessarily appointed. This implies that recruitment standards are relaxed, and the basic principle of markets or competition is negated. A further possible disadvantage of affirmative action is that the victims of discrimination might use affirmative action as a source of entitlement, in the same way that whites used the system of apartheid as a source of privilege (Nehru, 2003: 298). Indeed, affirmative

action should reduce unemployment on one side while creating it on another, as it is based on racial considerations.

2.3. Experiences and Effects of Unemployment

Most unemployed people feel acute shame and are stigmatized for being out of work. They feel that people are looking down on them and start to withdraw from the community. This sense of ostracization is further entrenched by their inability to socialize due to insufficient funds; by having nothing in common when their contemporaries discuss their jobs, and due to avoiding the embarrassment of having to answer questions about whether one has a job (Linders, 2001; Feather, 1990; Fryer and Ullah, 1987; Sinfield, 1983: 37). By their withdrawal, they feel secure that their poverty and distress become less apparent.

Unemployed people are jealous of those who are working. Obviously, the impact of unemployment on those out of work and on their families varies enormously (Linders, 2001; Feather, 1990; Sinfield, 1983: 37). When one is initially out of work, one registers a state of shock when contemplating unemployment, which ultimately compels one to action. The individual embarks on an aggressive job hunt and feels optimistic. When all efforts fail, the individual becomes pessimistic, anxious and distressed. The individual ultimately becomes fatalistic and adapts her/himself to her/his new state of having narrower job scope. S/he now has a 'broken' attitude (Sinfield, 1983: 37). The pattern of shock-optimism-pessimism-fatalism has been reported by many researchers with respect to the experiences of the unemployed (Bakke, cited in Sinfield, 1983: 37). This is substantiated by more recent research

Being unemployed is very depressing and degrading. People think that you have expended no effort to find employment. People who have never been out of work do not know what it is like. Unemployed people are bored, frustrated and worried. It is worse for someone who has a family because he/she has family 'responsibilities'. When a person is

out of work, he/she cannot sleep as he/she is always thinking about the situation and constantly worry about whether he/she will find work (Linders, 2001; Feather, 1990; Sinfield, 1983: 91).

An unemployed person reaches a point where s/he can no longer sustain her/his motivation if he/she faces continual rejection. In a case of prolonged unemployment, unemployed people grow tired of looking for a job and give up. They start believing that all available options are taken and that jobs are scarce. Further, they lack confidence in their ability to do the work if they get it. They start thinking that there is something wrong with them. Their self-confidence declines, which subsequently reduces the energy and determination they have to keep looking for work (Linders, 2001; Sinfield, 1983: 91).

A job is the first step to escape poverty. It is the key to creating wealth and distributing it equitably. In other words, a job can mean a positive social identity and also can mean acceptance into community life. A job can also contribute to one's independence, enhance self-esteem and strengthen families (Linders, 2001). Unemployment destroys one's sense of human solidarity and is linked to continuous ill health, arduous and often hazardous work for low income, lack of power to influence change and high levels of anxiety and stress (Linders, 2001). According to Feather (1990: 32), unemployment has negative various effects with respect to the psychological well-being of individuals and their families.

The effect of unemployment on physical and mental health is considerable. Mental illnesses as well as many sicknesses became progressively common as the duration of unemployment increases. Distress also rises significantly after becoming unemployed and falls with re-employment (Linders, 2001; Feather, 1990; Sinclair, 1987). There is also a link between unemployment and maternal childbirth mortality. Infant mortality is far higher in regions with high unemployment rates than elsewhere (Feather, 1990; Sinclair, 1987).

As argued by Sinclair (1987), various studies find that unemployment and suicide are tragically associated. There is a strong and positive correlation between unemployment and attempted suicide, especially for those who are unemployed for more than a year. Unemployment also furnishes both the opportunity and the motive for crime. Robbery, assault, theft, murder and rape rise due to unemployment. Crime is much more common in inner city areas as there is high unemployment there (Linders, 2001; Feather, 1990; Sinclair, 1997).

There is also a link between unemployment and poverty. Unemployment signifies loss and deprivation. Financial hardship is naturally common during unemployment. Being unemployed often equates to not being able to afford basic human needs like shelter, food and so on, and hence not being able to fulfil expected family roles. If you have no money, your choices are limited and your living standards decline. Children put more store in materials things than adults do, thus feel more deprived when a parent cannot provide the things they want. They cannot understand why they are not given what they want. Indeed, unemployment severely affects family life (Feather, 1990; Fryer and Ullah, 1987; Sinclair, 1987; Sinfield, 1983).

There is a shift in the traditional dynamics of authority within the family resulting from the unemployment of the male head of the household. Thus, there are changes in familial relationships. There are also changes in the relationships within the nuclear family and with both extended family and the larger community. Many friends are lost following the loss of job (Linders, 2001; Feather, 1990; Fryer and Ullah, 1987). An unemployed person is considered less valuable by society and becomes socially marginalised (Linders, 2001; Feather, 1990; Fryer and Ullah, 1987).

The role of family and friends in helping the unemployed person to get a job is crucial. A relative or friend who hears of a suitable job may follow it up and recommend the unemployed person to the employer. Many jobs are filled through informal contacts. Informal contacts are very important in finding and keeping work. Unemployed people often say that it is who you know not what you know that determines the chances of re-

employment. Unemployed people often lack social contacts and it is therefore difficult for them to find work and to escape poverty (Linders, 2001; Fryer and Ullah, 1987; Sinfield, 1983).

2.4. Case Study of Refugees in Australia

The following case study gives an overview of the life experiences of refugees in Australia. It is used here to illustrate that refugees can suffer in both developed and developing countries. Refugees in developing countries entertain the notion that refugees in developed countries live an easier and better life. This study highlights the struggle and barriers to job opportunities for refugees in Australia and how they are helped to counter those barriers. However, the study also shows that most refugees are at the bottom of the societal ladder, especially those coming from French-speaking countries (MacDonald and Kyle, 2004). The study explored the labour market barriers for recent immigrants, including refugees, which were: language skills, education and training, labour market knowledge, access to formal and informal employment networks, poor provision of advice (including guidance and training), cultural and pre-arrival experiences (MacDonald and Kyle, 2004). It also highlighted what efforts had been made to help refugees secure employment.

Most of the skilled immigrants were unable to find work in their chosen occupation and were subsequently 'unemployed' in order to earn a living. They quickly accepted just about any jobs in order to survive (MacDonald and Kyle, 2004). This creates a further barrier to meaningful employment, as many didn't learn English because they worked long hours, often under challenging conditions. They had virtually no free time for English studies (Watson, 1998: 5, cited in MacDonald and Kyle, 2004).

As mentioned by a 37-year-old Iraqi refugee research participant (Hannan, 1990), getting a job quickly is considered vital:

What I want in my life, when I think about my life, what I hope and dream for my future is for all my family to be reunited. This can only happen if I have a permanent job, any job.

As MacDonald and Kyle (2004) state, there are unique barriers inhibiting refugees' participation in the labour market. Refugees have additional barriers to job opportunities compared to non-refugee migrants. Their lack of possessions and community networks and their experiences of torture and trauma generally implies that their needs are often greater than those of non-refugee migrants. Hannan (2004) explains that refugees are challenged by the new host country, have had little or no choice for migrating, have had no choice regarding the country of resettlement and have little or no understanding at all of the employment opportunities in the Australian context. All of this contributes to feeling vulnerable and disempowered, whereas other groups of migrants will experience this to a lesser extent.

According to Waxman (1998: 763, cited in Macdonald and Kyle, 2004), refugees have a range of characteristics that impact on their ability to access services and therefore employment. These include pre-arrival experiences; the level of their English competency; whether they understand the services available to them; their ethical and cultural backgrounds; the degree to which the ethnic community is already established; the level of orientation received prior to departure and the awareness of and access to non-government organizations. Many refugees are afraid, have educational gaps and health problems and these can impact on their successful entry into the labour market and on ongoing employment potential (MacDonald and Kyle, 2004). In addition, young refugees have special needs resulting from making the critical life transition from childhood to adulthood at the same time as having to make a major cultural transition, often without parents and family networks to provide support (Coventry *et al.*, 2002, cited in MacDonald and Kyle, 2004).

The study found that, in general, the employment needs of refugees (including those of young people) are not being adequately addressed by available settlement and

employment services. However, some of the refugees' specific needs in the labour market are recognized but these are not consistently addressed (MacDonald and Kyle, 2004).

According to the study, employment assistance is available to refugees in the form of Commonwealth Government assistance and a job network.

While some agencies and programmes funded under the Commonwealth's Settlement Services programme provide some individually-based employment support (e.g., a few Migrant Resource Centres), this varies in scope. Indeed, in general, DIMIA-funded settlement services explicitly stop short of providing employment assistance other than information about and referral to mainstream services. This approach has been reaffirmed in the recent DIMIA Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants (DIMIA, 2003a).

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) integrates refugees into mainstream employment services. Thus, the key services providing employment assistance to refugees (who are eligible) are agencies contracted to provide job networking services. In addition, young people who are refugees may be eligible to receive assistance through the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS)-funded Jobs Placement Education and Training (JPET) programme. Through federally funded employment assistance services, refugees on Temporary Protection Visas were only eligible to access the most basic services, that is, jobs matching services of job network providers. Other job-seekers were also assisted with job searching and intensive support services (MacDonald and Kyle, 2004).

2.5. Refugees in South Africa

South Africa has a high level of inequality as the gap between the rich and the poor is considerable (Mubangizi, 2005). Most South African citizens live in abject poverty and this notably stems from apartheid policy. Unemployment among citizens is a major issue (Mubangizi, 2005). As South Africa hosts various kinds of refugees, unemployment is

not only impacting on the lives of South African citizens, but also on refugees. The exact demography of refugees in South Africa is not known as they are coming and some of them live the country at the same time (interview with a Department of Home Affairs official, 2009). This high prevalence of unemployment in South Africa underpins the relationship between South African citizens and refugees. Most South African citizens can identify refugees and this creates a sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Subsequently, refugees are blamed for stealing jobs and spreading diseases (Pickering, 2001; Christie, 1997:4).

The majority of refugees earn a living by participating in the informal sector (car-guarding, hairdressing, selling things at flea-markets etc.) and only a small portion are employed in the formal sector (in Education, by the Health Department, as security guards etc.). The South African Constitution highlights the socio-economic rights of the citizens but, despite the fact that refugees are entitled to those socio-economic rights (Refugee Act No. 130, 1998), these are seldom enforced and that is why many refugees in South Africa are struggling to earn a living (Steinberg, 2005).

2.5.1. Definition of a refugee

The term refugee is sometimes used interchangeably with asylum seeker, but they are different. An asylum seeker refers to a person who is seeking recognition as a refugee in the Republic, while a refugee refers to a person who has been granted asylum in the country (Government Gazette, 1998).

‘Refugee’ is defined under the 1951 UN Convention as a person who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (UNHCR, 1951; Government Gazette, 1998).

However, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention (OAU) Protocol on Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa considers a refugee to be “a person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality” (OAU, 1969; Government Gazette, 1998). In this research the term ‘refugee’ encompasses both the refugee and asylum seeker definition since “a person is a refugee whether or not a legal eligibility procedure has already recognized that status” (UNHCR, 2001, in Amisi, 2005).

2.5. 2. General Rights of Refugees

Refugees’ rights are institutionalized in a well-established international refugee framework that protects their rights and obliges individual countries to assist them (Redelinghuys, 2000). The Refugees Act No. 130 of 1998 (Government Gazette, 1998: 18-20) contains the general rights of refugees as follows. A refugee:

- 27. (a) Is entitled to a formal written recognition of refugee status in the prescribed form;
- 27. (b) Enjoys full legal protection, which includes the rights set out in chapter 2 of the Constitution and the right to remain in the Republic of South Africa in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- 27. (c) Is entitled to apply for an immigration permit in terms of the Alien Control Act, 1991, after five years continuous residence in the Republic from the date on which he or she was granted asylum, if the Standing Committee certifies that he or she will remain a refugee indefinitely;
- 27. (d) Is entitled to an identity document referred to in section 30;
- 27. (e) Is entitled to a South African travel document on application as contemplated in section 31;
- 27. (f) Is entitled to seek employment;
- 27. (e) Is entitled to the same basic health services and basic primary education that the inhabitants of the Republic receive from time to time.

The New Refugee Act No. 130 of 1998 came into effect from April 2000 and was supposed to fast-track the asylum process. Prior to this, the legislation prevented asylum seekers from working or studying for six months while their applications were being processed. However, the Human Rights Committee (2001) states: “many asylum seekers have waited for periods as long as four years for their application to be processed. These asylum seekers struggle to make a living, and the burden of not being able to work adds to what is already a stressful situation”. While there are about 29 000 people with refugee status living in the country at present, the backlog of asylum seekers still to be processed was evaluated at 103 410 cases (Department of Home Affairs, 2006).

2.5.3. Livelihood and Difficulties Faced by Refugee Women in South Africa

Many migrants and refugee women in South Africa have limited employment opportunities and are often sidelined by the labour market. Accordingly, many refugee women hold jobs in the informal economy or in unregulated sectors. As such, their access to state services such as health, education and justice is also limited, especially if they are undocumented migrants (Fuller, 2008). Due to the lack of formal jobs, refugee women work in informal activities, regardless of the qualifications they may have. As expressed by Murekatete, a qualified psychologist in her native Rwanda and currently a refugee in Johannesburg, “refugee women experience the trauma of losing a sense of worth in a country with a high unemployment rate even for locals. For refugee women, the reality is even harsher” (Murekatete, 2002).

Employment: Some of the refugee women in Johannesburg started with embroidery and sewing projects and were able to integrate into their respective communities. However, they experienced many difficulties before they were accepted. Murekatete (2002) explained in an interview during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg how refugee women in Johannesburg formed an association called the Refugee Women’s Hope Centre and how they initiated an embroidery and sewing project from which they could earn an income. Besides earning an income, it also afforded them

the opportunity to deal with the trauma and loneliness unique to refugee women. When they started selling their goods at the Tshwane market, it was not easy to get a place to sell their goods. They were asked to produce green IDs which they did not have, but were finally allowed to retail at the market despite not having the relevant documents. They also experienced xenophobia once they started selling their goods. No one wanted to talk to them and they were called 'Kwerekwere'. 'Kwerekwere' is a derogatory term used by Black South Africans to describe non-South African Blacks. It refers to Black immigrants (Murekatete, 2002). However, due to their perseverance, they became friends with those who initially persecuted them (Murekatete, 2002).

Documentation: As highlighted by various studies on refugees in South Africa, the major problem faced by refugees is the lack of access to documentation. It is a major obstacle to their integration. The lack of documentation has an intense effect on securing employment, the provision of livelihoods, shelter and education – essentially, everything required to live with dignity (Rulashe, 2007).

Gender: Gender-based power relations impact on refugee women's life experiences. For example, during the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, foreign women in the townships were targeted, beaten and raped (Fuller, 2008). Being a woman, and the associated roles of being a wife, mother and daughter, denotes a social position that comes with a range of expectations. Women are traditional carers in their families, with the responsibility to feed, clothe and so on. Rulashe (2007) argues that women and children are targeted during xenophobic attacks because they are central to making settlement happen. During the xenophobic outbreak of 1998, foreign women moved from place to place in order to protect their children from violence. They were effectively displaced and at the shelters that were eventually set up, there was often insufficient access to food, blankets and sanitation (Fuller, 2008). Refugee women and children are worse affected by violence. For example, women Somali refugees in Port Elizabeth keep their children of school-going age at home because they are afraid of being targeted by xenophobic people (Rulashe, 2007).

The insecurity and violence refugee women experience in South Africa compounds their trauma. Many of them are in South Africa after having fled conflict-zones, sexual and domestic violence in their home countries (Fuller, 2008).

The study conducted by Uwantege (2007), 'Refugee Women, Gender-based Challenges, HIV and AIDS and the French-Swahili Church in Pietermaritzburg', explored the livelihoods of unemployed refugee women from the Great Lakes Region and the challenges they face. The study found that language is an immense challenge and the women do not have the chance to learn the language either in a formal or informal setting through interacting with other people who speak local languages. This is also due to the fact that refugee women exist in a 'vacuum world' due to the lack of job opportunities. Their cultural background also dictates that women should stay at home to look after children and prepare food (Uwantege, 2007). The study found that most of the refugee women from the Great Lakes Region live together and continue to use their mother tongue. This also prevents them from learning and speaking local languages. This lack of local communication means that the information they get is very limited. As highlighted by Westermeyer (1989: 112, cited in Uwantege, 2007: 21), "The social isolation and loneliness are common experiences for migrants and are a contributing factor in hindering their level of communication and their social network".

The study found that the refugee women are not welcomed at the hospital and do not feel comfortable interacting with hospital staff because of the lack of communication capabilities. However, xenophobia also plays a role at this point. The following quotation highlights that:

I took two children to the clinic, because of language problem they asked me where I come from. The nurse got nervous and she did her job without talking to us apart from asking when we are going back where we come from (Uwantege, 2007).

Also, the study found that refugee women are a target group of violence and abuse. Refugee women are often exposed to sexual violence when fleeing wars or political

conflict. They are faced with inadequate accommodation and find themselves sleeping in places that are overcrowded and where they are at risk of being violated by males (Uwantege, 2007: 22). Most of the refugees from the Great Lakes Region, including married couples, boys and girls, share rooms. This situation can put women at risk of being sexually abused and exploited. In this way, they are at risk of being infected with HIV (Uwantege, 2007).

The refugee women are identified by the native languages they speak and their traditional clothes. They are mostly called “Makwerekwere” and they are considered people in need. Earning a livelihood is a struggle for refugee women in Pietermaritzburg. In order to survive, refugee women try to start small businesses, but they suffer from discrimination and the lack of investment willingness. Young refugee girls experience sexual violence because they share rooms with many different people. Also, both local and refugee men take advantage of their economic needs and abuse them (Kenge, 2004, cited in Uwantege, 2007).

Refugee women who are involved in informal trading experience violence. They are vulnerable to bribes, assault and xenophobia-related violence. Refugee women confirmed that sometimes the police throw away their stuff, and often they are asked to give money or sex to be allowed to continue their business in a particular place (Landau, 2004, cited in Uwantege, 2007: 24). Although many refugees involved in trading experience all kinds of violence and their human rights are not enforced most of the time, the refugee women bear the biggest burden.

The study found that refugee women experience psychological stress due to the new life style, which is completely different to in their home countries. Refugee women depend on their husbands for financial support and this situation makes them vulnerable. Even those who work do not keep the money for themselves. They give all the money to their husbands, who ultimately control it. This is highlighted by the following quotation:

Every day I have to bring the money to my husband, and I only ask him when I want to buy something, because he says that I can misuse the money or I cannot respect him when I have the money (Uwantege, 2007: 62).

Most refugee women believe they are powerless and are not able to challenge their husbands even if they make bad financial decisions. The husbands control them as they have paid their 'Lobola' (Bride wealth) and this entitles them to do as they please, without consulting their wives.

2.6. Experiences of Central African Refugees in Durban

The whole world witnessed the genocide in Burundi and Rwanda which caused refugees to scatter all over the globe (Hakizimana, 2001: 13). Many people were killed and others became orphans, widowed and handicapped. South Africa is the one of the countries hosting Central African refugees (Hakizimana, 2001).

Despite the lack of assistance to refugees and the fact that refugees are not allowed to work in either the informal or formal economy (Hunter and Skinner, 2002:6, cited in Amisi, 2005: 115), there has been a constant increase in the number of Congolese refugees in Durban (Amisi, 2005). However, to argue that there is no assistance for refugees at all, or that they are not 'allowed' to work either in the informal or formal economy is a generalisation. Some refugees are legitimately employed in the formal sector and others do get some assistance from refugee services providers such as the Refugee Social Services, previously known as MCC, Refugee Pastoral Care and so forth. What is true is that the majority of refugees live a difficult life.

The research conducted by Misgun (2006), 'Foreign Migrants in the Inner City of Durban', revealed the following: the majority of migrants in the inner city of Durban are refugees and, of those refugees, the majority are from the Great Lakes Region. Many of them work in shoe-repairing, car-guarding and hairdressing businesses. This kind of specialisation is most likely a result of their social network's influence. Same-nationality

people seem to perform similar economic activities. This is an indication that their communities provide sources of support, resources and information on product lines, which shapes the new migrant to enter more or less the same trade (Misgun, 2006; Amisi, 2005).

Some of the African migrants have spaza shops, but most asylum seekers experience problems in setting one up due to the nature of their legal status; most find that asylum seeker permits are given on a monthly or quarterly basis, which makes it difficult to conclude any contract on a long-term basis, which is the norm (Misgun, 2006: 44). Misgun also found that most refugees rent accommodation at Point Road, South Beach, and Albert Park and most of them live in flats shared with a number of other people. Their interaction with local people depends on the kind of activities they do. If they do businesses with local people, the interaction is more frequent.

Central African refugees arrive in South Africa after crossing a number of countries. Many of them are traumatized by what has happened to them in their origin country or by what they have seen or encountered while fleeing through other countries. They experience isolation, stress disorder, loss of innocence, a lack of basic needs being met, hopelessness and despair (Hakizimana, 2001: chap 3). Keison (1979, cited in Hakizimana, 2001: 37) distinguished three phases related to refugees' experience of trauma during the Second World War. The first phase deals with the increasing political repression at home. The second phase encompasses major traumatic experiences mostly connected with emotional reactions, including guilt and self-blame, mortal fear, anger and denial. The last phase takes place in exile and includes stressful experiences such as receiving bad reports from home, cultural shock and cultural adjustment to language problems (e.g., from French to English and/or Zulu), not understanding common art and symbols, integration problems in the new society and so on. There is no doubt that Central African refugees predominantly suffer from the second and third phase of trauma as defined by Keison.

Some of the female refugees work in hairdressing; others sell diverse products in various flea-markets around Durban and others stay at home. Male refugees are involved in different economic activities, such as security-guarding, hairdressing and repairing electronic and appliance equipment (Amisi, 2005).

2.6.1. The Livelihood Strategy of Central African Refugees in Durban and Services Offered to Them

According to Nduru (2006), refugee children are refused by some primary schools due to their asylum seeker and refugees permits. Lacking an ID is one of the biggest obstacles for refugees. Although this also applies to South African citizens, the Department of Home Affairs is slow in providing refugees documents such as the Refugees' ID and Refugee status papers and school authorities and employers are often not keen to enrol or employ people without IDs (Nduru, 2006; Palmary, 2006).

Some of Congolese refugees' problems include "the lack of free education for both children and parents, a lack of access to banking facilities and a lack of proper work permits for formal employment and trading licenses for the informal economy of the city in which they live and contribute in various ways" (Amisi, 2005: 119). They are also affected by police harassment and xenophobia (Amisi, 2005; Gebre, 2007). In addition, employers often do not have information about how to assist with obtaining or renewing refugees' IDs (the maroon ID) and refugee status papers. These documents expire after two years and are sometimes not renewed – a deterrent for would-be employers.

According to Hakizimana (2001: 94), "Some NGOs in Durban have been formed for the purpose of helping refugees. They have taken on the responsibility to assist asylum seekers and refugees out of an urgent need, but lack sufficient resources to provide even short term assistance". The focus of local NGOs is to provide the basic means of survival and self-sufficiency. NGOs should continue to spread information among South African citizens about refugees and their reasons for leaving their own countries. "The much

needed provision of welfare such as accommodation, food and clothing, as well as training in literacy and other skills, counselling services and so on, should be best achieved by NGOs” (Hakizimana, 2001). According to the Refugee Social Services and Refugee Pastoral Care managers (2006), vulnerable and bona fide refugees are assisted in this regard, although the assistance is not sufficient due to the lack of capacity. They should build on this role with appropriate assistance from government (Hakizimana, 2001). “The Church, especially, has seen the refugee cause as an important part of its pastoral, humanitarian, educational, spiritual and moral care responsibilities” (Rassool, 2006).

Considering Hakizimana and Amisi’s views about refugee assistance, there is a contradiction. While Amisi (2006) assumes that there is a lack of assistance, Hakizimana (2001) argues that there is generally some kind of assistance but also assistance in urgent circumstances. However, Hakizimana also adds that NGOs and churches assume what refugees need and then direct their efforts into giving clothing, soup or teaching the refugees to speak English. Nothing is done to help them with respect to emotional or perceived needs and no refugee desires are expressly integrated into the assistance-giving process (Hakizimana, 2001). On this point, it is clear that Hakizimana envisaged the help of refugees to be within the preliminary needs category, which is very important when they arrive but, beyond this, further steps need to be taken to empower them.

Most Durban refugees are living in miserable conditions: “They do not receive satisfactory assistance from both the government and non-governmental organizations. They are accused of causing socio-economic problems, such as unemployment, crime, drug related problems, weapon smuggling, the spread of diseases including HIV/AIDS, and taking South African spouses” (Minnaar and Hough, 1996, cited in Gema, 2001: 16; Fuller, 2008). The high rate of unemployment generates these prejudices among South African citizens as the refugees are competing with them for jobs.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework refers to a set of ideas, assumptions and methodological approaches that guide the examination of issues (Raniga, 2000: 8).

The Social Justice Perspective Theory guided this study. Social justice is defined as “the elimination of institutionalised domination and oppression” (Young, 1990 quoted in Mullaly, 2007:256). Social justice is about justice, fairness or equity. The social justice perspective has four key components of the social justice approach to community work. These are disadvantage, empowerment, needs, and rights (Ife, 2002). This theoretical framework as applied by Ife to community work is explained below.

The social justice theory originated from the theory of justice developed by John Rawls (1972). Rawls determined the principles of justice that reasonable people, with no prior knowledge of their personal stake in the outcome, would seek to apply to a society in which they were to live. His argument is complex, but he concluded with three principles of justice he believed satisfied his criteria. These are: equality in basic liberties, equality of opportunity for advancement, and positive discrimination for the underprivileged in order to ensure equity (Rawls, 1972 quoted in Ife, 2002: 49). With Rawls’ theory of justice, reaching consensus regarding the application of these principles would be a long and difficult process. The question is whether these principles are sufficient for any society concerned with justice, fairness or equity. The significant point to note is that Rawls’ principles would be understood as applying to individuals. However, analysis from an individual perspective is only one way to understand social issues and social injustice (Ife, 2002).

As suggested by broader sociological treatment of social problems and social issues, a more wide-ranging perspective than that of Rawls’ is required in order to provide an adequate framework for understanding and acting on the social issues confronting community workers (Ife, 2002). Hence, Taylor-Gooby and Dale (1981) developed a

useful threefold classification of ‘accounts of social issues’ that highlights relevant social problems and points to potential solutions useful. They describe individual, institutional reformist and structural accounts, to which post-structural category can be added (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002).

The Individual Perspective

The individual perspective on social issues locates a social problem primarily within the individual, and therefore seeks individually-based solutions. For example, poverty, unemployment and so forth are seen as the result of some defect or pathology in the individual/s affected. Solutions are sought on the basis of individual treatment or therapy, such as counselling, moral exhortation, behaviour modification and so forth (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002; Mullaly, 2007). As argued by Mullaly (2007:78) “individuals have responsibility to look after themselves, only when people do not carry out this responsibility do problems such as unemployment, lack of resources, and inadequate housing occurs”. While it may well be true that individual factors are significant in many cases, a purely individual account can be criticized in that it fails to take account of external factors over which the individual has little or no control. The individual perspective on social issues leads to the phenomenon known as ‘blaming the victim’, where the people who are penalized by an unjust society are themselves blamed for their own inadequacies (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002; Mullaly, 2007). Hence, the individual approach is inherently conservative in that it fails to take into consideration important causal factors such as income distribution, racism, patriarchy and market-induced inequality, leaving such exploitative structures and discourses essentially unchallenged and focusing all attention on the individual (Ife, 2002).

Relating to the study, unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda are blamed as being responsible for their unemployment, without taking into consideration factors beyond their control. For example, the issue of the documents they receive from the Department of Home Affairs. As the individual perspective seeks individually-based solutions, here the solutions to counter professional refugee women unemployment should encompass the effort made by refugee women in learning languages by using any

available means of learning; seeking counselling, which help refugee women to reduce their trauma and stress so that they can change their behaviour; networking with local people in order to build social capital and have the necessary information for job opportunities and so on. However, these individually-based solutions alone cannot address the problem of their unemployment.

Institutional Reformist Perspective

The institutional reformist perspective locates the problem within the institutional structures of the society and focuses on the inadequacies of the institutions established to deal with the problems: courts, welfare departments, employment services, police and so forth (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002; Mullaly, 2007). For example, poverty is seen as the result of an inadequate or ineffective social security system. Proposed solutions to social problems therefore concentrate on reforming, strengthening and improving the institutions developed to deal with them. Instead of ‘blaming the victim’, this approach might be termed ‘blaming the rescuer’ (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002). Again, there is an element of conservatism, as this approach focuses on the amelioration of social problems rather than on seeking to address their underlying causes (Ife, 2002: 50; Mullaly, 2007).

With regard to this study, as the institutional reformist perspective put the blame on the rescuer rather than the victim, the problem of addressing unemployment within refugee women in this case should be addressed through the reforming, strengthening, and improving the institutions such as the Department of Home Affairs, employment agencies, and so on. Refugees should get the proper documents from the Department of Home Affairs allowing them to access jobs; there should be an effort in processing the refugee documents in a fair period as the process is always delayed. However, these institutions-based solutions can not alone address the problem of professional refugee women unemployment.

Structural Perspective

Structural accounts of social issues distinguish the problem as lying in oppressive and inequitable social structures (Mullaly, 2007; Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002:50). This approach ‘blames the system’, as it concentrates on issues such as patriarchy, capitalism, power, institutional racism and income distribution, and identifies oppression or structural disadvantages as the major issues to be addressed (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002:50; Mullaly, 2007). In this way, change requires major restructuring of the society, whether in terms of class, race or gender. It is a more radical approach to the analysis of social problems (Ife, 2002; Mullaly, 2007). As stated by Mullaly (2007: 123) “all forms and sources of oppression must be challenged in order to bring change”.

Relating to this study, the problem of unemployment within professional refugee women from Rwanda can be addressed through restructuring the society as it is mentioned above. Issues such as power, patriarch, and capitalism need to be considered. For example gender-power relations need to be addressed. African societies always consider men as dominant figures and women have no say over their destinies. Unemployed professional refugee women need to be empowered. But also as mentioned above, the problem of unemployment within professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city can not be addressed by restructuring the society only.

The Post-Structural Perspective

The last category is post-structural accounts. Writers such as Foucault (1979) and some other post-modernists characterize social issues as being concerned with the ‘discourse’ associated with the particular problem. It maintains that social issues are rooted in the use of language, the conveyance of meaning, the formation and accumulation of knowledge, and the ways in which these are used to control and dominate through defining conformity, acceptable behaviour and so on (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002:50). It is through language that we construct discourses of power and it is in the construction of such ‘discursive power’ that oppression and disadvantage are perpetuated. This approach ‘blames the discourse’. Hence, solutions to social problems involve

deconstructing discourses of power and oppression and, through subsequent reconstruction, seeking understanding of shared knowledge and meanings in order to allow people to help shape such alternative discourses (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1981 cited in Ife, 2002).

Regarding this study, the solution to unemployment should be addressed by deconstructing the discourses of power and oppression. For example, it is taken as a reality that there are some jobs that women cannot perform and women consider this as the truth. This discourse needs to be removed. Professional refugee women need to be considered as individuals who can perform different kinds of jobs as they have knowledge and the capacity to work. They can do other jobs besides domestic work and so on. However, changing the discourse alone cannot address the problem of unemployment of professional refugee women.

As argued by Ife (2002) there is some value in all four of these approaches. Each identifies particular aspects of social issues and social change, thus it is not realistic or appropriate to concentrate on one to the exclusion of some or all of the others. Notwithstanding how important it is for the individual and institutions to implement change, unless changes are also made to the basic structures and discourses of oppression that create and perpetuate an unequal and inequitable society, any social justice strategy will have only limited value. Indeed, all programmes that claim a social justice label need to be evaluated in terms of their relationship with the dominant forms of structural oppression, particularly class, gender and race/ethnicity (but also including age, disability, and sexuality), and also in terms of their role in either perpetuating or challenging dominant discourses of power (Mullaly, 2007; Mullaly, 1993; Ife, 2002).

Conventional social policy strategies, however, tend to focus on the first two perspectives as they are relatively easy to change within the existing order and do not necessarily challenge significant interests or existing discourses of power and domination. For this reason, the critical literature seeking more radical alternatives has tended to concentrate on the third and fourth perspectives, perceiving the inability of social policy to take

account of a structural and post-structural analysis as being a primary reason for its failure to adequately address social issues and social problems (Ife, 2002:51). Community development has been largely concerned with the second and third of these perspectives on social problems, namely the institutional reformist and structural perspectives. The post-structural perspective has little relevance for a community development worker. While it provides an interesting analysis of power and disadvantages, it has had relatively little to say about what one should actually do about it (Ife, 2002). Thus, the problem of unemployment within professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city should be addressed through the combination of solutions highlighted by all the four approaches. One approach-based solution cannot suffice to resolve the problem of unemployment.

2.7.1. The component one: disadvantage

They are four categories of disadvantages. Primary structural disadvantages include the three principal forms of structural disadvantages, namely class, gender and race/ethnicity. The victims of class, gender and race/ethnicity related oppression must come first in any consideration of the disadvantaged in society. The three forms of oppression obviously interact and reinforce each other (Mulley, 1993; Ife, 2002). Other disadvantaged groups refers to the other groups which can be regarded as disadvantaged even though they are not necessarily victims of the primary structural disadvantage. This group includes the aged, people with disabilities, the isolated, those living in remote areas and gays and lesbians (Ife, 2002:59).

People can also be considered disadvantaged as a result of personal circumstances. This is termed personal disadvantage. For example, one could be considered disadvantaged due to grief over the loss of a loved one, because of problems with personal and family relationships, sexual problems, shyness and a number of other essentially personal problems (Ife, 2002).

2.7.2. The second component: Empowerment

The notion of empowerment is central to a social justice strategy and to community work, and many community workers would choose to define their role in terms of the empowerment process. The simple definition is that empowerment aims to increase the power of the disadvantaged (Ife, 2002:53; Mullaly, 2007). Power and disadvantage are important aspects of empowerment and need to be considered in any discussion of empowerment when formulating a social justice perspective.

Empowerment is about power: giving power to individuals or groups, allowing them to take power into their own hands, redistributing power from the 'haves' to the 'have-nots' and so on. According to Ife (2002:58) there are seven kinds of power involved in community-based empowerment. These overlap and interact in often complex ways. They are the following: power over personal choices and life chances, power over the definition of needs, power over ideas, power over institutions, power over resources, power over economic activity, and power over reproduction.

In order to empower disadvantaged groups, various strategies have been highlighted, namely: policy-making and planning, social and political action, and education and consciousness-raising (Ife, 2002).

Empowerment through policy-making and planning is achieved by developing or changing structures and institutions to bring about more equitable access to resources or services and opportunities in order to facilitate participation in the life of the community (Ife, 2002). Policies of affirmative action or positive discrimination acknowledge the existence of disadvantaged groups and seek to redress this disadvantage by 'changing the rules' to favour the disadvantaged.

Empowerment through social and political action emphasizes the importance of political struggle and change in increasing effective power. It seeks to enable people to increase their power through some form of direct action, or by equipping them to be more effective in the political arena (Ife, 2002: 61).

Empowerment through education and consciousness-raising emphasizes the importance of an educative process in equipping people to increase their power. Consciousness-raising could be achieved through helping people to understand the society and the structures of oppression, giving people the vocabulary and the skills to work towards effective change (Mullaly, 2007; Mullaly, 1993; Ife, 2002). Refugee women should regain power by learning languages so that they can communicate effectively. They can take training courses and then use their knowledge and experience. They need to have proper documents, which allow them to have jobs. Employment agencies should be aware of professional refugee women and they can help them to access jobs, and so on.

Empowerment is a goal and a process for overcoming oppression. It is a goal as it cannot be reached overnight. It is a process as it is ongoing (Mullaly, 2007). The major promise underpinning empowerment is that people are not objects to be exploited, to be controlled, or to be oppressed. People are subjects, human beings with inherent dignity and worth that should not be conditional on race, gender, class, or any other characteristic (Mullaly, 2007: 302).

2.7.3. The third component: Needs

As argued by Ife (2002), social justice principles are often expressed in terms of need. The notion of need is fundamental in social policy-making, social planning and community development. Understanding needs is fundamental to social justice and community development. People or communities should have their needs ‘met’ and should be able to define their own needs rather than have them defined by others.

Bradshaw (1972) developed a typology of need and he divided need into four categories: normative need, which is need defined by some authority, in accordance with an accepted standard; felt need, which is need as experienced by the people concerned; expressed need, which is need expressed by people seeking some form of service; and comparative need, which is need inferred from comparison of service provision with national or regional norms (Bradshaw, 1972 quoted by Ife, 2002: 62). Therefore, there are four

groups of people who are involved in need definition at community level. These are: the population at large; consumers or potential consumers of the service or facility that is needed; caretakers whose businesses are related to community need, such as welfare workers, social workers and so on; and the researchers and planners who infer need on the basis of statistics, survey results and other data (Bradshaw, 1972 quoted by Ife, 2002:65).

As argued by Ife (2002), population- and consumer-defined need is the most important, and should prevail over the other forms of need definition, unless basic human rights or other social justice principles are at risk. An empowerment base for community development requires people to have the capacity to define their own needs and to have them met. The role of professionals, community caretakers, researchers and planners must be to assist the community with its own need definition, possibly through helping to provide expertise where necessary, and through facilitating the process. However, their role is not to assume responsibility for need definition, thereby denying the community the right to control its own destiny (Ife, 2002). Refugee women know more their problems than others. They should be considered and included when it comes to defining their needs which impact on their lives. Their views should be considered.

2.7.4. The fourth component: Rights

Social justice implies some view of fairness or equity, and the principles on which nations of fairness or equity are based generally involve some reference to rights. Indeed, rights are fundamental to any understanding of social justice (Ife, 2002: 66). Human rights represent a powerful discourse of the idea of sharing a common humanity. To be human is to have the basic rights of human beings.

The idea of human rights implies there are obligations on the part of the state and on the part of citizens. The state has an obligation to ensure that all citizens' human rights are protected and realized through the provision of legal protection, genuine equality before the law and adequate provision of health services, education, housing, income security, economic opportunities and environmental protection. The obligations on the part of the

citizens are not only to respect the human rights of others but also to exercise one's own human rights and to make the most of one's opportunities (Ife, 2002: 68).

There are many human rights conventions and agreements, the most significant being the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was drafted in 1948 and assented to by the nations of the world through the United Nations. No nation can claim that all its citizens enjoy all the rights defined in the Universal Declaration. Yet, it remains an important rallying point for those seeking action for a more just world (Ife, 2002).

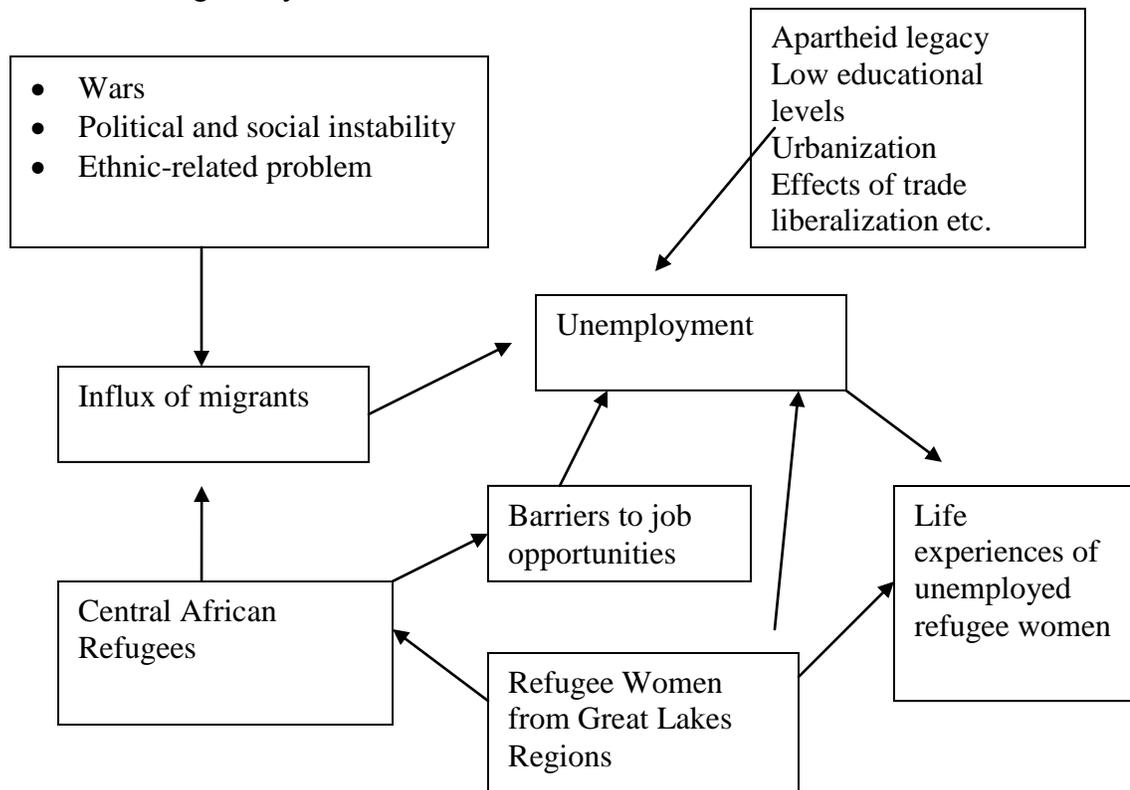
The South Africa Constitution (1996) highlights socio-economic rights in its chapter two. Every citizen has the right to food, shelter, education, employment and so forth (SA Constitution, 1996).

Human rights are a vital component of community development. The fundamental principle is that community development should seek to affirm human rights and should enable people to realize and exercise their human rights while being protected from human rights abuse. Refugees should be aware of their rights and these should be enforced as highlighted by the South African Constitution and the Refugee Act No 130 of 1998.

2.7. Conceptual Framework

Concept Map

According to Maxwell (1996: 37), “A concept map, like the theory it represents, is a picture of the territory you want to study, not of the study itself. It is a visual display of your current working theory”.



The above concept map illustrates the many facets of Unemployment in South Africa. Its high rate of unemployment is due to various factors, such as the apartheid legacy as well as the influx of migrants from other African countries in search of peace and a better life. This influx of migrants is escalated by wars, political and social instability, ethnic-related problems and so forth. Refugees from Great Lakes Regions, including ‘Rwanda’, are among that influx of migrants. As they are competing for jobs with local people and they have some barriers to getting jobs, many of them are unemployed and endure hardships.

Unemployed women are the most vulnerable. Their chances of getting meaningful and well-paying employment is sometimes limited and being unemployed results in difficult life experiences.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter aimed to present the literature related to this study. Different authors as well as different issues related to the field of study have been explored. The researcher's comments concerning the literature review were given. The theory informing this study showed that unemployment among refugee women is a social issue that needs to be addressed through a social justice perspective. The four key components of a social justice approach to community work, namely 'disadvantage', 'empowerment', 'needs' and 'rights' have been elaborated upon. It was found that most refugees rely on the informal economy for their survival. Some of the problems experienced by unemployed refugees have been described. This study bridges the gap not covered by the above literature review as it looks deeply into the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city. The following chapter presents the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter highlights the research methodology used to achieve the objectives of this study. The methodology helped the researcher to follow certain procedures in order to carry out the research. The methodology section encompasses the research design, population and sample, data collection methods, methods of data analysis, ethical consideration of the study and the validity and reliability of the study.

3.2. Research Design

This study was a qualitative case study; it sought to explore the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city and what should be done to empower them. In case studies, the researcher explores a single entity (the case) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures.

The research questions for this study explored the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city; what they think are the causes of their unemployment; and their livelihood and coping strategies in their quest to earn a living. For this study, the researcher used the qualitative research approach. Twelve unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city were interviewed. The same group of women was also used for two focus group sessions. The researcher used the combination of non-probability sampling methods: purposive and snowball sampling. In-depth interviews and focus group sessions were used to collect data. Qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the data collected.

3.3. Research Methodology

Qualitative research refers to research that underlines meaning and patterns of relationships and enables one to obtain rich, in-depth information on experience and behavioural perception (Marlow, 1998; Schuririk, 1998, in De Vos, 1998: 220). Katzenellenbogen *et al.* (2002) argues that qualitative research methods allow the researchers to understand how subjects of research perceive their situation and their role within this context. These rich descriptions of individuals' perceptions, beliefs and feelings provide insight into the meanings and interpretations given to various events and behaviours (Hakim, 1987). For qualitative study, the focus is on meaning rather than the numbers.

Thus, in-depth interviews and focus groups were appropriate for the study. In-depth interviews and focus group sessions were used in order to get detailed information regarding the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda and what they consider needs to be done to empower them. The reason for conducting face-to-face in-depth interviews was to gather rich, in-depth data about each participant's perception and experiences of being an unemployed refugee woman. According to Holloway (1997: 4) and Katzenellenbogen *et al.* (2002), "in-depth interview is a conversation in which the researcher encourages the respondent to relate in his or her own terms, experiences and attitudes that are relevant to the problem". The major advantage of this method is that it gives the respondent the opportunity for personal explanation and detailed responses.

Using focus groups was also appropriate for this study. According to Folch-Lyon and Trost (1981: 444), "A focus group session can be simply defined as a discussion in which a small number (usually six to 12) of respondents, under the guidance of a moderator, talk about the topics that are believed to be of special importance to the investigation". The group session may encourage participants to disclose behaviour and attitudes that they might not consciously reveal in an individual interview situation. Through the focus

group, the research participants should learn from one another. Focus groups essentially serve as an instructive method. Focus group sessions help the research participants to open up as they see that their colleagues are also speaking out.

3.3.1. Population

According to Higson-Smith and Bless (1995: 85), “the entire set of objects and events or group of people which is the object of research and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics is called the population”. Unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda whose husbands are also not working are considered as the population for this study.

Professional refugee means ‘a refugee who is qualified in a given field of study and has particular skills’. For example, a qualified high school teacher is considered a professional.

3.3.2. Sample and Sampling Method

Higson-Smith and Bless (1995: 88) state that “the sampling theory distinguishes between probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling occurs when the probability of including each element of the population can be determined, while non-probability sampling refers to the case where the probability of including each element of the population in a sample is not known”. The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling. The disadvantage of this technique, as mentioned in the limitation, is that “some elements might even have no chance of being included in the sample. It is thus difficult to estimate how well the sample represents a population and this makes generalization highly questionable” (Higson-Smith and Bless, 1995: 88).

The researcher used a combination of non-probability sampling methods: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. First, the researcher used purposive sampling to obtain the first four research participants. The purposive sampling method is based on the

judgment of a researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample (Higson-Smith and Bless, 1995: 88).

The snowball sampling method was then used to obtain other participants. Brink (2001: 141) defined snowball sampling as “a technique that involves the assistance of study participants in obtaining other potential participants”.

The sample consisted of 12 unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda whose husbands are also not working, who have been in Durban for more than two years and are between 25 and 50 years old.

According to Higson-Smith and Bless (1995: 86), “the subset of the whole population which is actually investigated by a researcher and whose characteristics will be generalised to the entire population is called a sample”. The researcher chose the sample considering the responsibilities they bear for their families.

3.3.3. Data Collection Methods

De Vos (1998) argued that “the most widely used methods of data collection in the social sciences are documentary sources, observation, in-depth, intensive interviews and questionnaires”. For data collection, the researcher used face-to-face in-depth interviews and focus group sessions as they were considered to be the most appropriate methods for the purpose of the study. While conducting interviews in the research participants’ homes, the researcher also made observations that provide additional information regarding their life experiences.

Face-to-Face In-Depth Interviews

Twelve unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda were interviewed. The research participants were questioned at their homes as it made the participants feel more

comfortable. Each participant had between one to two hours for the interview and all information was tape-recorded after getting their authorization.

The questions used in the interview were open-ended, which enabled the interviewees to elaborate on their experiences, feelings and thoughts and to clarify what they meant.

The researcher contacted the interviewees a week before interviewing them to ask whether they were willing to participate in the study. Many of them replied that they did not have time to participate in the study when what they meant was that they did not want to provide information and considered this interview to be a waste of their time as they perceive no tangible efforts being made to change their situations. Finally they cooperated and an appointment was set up.

During the face-to-face in-depth interviews, respondents expressed frustration talking about their life experiences. 'Anger' was also exhibited by all the research participants. They highlighted that the interview reminded them of their social status of 'being a refugee' and the 'way they are treated', while they wanted to try forget about that in order to carry on their lives. They mentioned that they had heard that other refugee students wrote about refugees, but that they did not see any changes that improved their lives as a result thereof. As the researcher was also a professional refugee woman who also experienced the problem of being unemployed, some respondents were reluctant to participate, saying that the researcher already knows what it means to be an unemployed refugee woman. However, after explaining the research purpose and ethical issues, the respondents were happy to participate in the study and they were also happy to interact with a person that speaks the same language and shares the status of being a 'refugee'. The researcher's commonality assisted with obtaining in-depth data as it informed the questions being asked.

The interviews were time-consuming because they were sometimes interrupted by participants checking what was going on in the kitchen. Many of the respondents chose to have the interview in the evening due to work commitments during the day. For some of

the interviewees, the interview was not private because the family stays in one room. However, children were not interested in what was happening and only the husbands would interject their opinions regarding certain questions, often to express anger. Despite the lack of privacy, unemployed professional refugee women still conveyed their most painful experiences.

The issue of using a tape recorder was accepted, although some participants were initially reluctant to be recorded. They were afraid that anyone could access the tape recorder and then be able to identify them. They did not want to be identified through their stories or voices. They were reassured that no one would have access to the tape recorder and that there was no way to recognize them. They then consented to its use.

Focus Group Sessions

The researcher also used two focus groups to explore what unemployed professional refugee women perceive needs to be done in order to empower them. The focus group sessions were conducted with the same twelve interviewees. They were divided into two groups of six women. The research participants were invited to meet at the researcher's residence for the group discussion. This was done in the evening and privacy was enforced. The focus groups were conducted at the researcher's house because it was thought that this would be a more comfortable setting for the participants.

The research participants enjoyed the focus group sessions. They were able to discuss their concerns in an open way and enjoyed contributing to the dialogue. They considered this discussion a stress-reliever from the anxiety they suffer due to ongoing xenophobia and a perceived lack of positive intervention in their lives. The focus group session took two hours. The research participants used their mother tongue, Kinyarwanda, to discuss the issues. The tape recorder was used after getting their permission.

3.3.4. Methods of Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data, the researcher used qualitative data analysis. This qualitative research study incorporates one of the defining characteristics of qualitative research, namely an inductive approach to data analysis (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 126). A constant comparative method of data analysis was used. A constant comparative method is one way to conduct an inductive analysis of qualitative data. It combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained. As each new unity of meaning is selected for analysis, it is compared to all other units of meaning and subsequently grouped (categorized and coded) with similar units of meaning. If there are no similar units of meaning, a new category is formed (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). In this process, “there is room for continuous refinement; initial categories are changed, merged, or omitted; new categories are generated; and new relationships can be discovered” (Goertz and le Compte, 1981, cited in Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 134). In short, it consists of four steps: “inductive category coding and simultaneous comparing of units of meaning across categories; refinement of categories; exploration of relationship and patterns across categories; and integration of data yielding an understanding of people and setting being studied” (Morehouse and Maykut, 1994: 135). The themes emerging from the data collection included time constraints, powerlessness, loss of control, loss of home, trauma and credentials.

To analyse the data, the researcher first transcribed the collected data. The data from the interviews was analysed first. It was grouped into categories according to similar responses, as highlighted by the above literature. The focus group was also analysed in the same way as the interviews. The focus group sessions mainly focused on what unemployed professional refugee women think would improve their lives. The analysis of the research design was to find out whether the research questions were adequately answered by the responses. The research questions aimed to uncover the life experiences, perceived causes of unemployment and livelihood and coping strategies of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city. The

responses were then organized according to the research questions, as related to the objectives of the study.

3.3.5. Ethical Considerations of the Study

According to Bailey (1978: 381, cited in Raniga, 2000: 44), “to be ethical means to conform to accepted professional practices as any research endeavor which uses and affects the lives of subjects raises the question of ethical standards”. Indeed, ethical issues were considered during the research process in order to minimize problems which could arise therefrom. Before the interview, the researcher read the consent form and explained any confusing sections. Thereafter, research participants agreed to participate in the research and signed the consent form.

Ethical issues such as confidentiality were considered during the research process and in the presentation of findings. The researcher made sure that research participants remained anonymous. Instead of using the research participants’ names during the presentation of findings, the researcher used capital letters to signify names. Confidentiality is important in order to protect the research participants from any potential harm which may result from the study. The data collected was also well secured.

The participants were told that their participation was not compulsory and that they could withdraw from the research at any time if they felt uncomfortable. In addition, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants so that they would not be inhibited by fear and uncertainty regarding the research purpose. The findings were honestly and accurately reported.

Participants were told that they had the right to review what the researcher reported if they wished to do so.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

According to Selltiz *et al.* (1976, cited in Brink, 2001: 124), “reliability is concerned with the consistency, stability and repeatability of the informants’ accounts as well as the investigator’s ability to collect and record information accurately”. Reliability of the research instrument refers to the degree to which the instrument can be depended upon to yield consistent results if used repeatedly over time on the same persons, or if used by two researchers (Sullivan, 2001; Brink, 2006). In other words, reliable measures do not fluctuate unless the thing being measured has changed (Sullivan, 2001).

The instrument validity refers to whether an instrument measures accurately what it is intended to measure, given the context in which it is applied (Sullivan, 2001; Brink, 2006). For this study, the content of the report is based on the responses provided by the research participants in relation to the objectives of the study and the research questions. It covers the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city; their perceived causes behind their under-employment; and their livelihood and coping strategies in their quest to earn a living. This study is valid as the instrument used measured what it intended to measure.

In general, a valid measure is deemed reliable (Sullivan, 2001). However, as argued by Sullivan (2001: 135), “If we were certain of the validity of a measure, we would not therefore need to concern ourselves with its reliability. However, evidence of validity is almost always less than perfect, and that is why we turn to other ways of evaluating measures, including reliability”. Reliability provides more evidence of validity since a reliable measure may be a valid one (Sullivan, 2001). To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher avoided any kind of bias which could occur when conducting interviews, describing and interpreting situations. The researcher was aware of behaviours that would influence validity and reliability. The data collected was accurately reported. Thus, this study is reliable and valid.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter explained the research methodology used to achieve the study's objectives. The success of any research depends largely on the methodology used. Qualitative research was appropriate for this study as its subject matter was concerned with investigating the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women living in the Durban inner city. The non-probability sampling technique was used to select a sample. In-depth interviews and focus group sessions were used to collect the data. A Constant Comparative method was used for data analysis and the findings have been reported accurately.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study. It first presents the background information of the respondents and factors unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda consider contributory to their unemployment, namely language, the issue of French qualifications and refugee documents, the high rate of unemployment and the lack of local job experience, xenophobia and financial constraints. The chapter also reflects on refugee women's informal employment context and some of the strategies they adopt in order to survive. Furthermore, it presents the role of refugee service providers in Durban; the feelings towards life experiences, encompassing psychological, economic and social experiences. Finally, it presents their attitudes and recommendations of what should be done to help them improve their lives.

4.2. Background Information of the Respondents

To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, the researcher used capital letters instead of using their names. The letters A to L represented their names. The following gives the background information of each woman.

Respondent A is a qualified nurse. She is 28 years old and has two children attending primary school. She arrived in South Africa in 2000. She was working as a nurse in her home country. Respondent A left her origin country due to feeling insecure about the country's political situation. Since she arrived in South Africa, she has never had formal work. She is surviving as a car guard. Her husband is also a car guard.

Respondent B is a qualified secretary. She is 44 years old. She has three children attending high school. She arrived in South Africa in 1999. She was working as a secretariat in her home country. She left her country of origin because of genocide in 1994. She had traumatic experiences travelling to South Africa because they had no means to survive. Since her arrival in South Africa, she has not had formal work. She is surviving as a car guard, as is her husband.

Respondent C is a qualified high school teacher. She is 41 years old. She has four children. One of them attends high school, two children attend primary school and one is enrolled in pre-school. She left her home country because of political turmoil. Since she arrived in South Africa in 2001, she has survived by selling at the flea-markets. Her husband is also doing some piece work, including selling at the flea-market.

Respondent D is a qualified secretary. She is 43 years old. She has four children. One of them is in a college, two are in high school and one is enrolled at primary school. She left her home country because of political upheaval. All of her relatives were killed in Rwanda. Since she arrived in South Africa in 1997, she has never had formal work. She was doing car guard up until 2004, but then grew tired of it. Since then, she has started selling at the flea-markets. Her husband also sells at flea-markets.

Respondent E is a qualified teacher. She is 37 years old. She was working as a teacher in her home country. She has two children attending primary school. She left her home country because of political insecurity. Since she arrived in South Africa in 1998, she has never had formal work. She was working as a car guard until 2003, but quit this occupation because her legs started to pain her due to long hours of standing. Currently, she and her husband sell things at the flea-market.

Respondent F is a qualified teacher. She is 46 years old. She was working as a teacher in her home country. She has two children. One is studying at university and another one is at high school. Since she arrived in South Africa in 2004, she has never had formal work. Although she struggled to speak English when she arrived in South Africa, she can now communicate in English. She ran away from her home country because of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. She passed through many countries to come to South Africa. She is surviving by selling at the flea-markets. Her husband is a car guard.

Respondent G is a qualified teacher. She is 39 years old. She was working as a teacher in her home country. She has three children. Two of them are in high school and one is going to primary school. She arrived in South Africa in 1997. The respondent ran away from Rwanda due to political upheaval. Since she arrived in South Africa, she has never had a formal job. She was working as a car guard and stopped in 2003 as she was suffering from backache. Since then, she has done piece work and also sells at the flea-markets. The husband is not working.

Respondent H is qualified secretary. She is 40 years old. In her home country, she was working as a secretary for the municipality. She has three children. Two of them are in high school and one of them is in primary school. She arrived in South Africa in 1998. She left her home country because of genocide. Since she arrived in South Africa, she has never had a formal job. When she arrived in Durban, she was doing car-guarding until 2005, when she stopped this due to

sickness and painful legs. Since then, she has survived by selling on the street and at flea-markets.

Respondent I is a qualified teacher. She is 38 years old. In her home country, she was working as teacher. She has four children. Two of them are going to high school and the other two are in primary school. She arrived in South Africa in 1998. She left her home country because of political turmoil. When she arrived in Durban she was a car guard, but put all her energy into looking for a job. In 2004 she worked as a book keeper but only for one year. Since then, she has not been working; she is surviving by doing piecemeal work, which includes selling at the flea-markets.

Respondent J is a qualified teacher. She is 29 years old. In her home country, she was working as a teacher. She has two children: one in primary school and another one in pre-school. She arrived in South Africa in 2005. She left her home country because of political upheaval. Since she arrived in South Africa, she has never had a formal job. She is surviving by selling on the street and at the flea-markets. The husband is not working but does piece work from time to time.

Respondent K is a qualified secretary. She is 27 years old. She has one child going to pre-school. She was working as a secretary in her home country. She left her home country because of political turbulence. Since she arrived in South Africa in 2005, she has never obtained formal work. She is surviving by working as a car guard.

Respondent L is a qualified nurse. She is 30 years old. She has two children going to primary school. She was working as a nurse in her home country. She arrived in South Africa in 2004. She left her country because of political turmoil. Since she arrived in South Africa, she has never had formal work. She worked as a car guard for two years. Currently, she is surviving by selling at the flea-markets and doing piece work. The husband is working as a car guard.

Demographics of the Respondents

Table 1: Ages of the Respondents

Age	Number	Percentage
25-33	4	33.3%
34-42	5	41.7%
43-50	3	25%
Total	12	100%

The majority of the respondents (five, or 41.7% of the sample group) were aged between 34-42 years old. Four (33.3%) were aged between 25-33 years old and three (25%) were aged between 43-50 years old (See Table 1).

Table 2: Occupation of the Respondents in Their Home Country

Previous Employment Prior to South Africa	Number	Percentage
Teachers	5	41.7%
Nurses	3	25%
Secretaries	4	33.3%
Total	12	100%

Most of the respondents (five, or 41.7% of the sample group) were qualified as teachers, four respondents (33.3%) were government officers, and three respondents (25%) were nurses (See Table 2).

Table 3: Number of Children of the Respondents

Respondents	No. of Children	Percentage
K	1	3.3%
A, C, E, F, J, L	2 each	40%
B, H, G	3 each	30%
D, I	4 each	26.7%
Total	30	100%

Most of respondents (40%) have two children. Three respondents (30%) have three children, two respondents (26.7%) have four children and one respondent (3.3%) has one child.

4.3. Contributing Factors to the Unemployment as Perceived by Professional Refugee Women From Rwanda

4.3.1. Language

The study found that language is a major barrier to getting employment for professional refugee women from Rwanda living in Durban inner city. In South Africa, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, English and IsiZulu are the languages commonly used in the workplace and in various businesses. When refugee women arrive in Durban, the majority of them only speak their mother tongues as well as French, which is their second language. A few of them have done English courses at their secondary school but this is very elementary and is used only for basic communication. As stated by a research participant:

As refugees, we have major problems in languages. English and IsiZulu are the languages commonly used in Durban. In order to get a job, you need to speak at least English. Once I arrived in South Africa, the language I spoke was Kinyarwanda and French. Then slowly, I learnt basic English when I was doing car guarding on the street (Interview with E, 19/03/2009).

All of the research participants were employed in the formal economy in their country of origin, Rwanda, but due to this language barrier, their communicative ability was limited when they reached Durban and this has contributed significantly to their unemployment. In Durban, some services providers offer English courses to refugees. For example, there is an English course at Addington Primary School on Saturdays; Refugee Pastoral Care offers tuition three times a week in the evenings; and Refugee Social Services offers it twice a week for two hours.

Very few refugee women from Rwanda attend English classes offered during the day. This is because they do not have time due to their informal employment. They also cannot attend English classes in the evenings because they are then busy with domestic work and caring for their children. In addition, the issue of their safety in the evenings was also highlighted. Moreover, the English being offered by these services is not relevant and aimed at equipping them to be able to compete for jobs with other people who already speak English, namely people from Zimbabwe, Swaziland and so on. Many of the research participants speak English because they have been in South Africa for many years and they were able to learn it on the streets. However, they cannot compete with native or second language English speakers.

Refugees do not get help from the government with respect to learning English and learning programmes are often inaccessible as refugees need to do what they call ‘dirty jobs’ every day in order to survive. Indeed, due to financial constraints, learning English is limited. If they could afford to, they would possibly hire English teachers in order to remove this communicative barrier to employment. The research participants explained that their opportunities to learn English are very limited.

Once you arrive in Durban, you are scared by the living conditions. Everything is money. The first thing to do is to look for anything you can do in order to have small money to survive. There is no time for English classes. It is not easy for us who have been taught in French to compete for job market with English speakers (Interview with B, 13/03/09).

The above discussion is in line with MacDonald and Kyle’s (2004) findings that the labour market barriers for immigrants, including refugees, are language skills, education and training, unrecognized qualifications and so on. What refugees need is to get a job in order to survive – any kind of job – even undesirable work. As they understandably want to get a job quickly, it becomes a barrier for many to learn English. There is no time to learn as they are too busy working to earn a living. They also do not have free time for English studies due to their living conditions.

In order to integrate into the community, one needs to speak the local language. Refugee women are aware that their barriers to job opportunities include language. All the research participants expressed that the government does not care for them, does not provide appropriate English language courses for them and acknowledge that they themselves compound the problem because they do not have the time to learn. Thus, government should prioritise language learning programmes for refugees that take into account their socio-economic situation. These women are professionals and they are not illiterate. They know the importance of learning. Some of them were teachers. Government assistance aside, refugees need to help themselves to learn English. They could find someone to teach them and buy or get books donated so that they can practice

reading English. All of the participants' children speak English. This is an advantage as the children can teach the parents. Ultimately, they need to make the time to learn English. Being busy with domestic work is not an excuse – their husbands should help them when necessary so that they can make time to learn English. Refugee women need to learn how to help themselves, especially as they feel that the government does not care for their welfare. Some of them have been in this country for more than ten years but have not received official assistance with learning English – a reminder that they need to create their own solutions to this problem. If they do not, they will reinforce their status of being unemployed.

4.3.2. Issue of French Qualifications

Refugees do not plan to emigrate and it is often done on the spur-of-the-moment in response to urgent necessity, meaning that some research participants left their certificates behind and therefore have no proof that they have studied. As a result, it is not easy for them to get a job or to further their studies. Those who bring certificates with them also stated that their certificates are not recognized by South Africa. There is a long accreditation process and refugees need to prove their English competency and undergo an evaluation by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA), which requires payment of money. Some of the research participants do complete this accreditation process, but say that it does not make any difference in terms of obtaining gainful employment. As stated by one research participant:

Our French qualifications are not accepted by the South African Government. It is a long process to have your qualification evaluated. Further, there is no guarantee of getting a job once these steps have been done. The only way to get a job, if you are lucky, is to have further training in South Africa. This is a problem as refugees do not have money to pay for this training, and they do not access loans like South Africans (Interview with D, 18/03/2009).

4.3.3. Issue of Refugee Documents

All the research participants are recognized as refugees. This means that they have refugee status which expires after two years. They can also apply for a refugee ID (a

maroon ID), which also expires after two years. Many of the research participants have officially been recognized as being refugees for more than five years. They have applied for permanent residence but are still waiting for a decision. Five research participants arrived in South Africa in 1998 but still do not yet have permanent residence, even though the Refugee Act (1998) states that after five years of being recognized as a refugee, the refugee can apply for permanent residence. Their refugee documents state that they have the right to work and study but those refugee documents are not recognized by employers. It is not easy to get a job if you have refugee status or a refugee ID, unless someone really wants to help. Those documents are not as familiar to employers as the green ID is.

Employers are not familiar with refugee documents. For example, when there is massive recruitment at the municipality or by any other agency, refugees are told that the recruiters consider South Africans only. The agencies tell them that they are not expected to hire refugees. Then they are told that they may consider them in the future once they have all the information regarding them (Interview with I, 30/03/2009).

Employers do not know refugee documents. If you are lucky and called for an interview, they ask you if you have a work permit. Once you try to explain that a refugee does not need a work permit you are told that they will call you, but it ends by there (Interview with G, 21/03/2009).

Research participants state that they do not have control over the documents they get from the Department of Home Affairs. The issue of getting documents from the Department of Home Affairs is always a long process, even for South Africans. However, refugee women who have a chance of succeeding in a job interview need to let potential employers know about the problems of acquiring documentation. They need to explain that refugees do not need a work or study permit. For example, at UKZN, refugees are known by the documents identifying them. They are not considered international students. However, this state of affairs was largely brought about by a refugee student organization that highlighted the problems of receiving permanent residential status. The researcher was exposed to the positive influence of illuminating authorities regarding the documentation problems faced by refugees. Bearing this in mind, refugees would be wise to educate potential employers regarding the tardiness of receiving relevant

documentation as they may gain understanding and assistance from these people. Each time they have the opportunity to meet with influential people, they need to speak their concerns.

4.3.4. High Rate of Unemployment

The research participants also recognized the impact of the high rate of unemployment in South Africa as a barrier to employment. Many South African citizens are also unemployed. Refugees are the last to be considered when job opportunities present themselves. They generally are employed only when the necessary skilled persons are scarce. If there are South African citizens who are able to do the work, preference is given to them. The research participants who do not have South African accredited educational certificates believe that it should be easy to get a job if you have them, but this is not the case. There are many refugees with South African qualifications that still do not have jobs.

It is not easy to get a job if you are a refugee. I do not have a South African qualification but I know many refugees who have South African qualifications, but still they do not have a job. This is discouraging for those who can further their studies (Interview with C, 16/03/2009).

4.3.5. Lack of Social Contact and Lack of Social Networks With Local People

Through interviewing the research participants, it emerged that refugees stay in a 'vacuum world' due to cultural differences, xenophobia and the lack of communicative skills. As stated by one research participant:

I do not interact with local people, mostly blacks, because I know that they do not like us. They know that we come to South Africa to take their jobs (Interview with B, 13/03/2009).

Sometimes, you meet local people and you start interacting. Then, when they realize that you do not speak IsiZulu, they get angry and stop conversing (Interview with E, 19/03/2009).

Refugees appear to be barred from participating in the prevailing social system because of their lack of local knowledge. South African citizens have much information regarding job and other opportunities in South Africa. The only way for a refugee to access such information is through developing relationships with South African citizens, who, out of goodwill, will then impart relevant information. Hence, if there is no contact with locals, refugees rely on their limited access to information. As stated by one research participant:

I was lucky to get contract work. But when the contract ended I did not know that I was qualified for UIF benefit. No one told me about this as I was not friendly with my colleagues (Interview with I, 30/03/2009).

Refugees do not know where to go and who to approach, particularly if jobs are not advertised in newspapers. Often though, vacancies are internally advertised within a company and, without any acquaintances and references, these become inaccessible to refugees. Refugees with local networks have a greater chance of landing jobs than those without.

The above observation was supported by Hunter (2004: 87), who stated that: “The use of current employees in recruitment techniques is very effective and inexpensive for advertising a vacancy by asking employees to tell their friends or relatives who might be interested in the vacancy. This technique is effective because the employees have a very good knowledge of the organization and will tend to recruit people who will fit into the organization”.

This is also confirmed by MacDonald and Kyle’s (2004) findings regarding labour market barriers for refugees, which include access to formal and informal employment networks, poor provision of advice and the lack of labour market knowledge.

According to the respondents, the lack of social connection limits their job opportunities because the information they receive is limited. This is illustrated by the fact that in any given organization, most of the employees belong to a particular race group, or first dominant race employees, because information regarding job vacancies is most often

transmitted from one to another rather than through the media. Furthermore, it is not easy for refugees to get jobs as they do not have references. As expressed by one research participant:

As a refugee, to get a job is not easy. When you are looking for a job they ask you for at least three references. In this country, no one knows our previous work experiences. Therefore, it is not easy to give references, and this diminishes the chance of getting a job (Interview with A, 12/03/2009).

4.3.6. Lack of Local Job Experience

Many jobs require several years' experience. The research participants only have experience in their home country. They were working as teachers, nurses, government officers and so on. Once they apply for a job in South Africa, their experience is seldom considered as they are from a French-speaking country. The following quotation highlights that:

I am a qualified teacher but I am unemployed. I worked as a teacher for five years in my home country. Since I came here to South Africa, I tried to look for a job but I did not get one because my qualification and my experience are not considered in South Africa (Interview with E, 19/03/09).

4.3.7. Xenophobia

All the research participants believe that xenophobia contributes to their unemployment. Research participants highlighted this:

Local people do not like us because they say that we came to this country to take their jobs. Sometimes, employers do not want to give you a job because you might get in trouble with your colleagues at work (Interview with J, 01/04/2009).

Most human resources officers do not have information regarding refugee issues. They find it easy to reject refugees' applications for jobs as there is no legal follow-up. They just separate refugee papers from the others during the process (Interview with F, 20/03/2009).

4.3.8. Financial Constraints

As already mentioned, financial constraints are one of the barriers to job opportunities among the research participants. They argued that it is not easy to pay for English or IsiZulu courses in order to become fluent in these languages. It is also not easy to get employed when you have financial constraints. While it is expensive to use telephones for job-searching, it is not impossible. However, when potential employers hear their pigeon English on the phone, they receive no subsequent feedback. Using computers, sending faxes, travelling to interviews, buying newspapers etc. add up. For someone who is already battling financially, these costs are big deterrents.

The job I am doing does not allow me to keep money for other things. Searching for a job is costly, and there is no hope that you can get one (Interview with H, 22/03/09).

From the above discussion, it is clear that the social justice perspective theory is critical to understanding social issues and social injustice. Taylor-Gooby and Dale developed a threefold classification account of social issues that is helpful in understanding and acting on social issues (Ife, 2002). They describe individual, institutional reformist and structural accounts, to which a post-structural category can be added. The research participants' responses regarding contributory factors to their unemployment include the individual perspective, institutional reformist perspective, structural perspective and the post-structural perspective.

For example, the issue of language being a barrier to job opportunities can be considered using all of the above perspectives. The individual can be blamed for not playing a bigger role in learning the language. However, they do not have time to learn English because they are busy with domestic work. A structural perspective applies here, as one could 'blame the system'; i.e., patriarchy, capitalism, power hierarchies and so forth mean they have little free time.

Oppression or structural disadvantage is the major issue to be addressed, which can only be done through restructuring the society, whether in terms of class, race, or gender (Ife,

2002). With respect to the research participants, gender-power relations need to be reviewed and refugee women need to be empowered. African societies still consider men to be dominant figures and women must always submit to them. Domestic work is unquestionably considered to be women's work.

Refugee women need to be empowered as this is central to social justice theory. As argued by Ife (2002: 58), seven kinds of power must be involved in community-based empowerment strategies: "power over personal choices and life chances, power over the definition of need, power over ideas, power over institutions, power over resources, power over economic activity, and power over reproduction". These overlap and interact in often complex ways.

Refugees need to be consulted by institutions dealing with them to define their needs. As argued by Ife (2002), population- and consumer-defined needs are the most important, and should prevail over the other forms of need unless basic human rights or other social justice principles are at risk. Refugees' rights need to be enforced as rights are fundamental to any understanding of social justice (Ife, 2002). Hence, what is highlighted by the Refugee Act No. 130 of 1998 should be applied to refugees.

4.4. Strategies to Survive

The research participants indicated that there is not much assistance from either the South African Government or from UNHCR or other non-governmental organizations. These refugee women are not employed and they have to find ways to earn a living. Those who have many children experience multiple problems related to schooling, food and shelter. As reiterated here:

It is not easy to survive in Durban once you are not working. The prices of everything are increasing day by day. Even those who are working are crying. Then imagine how unemployed people struggle to earn a living (Interview with B, 13/03/2009).

Four of the research participants tried to visit Refugee Service Providers based in Durban to seek assistance but they gave up. As they mentioned, Rwandan people usually like to work for themselves. They do not like begging and they will only do this as a last resort. If they do go to refugee services providers to seek assistance, they have to visit often and the assistance they get is minimal. These research participants said that if you are not able to help yourself in this country, you will die. No one takes care of them, particularly as South African citizens are dying on the streets. No one shows mercy.

In order to earn a living, the research participants are obliged to do what they call ‘dirty jobs’, such as car guarding and so on. All of the research participants did car-guarding on arrival in Durban. Then, after many years, they grew tired of this work and became sick because of the physical strain of running and standing for long hours. Hence, they explored other means of deriving an income. As expressed by one research participant:

When I arrived in South Africa in 1997, I was not able to get a job. I started doing car-guarding. It was not easy for a woman to be a car guard. You need to run up and down for the whole day and you get meagre tips. It also makes you physically and psychologically tired. Since 2004, all my body parts, including legs and back, have been pained. Then, I stopped doing car-guarding. Now I am selling at the flea-market and on the street (Interview with D, 18/03/2009).

Currently, nine of the research participants sell products such as shoes and clothes at the flea-markets during the weekends. Some of them also sell these products on the streets. As expressed by one research participant:

To get papers authorizing trading at flea markets, you sweat. But, once you have the permit, there are no problems. Only the South African Police want that permit and then everything is okay; no other complications (Interview with F, 20/03/2009).

Three research participants still rely on car-guarding as a means of survival. As expressed by one research participant:

To get a job in this country is not easy. The first time I arrived in Durban, I was hoping to get a job. I tried what I should do to get a job. But since 1999 up till now, I am still surviving by doing car-guarding. I cannot tell you the effect this has on me (Interview with B, 13/03/2009).

Hunter and Skinner's (2002: 24-25) research on the experiences of Durban's street vendors found that most refugees are in the informal economy. These findings were also consistent with the findings of Amisi (2005) and Hakizimana (2001), who found that the main activities for Central African refugees living in the Durban inner city are car-guarding, hairdressing and trading at flea-markets.

4.5. The Role of Refugee Services Providers

As expressed by the research participants, some assistance is received from Refugee Services Providers but it is too little. Refugees cannot rely on it. The research participants mentioned that the Refugee Pastoral Care (RPC) organization based at Durban Emmanuel Cathedral provides a set of school uniforms for their children. It used to provide R20 shopping vouchers per person in a weekly mass at the Durban's Emmanuel Cathedral but this is no longer given. RPC also contributes towards school fees (R120 for primary school children and R300 for high school learners) but their annual budget does not always allow for this. Refugee Pastoral Care also contributes towards tertiary education tuition fees. In addition, temporary shelter is provided for those who have no place to stay. The majority of the respondents received bed sheets and blankets, especially in the winter season, from Refugee Pastoral Care.

Eight research participants acknowledged receiving assistance from Refugee Social Services, previously known as MCC (Mennonite Central Committee: Refugees Project). For example, the research participants mentioned that they have been assisted with contributions towards rental for one month or more, for transport for school-going children and for crèche fees for their children:

Without the assistance from Refugee Social Services, it is hard to survive, especially if you are still a newcomer to Durban. RSS helped me with rent several times. Also, my children are getting transport money to go to school (Interview with G, 21/03/09).

The money I am making cannot suffice my needs. For example, it is not easy to pay rent, to buy food and pay for the crèche. Refugee Social Services helped me to pay crèche fees in difficult moments (Interview with K, 02/04/2009).

Two of the research participants are involved in some of the Refugee Social Services' self-reliance projects, in the role of interpreting and being peer educators. They are given a small stipend. However, as the research participants stated, the assistance is too little and is not always easy to get because there are stringent procedures that need to be followed to release the funds.

The Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) based at Durban assist refugee women with legal services, especially by helping them get their documents from the Department of Home Affairs. As expressed by one research participant:

I went to the Department of Home Affairs to apply for a refugee's ID. I waited for the whole year, while normally it takes three months to get it. When I went to check, I was always told to wait. Finally, I called the Lawyers for Human Rights for assistance. Within two weeks, I got my refugee ID. Without the assistance from the Lawyers for Human Rights, I would never have my refugee ID book (Interview with E, 19/03/2009).

Hakizimana (2001) confirms that Refugees Services Providers in Durban was formed to help refugees. They have taken responsibility for assisting asylum seekers and refugees with their urgent needs, however, they do not have sufficient means to do so. They provide much-needed welfare in the form of accommodation, food and clothing, as well as literacy training, counselling services and so on.

From the social justice perspective theory, the component 'need' is seen as being fundamental to social justice and community development, firstly through believing that people or communities should have their needs met and, secondly, by enabling people or communities to define their own needs rather than have them defined by others (Ife, 2002). Bradshaw (1972, cited in Ife, 2002: 65) developed a typology of needs divided into four categories: normative need, which is need defined by some authority, in accordance with accepted standards; felt need, which is need experienced by the people

concerned; expressed need, which is need expressed by people seeking some form of service; and comparative need, which is need inferred through comparing service provision with national or regional norms.

It is important to emphasize population- and consumer-defined need, namely the assertion of the primacy of people being able to define their own needs, and to realize that caretaker-defined and inferred need is disempowering and enforces the dominance of professional power. Population- and consumer-defined needs are the most important, and should prevail over the other forms of needs definition unless basic human rights or other social justice principles are at risk (Ife, 2002). In light of the above context, refugees should be involved in defining their needs.

4.6. Experiences and Feelings of Unemployed Professional Refugee Women from Rwanda

There is great variation in the experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda, due to disparities in their livelihood strategies. Their socio-economic as well as psychological experiences are discussed below. These sometimes overlap.

4.6.1. Psychological Experiences

4.6.1. 1. Stress/Trauma

All research participants emphasized stressful and traumatic experiences related to unemployment. They had good positions in their home country but when they arrived in South Africa, they became unemployed. They are stressed by the kind of low-level jobs they are doing and do not hope to get better jobs as they consider their chances of employment to be limited. Local people look down on them and disrespect them when they look after cars on the streets. It is psychologically difficult car-guarding when many of them were financially independent and even had their own cars in their home country. They feel humiliated by local people but also by other refugees who are working.

When you are unemployed those who are working consider you worthless, stupid and incapable of doing anything. Finally, you end up by seeing yourself the way they consider you – as worthless (Interview with D, 18/03/2009).

As expressed by another research participant:

If you are unemployed, you are considered stupid, as someone who does not know how to look for a job. They look on you as something disgusting. You have no value when you are not working. You also end up feeling and seeing yourself as useless and worthless (Interview with B, 13/03/2009).

The research participants felt stressed and could not reconcile with the conditions they are living under. They never anticipated that this would happen to them. Now they have experienced what it means to be ‘unemployed’ in addition to being ‘a refugee’. When they were in their home country they were not interested in understanding others’ trauma of being unemployed.

The research participants said that doing ‘dirty jobs’ was a new experience for them. If they had not been working in their home country, they may not have felt so keenly the drop in their life stations. For those who were working, it is a burden to survive doing odd jobs. They try to forget that they have studied so that they don’t get angry with the situations they find themselves in.

Uwantege’s (2007) study on refugee women from the Great Lakes Regions attending the French-Swahili church at Pietermaritzburg, found that the research participants are also stressed by their new life and unemployment.

Linders (2001) highlights how most unemployed people feel acute shame and stigmatization for being out of work. As a result, they start to withdraw from the community. Obviously, the impact of unemployment on those out of work and their families varies enormously (Linders, 2001; Feather, 1990; Sinfield, 1983: chap 2). Unemployment destroys one’s sense of human solidarity and is linked to continuous ill health, arduous and often hazardous work for low income, lack of power to influence change and high levels of anxiety and stress (Linders, 2001). According to Feather (1990:

32), unemployment has various negative effects on the psychological well-being of individuals and their families.

All research participants expressed that being an unemployed refugee in this country is stressful. The fact that they are poor, unemployed refugees car-guarding and selling on the streets means they do not get the respect they deserve. All of them mentioned that they have guarded cars on arriving in South Africa. Some were pregnant when doing so. Many men subjected them to unwanted attention, asking whether they were married or not. Even the street kids propositioned them due to their low status. As expressed by the research participants:

If you are doing car-guarding you are considered a gangster and no one respects you. Street kids and homeless gangsters see you in the same way and as equals. They call you baby, sweet – all kinds of strange names we are not familiar with. They proposition you even if you are 45 years old, married and have children. Sometimes they want to hit you for refusing their proposition (Interview with B, 13/03/2009).

I always feel stressed by the job I am doing, 'car-guarding'. This is because I see that this is not the job I should do. People show me that this is not a real job. The clients park their cars, but they run away from you when you want to greet them because they are tired of you and they do not want to look at you. Clients also sometimes give you rotten food, which should not be eaten by anyone. As an unemployed professional refugee woman, you feel so stressed. In our home country women were respected but in South Africa, we are disrespected because of the job we are doing (Interview with K, 02/04/2009).

When a client is parking his car, he does not even consider you as a person. Some of the clients giving you tips do not want to touch your hands (Interview with B, 13/03/2009).

Research participants expressed that they are disrespected. No one believes that they have studied or worked before. As they expressed, no educated woman would do a dirty job like 'car-guarding', but they do not have choice.

While I was doing car-guarding, the client asked my level of education. I told him that I have a teaching certificate and I was a teacher in my home country. He laughed at me, saying that I was joking (Interview with G, 21/03/09).

All of this stress and bad treatment determines their relationships with other people, especially with the local people. Isolation is the result of this stress and trauma – authentic communication is not possible when one is not at the same socio-economic level. They are angry, anxious, worried, frustrated and jealous of everyone who is in a good position. This is a natural psychological reaction. As expressed by one research participant:

If you are an unemployed professional refugee woman, you feel pain and are not happy. How can you be happy if you can see other people working while you have the same knowledge, the same qualification? It is a very painful experience but I try to forget who I was. Losing your country is losing everything (Interview with F, 20/03/2009).

The research participants conveyed that they are always worried about their present and future life. As expressed by the research participant:

Being a refugee and unemployed is stressful. I always think about what I had in my home country and how I lost everything. I do not know what to do. Today counts for me, as I do not know about tomorrow. The stress is not only within me but also within my family. My children suffer more than me as I cannot fulfil their needs as a mother (Interview with D, 18/03/09).

4.6.1.2. Isolation

Some of the research participants isolate themselves from society. This is because they are frustrated and not happy for their social status. They feel that people look down on them, even if it is not the case. They feel that they are neglected by other people and they are considered useless, as having no value. As stated by one research participant:

Being unemployed when you were working before is stressful. If you meet people they ask you about your job. Then, as you feel humiliated, you choose to go away from them to avoid such questions. You also feel that they are looking down on you as you are not working. This is a natural reaction (Interview with E, 19/03/2009).

The above discussion is in line with the findings of Linders (2001; Sinfield, 1981:41), namely that unemployed people always feel angry, frustrated, tense, worried, bored and jealous of those who are working. They feel humiliated, depressed, degraded and so on.

4.6.1.3 Hopelessness and Despair

For most of the research participants, loss of social status is virtually assured because they are at the bottom rung of society in the country of exile. The constant fear of being expelled is paralyzing; also, feelings of powerlessness, sadness, anger as well as aggressiveness and self-destructive impulses may increase. As they mentioned, they do not see their future in a positive light as they do not believe that their situations will change for the better. They experience despair, depression and hopelessness and keenly feel the futility of their situations, especially when comparing their present with the past.

Our lives have already been destroyed and there is really no hope that unemployed refugee women can improve their situation. All the barriers to employment remain. So how can our life improve? (Interview with F, 20/03/09).

Research participants should not give up and lose hope though. There is a Kinyarwandan proverb that says: 'if you are still alive, everything is possible'. It seems apt. As the proverb implies, the research participants must be brave, have courage and hope when things are going poorly. There is great power in changing one's attitude: If someone sees something in a negative way, the chances of changing it lessen because the negativity hinders a person's ability to think creatively and find solutions to problems. Indeed, the person must reflect on past experiences where s/he was able to get out of difficulty as this will buoy them up and create optimism. They should also seek counselling from wise people when they lose hope as collectively talking about the problem could generate resolutions.

4.6.1.4. Self-Esteem and Personal Losses

Research participants' feelings of self-worth have been severely affected. Their self-esteem and self-confidence has been diminished. The research participants were working in their home country but are now unemployed in South Africa. For the first time, most of them have had to really try hard to get jobs. When they find themselves disqualified from acquiring proper jobs, they think themselves worthless. They are forced to forget who they were in order to survive. When they start doing 'dirty jobs', it is with a sense of disbelief – they battle to come to grips with their difficult and demeaning circumstances.

As a woman working in our home country, you have self-esteem; you do not consider yourself to have an inferior status, and you consider yourself worthy. Your husband also sees you in a different way: as someone contributing to a better life for the family. But here in South Africa, being unemployed, you are nothing (Interview with K, 02/04/2009).

The above discussion is in line with Sinfield's findings about the patterns of unemployment: first there is shock, which is followed by an active job-hunt, during which time the individual is still optimistic. Second, when all efforts fail, the individual becomes pessimistic, anxious and suffers active distress; this is the most crucial state of all. Third, the individual becomes fatalistic and adapts her/himself to her/his new and narrower job scope. S/he now exhibits a 'broken' attitude (Sinfield, 1981: 37).

Some of the research participants expressed that they still have hope for improvement but the problem is that they are getting older. If possible, they should do a short training course which could improve their chance of getting a job. However, many are not afforded the opportunity as they are sometimes not accepted for training as the trainers want South African citizens.

Research participants need to know that there is no age limit to learning. Whenever they have the opportunity to learn, they must take it. They must try to always maintain a positive attitude and believe that they are able to do whatever they set their mind to. They must not tire when their applications are rejected for training opportunities. Some agencies do consider their applications and it is not a foregone conclusion that refugees are always rejected.

4.6.2. Economic Experiences

4.6.2.1. Lack of Basic Needs (Shelter, Food, Education, Clothes and Sanitation)

The study found that the respondents' unemployment led to a lack of basic needs for themselves and their families. When neither they nor their husbands are working, it is hard to escape the poverty trap. Unemployed refugee women contribute to the survival of their families by doing piecemeal jobs. They have no alternative. As the research participants expressed, life is very hard, and basic necessities are becoming more expensive. Survival is a dilemma for the research participants.

Their unemployment goes hand-in-hand with their poverty. Their financial woes mean that everyone in the family – husband, wife and children – is unable to live a normal and decent life. It is not easy to provide healthy food, proper shelter, a good education, health care and so on. Women bear the brunt of this burden: women traditionally care for the children. When women cannot provide the basic needs for their children, they cannot sleep and worry incessantly. The men tend to come home late in the evenings because they do not want to hear about the problems that cannot be solved and the tension in the family increases.

Men do not think of what to cook. Women are always thinking about the food for the evening and how they are going to get it as they have to shop day by day. This is always stressful as you have no means to buy things (Interview with G, 21/03/ 2009).

As a professional refugee woman, you think about your past and consider the current moment where you cannot have your needs met. Life changes (Interview with C, 16/03/2009).

From the social justice perspective, there are three principles of justice, namely: equality in basic liberties, equality of opportunity for advancement, and positive discrimination for the underprivileged in order to ensure equity (Ife, 2004: 49). Further, human rights are fundamental to any understanding of social justice. The South African Constitution

(1996) highlights socio-economic rights. Hence, every citizen has the right to food, shelter, education, employment and so on. Therefore, being unemployed means citizens are not able to enjoy their rights and injustice remains unchallenged.

4.6.2.2. Lack of Economic Independence and Freedom

The research participants highlighted that unemployed refugee women are not economically independent. When they were working in their home country, they were economically independent and were able to buy whatever they wanted. Now, they are deprived of some of their needs, as the following quotation shows:

Women need different things. You cannot always ask your husband for this and that when he is also not working. So there is deprivation of such things and you do not really get what you need as a woman. In addition, the tension amongst unemployed people is great so you prefer to keep quiet about everything you cannot afford (Interview with D, 18/03/2009).

As an unemployed refugee woman, you cannot get what you were getting before. You cannot buy most of what you need. As a woman, you need to look nice. But with financial constraints and the kind of dirty jobs we are doing, we cannot look nice as we did in our home country. Imagine the implication this would have on you (Interview with G, 21/03/2009).

4.6.3. Social Experiences

4.6.3.1. Loss of Being a Good Mother

The research participants mentioned that they cannot fulfil their roles as women and mothers due to their unemployed status. Usually, women are caretakers. Children as well as husbands are deprived of their love as they are often angry and depressed. If you are stressed and unhappy, it is difficult to hold normal conversations. Women are supposed to play a caring role in the family but, because of unemployment, the familial dynamics change. The women always complain about the children making noise in their flats and about the overcrowding as all family members stay in one room, sometimes sharing with

other people. Hence, the dialogue at home is not pleasant and the children are not shown the love and care they crave. As a result, the children also do not enjoy their childhood.

Further, the research participants were greatly concerned about the changes in their children's behaviour and customs.

If you are an unemployed refugee it is not easy to get a nice flat. The flats we are living in are not appropriate for the family. In our culture, children should not see you sleeping. But here in South Africa, we have to sleep in one room. All of this reminds you about the past, and we are worried about our children's behaviour (Interview with D, 18/03/09).

Uwantege's (2007) research reiterates that refugees' accommodation is fraught with problems related to overcrowding. Women and girls are particularly at risk as they are often exposed to sexual abuse at the hands of the men living with them.

The research participants explained that their choices with respect to reproduction are dictated by their living conditions and social status. The following quotations highlight some of the reproductive issues the refugee women face.

I like children and I have only two children. I cannot have another baby as my husband and I are not working. When I was in my home country my husband and I were working and everything was okay. I was planning to maybe have four children, but in this country, as an unemployed refugee, it is not easy to raise children as life is impossible. Even to raise those I have is a problem (Interview with J, 01/04/09).

My husband and I are not working. As an unemployed refugee, you cannot get medical aid. The treatment we get from the public hospital is not satisfactory. If you go to the hospital to give birth, you do not get a warm welcome. The local people are not happy with us because they say that we come to this country with our husbands. They are not happy for us at all (Interview with A, 12/03/2009).

It is better to die from family planning methods than to have children that you will not be able to look after (Interview with J, 01/04/09).

All the above experiences remind unemployed professional refugee women of their past, where they would be able to plan their reproduction choices and have adequate shelter for their families.

4.6.3.2. Xenophobia

The research participants conveyed their experiences of 'xenophobia'. They highlighted that there is no connection or social network between them and local people (mostly black people). As highlighted by the research participants:

Local people, notably black, do not like us. For them, being a refugee means you must be 'umutindi', meaning very poor. If they see you wearing nice clothes, they are not happy for you. They start asking you so many questions and want to get into your private life (Interview with E, 19/03/2009).

Some local people are happy when they see us suffering because they do not like us. They always ask you how you survive, where you stay and when you can go back. Then you tell them your story, thinking that they will understand who you are and why you are here. But after hearing your story, nothing changes (Interview with D, 18/03/2009).

The research participants explained that they experience xenophobia on the streets where they try to trade.

When you are trading on the streets, some of the local people are not happy with you. They always ask you questions such as: why did you come here to be street traders? Is it not possible to do that in your home country instead of coming here to South Africa? (Interview with H, 22/03/2009).

What some of the local people say shows that they do not accept refugees. They do not know the difference between refugees and economic migrants. They must think that a refugee is just a foreigner who chooses to come to South Africa to live. Otherwise, they would feel sorry for refugees, instead of hurting them.

Since the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, research participants realized that many local people are not happy with them. However, some local people do feel sorry for refugees.

During the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, we were frightened. But, as refugees, we do not have anywhere to go. We ran away from our country due to political insecurity. Many people went back to their home country. It is not the case for us (Interview with I, 30/03/ 2009).

All local people are not the same. Some of them were telling us to not worry, that we would be safe and that those who wanted to attack us were being watched out for. Then we felt strong and supported (Interview with F, 20/03/2009).

During the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, Durban was less affected by xenophobia than other South African areas. Therefore, key stakeholders were able to limit the severity of the xenophobic attacks. However, some refugees still experienced xenophobic attacks on an individual basis.

Thanks God. The local authorities in Durban were able to protect us during the xenophobic attacks of May 2008. But there are still some local people who practice xenophobia. Sometimes you need to be wise as you do not know who they are. We need to make sure that no one recognizes us for being foreigners. It is not nice to wear our traditional clothes as we can be singled out. In a taxi, you keep quiet even if you do not get your change (Interview with K, 02/03/2009).

Research participants said that they are called names such as ‘Makwerekwere’ and that the local people sometimes swear at them if they recognize that they are foreigners. Also, research participants expressed that they are sometimes treated unfairly and attribute this to xenophobia.

The above findings were confirmed by Uwantege (2007) in that refugee women are identified by their mother tongues, are subsequently called ‘Makwerekwere’ and are also not welcome at the clinic and so on. Also, they experience xenophobia when they trade. Murekatete’s interview (2002) reinforces the notion of xenophobia experienced by refugee women, in her case when they started selling their goods at a Tshwane market. They were not accepted by the local people and no one wanted to talk to them. They were called Makwerekwere too.

The research participants also highlighted other xenophobia-related mistreatment. For example, refugees are occasionally asked to pay a great deal of money as a deposit to open an electricity account; they are sometimes asked to pay inflated rent before occupying a flat; refugee children are periodically not accepted by schools and in some cases, refugees are not welcome at certain hospitals.

4.7. Coping With Difficult Situations, Including Xenophobia

The research participants thought that xenophobia, the fear of and/or discrimination against foreigners, is caused by the lack of knowledge about foreigners, including refugees. It is exacerbated by the hard living conditions that local people, mostly black, experience and the foreigner is blamed for these. They are aware of xenophobia and, where possible, make choices that limit their exposure to it. They avoid staying in townships and prefer to stay in Durban inner city, where they feel more secure.

As refugees have nowhere else to go, they just accept things as they are and put their hope in God. All the research participants stated that they drew their strength and courage from God. They attend prayer groups that provide moral support and also act as social networks. Refugees greatly help each other through these prayer groups.

Refugees also avoid situations that might put them in conflict with local people. Refugees like staying together, for example in the same building, and form groups as a way of gaining power to counter their lack of power in other areas of their lives. However, keeping to themselves reinforces xenophobia and becomes a barrier to integrating with the local community.

4.8. Attitudes and Recommendations of the Research Participants Regarding What Should be Done to Improve Their Lives

The focus group sessions focused on the research participants' views about what they think should be done in order to improve their lives.

- ❖ Reducing the rate of unemployment in South Africa should lead to a positive impact on the research respondents' situations.
- ❖ The research participants' view is that the government should provide assistance with respect to languages programmes and that the Department of Home Affairs should ensure proper refugee papers (Identity Document and refugee status) are timeously given, thereby permitting them to find gainful employment. Languages programmes should be made possible through financial assistance from the government or UNHCR and they should be held in the evenings, as it is not possible for them to leave their day-time jobs in order to learn languages. Without their livelihood strategies, they would not have money to buy food and pay for shelter. However, if Refugee Services Providers could guarantee that it will fulfil these needs, they could go for English classes during the day.
- ❖ Furthermore, English programmes should take into account the vocabulary needed for refugees to seamlessly interact with the local population. They should be provided for a year or more and, once the refugee is considered as fluent as local citizens, then s/he should be given a certificate to that effect.
- ❖ Agencies that assist locals to get jobs and provide training should be extended to refugees. Many training programmes and employment agencies do not consider refugees. Refugees should also have agencies dedicated to helping them get jobs. Refugees do not have access to loans and some short-term training programmes do not accept refugees. In order to integrate refugees into the community, remove barriers to finding gainful employment and facilitate easier access to the job market, discriminatory practices at the agencies must be discontinued.
- ❖ Once refugees have received their documents from the Department of Home Affairs, integration should be easier. The documents they have are not accepted by employers and they are not familiar with them. Even those who have been in

South Africa for more than ten years do not have proper documents. The lack of proper documentation is used as a reason to discriminate against refugees in the labour market.

- ❖ Some of the research participants emphasized that there is still a long way to go before refugees can be integrated into this country. Refugees are given papers that allow them to work and study but certain barriers inhibit them from achieving their employment and educational goals. They argue that there is no effort being made to integrate refugees into the communities. Some of the research participants suggested that if there are no tangible plans to integrate refugees, it might be better to re-settle them in other countries that can protect them.

4.9. Conclusion

This chapter attempted to analyze the data. The research participants' thoughts about what they think contribute to their unemployment have been explored. Their livelihood strategies have also been explored. Their experiences and feelings have been highlighted. The majority of the research participants suffer from stress, trauma and isolation. The research participants' ideas about what should be done to empower them have been explored. The following chapter deals with the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The study was conducted with the aim of understanding the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda who live in the Durban inner city. The data was collected through in-depth interviews with twelve unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda. Two focus group sessions were also conducted with the same group of women. They expressed their views regarding what should be done to improve their lives. This summary of findings is based on the objectives of the study: to explore the experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city; to discover factors that they consider contribute to their unemployment; and to explore their livelihood and coping strategies. The chapter is concluded with the researcher's recommendations.

5.2. Contributing Factors to the Unemployment, as Perceived by Professional Refugee Women from Rwanda

The study provided the answers to the research questions. The research questions were the following: What are the life experiences of unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in Durban inner city? What do they think are the causes of their unemployment? What are their livelihood and coping strategies in their quest to earn a living? The following summary of findings addressed the above mentioned research questions.

The study revealed that unemployment for professional refugee women is caused by various factors. The main causes of unemployment include incompetence with local languages, the issue of French qualifications, the issue of refugee documents, the high rate of unemployment in South Africa, the lack of social contact and social networks with local people, the lack of local job experience, xenophobia and financial constraints.

Research participants stated that their inability to communicate in local languages is a major barrier to job opportunities. All of the research participants only spoke their mother tongue, Kinyarwanda, and their second language, French, when they arrived in South Africa. However, they were obliged to communicate in the prevailing local languages, IsiZulu and English. They had problems with learning these languages due to a lack of money to pay for tuition. Moreover, the lack of accessible learning programmes and their time-consuming livelihood strategies made it hard for them to learn English and isiZulu. Subsequently, their poor English prevents them from competing with local people for professional jobs.

As stated by the research participants, the lack of local job experience, the issue of French qualifications and problems receiving refugee documents (which expire after two years) contribute to their unemployment. Their previous experiences prior to coming to South Africa as well their French qualifications are not accredited in South Africa. This inhibits the participants from getting jobs in the formal sector as most of the posts require SA qualifications. The documents issued by the South African Department of Home Affairs are not familiar to many employers (Maroon ID and A4 refugees' status document) and are only valid for two years, although they are renewable.

The research participants' lack of social contact and social networks with local people contribute to their under-employment. As they expressed, they stay in a 'vacuum world' due to cultural differences, xenophobia and their inability to communicate. They have no relatives or close South African friends who can help them get information about job opportunities. Hence, they do not know where to go and who to approach. Many jobs are not externally advertised and information regarding vacancies is often internally

advertised. In this latter case, they do not have access to information regarding these vacancies. This is confirmed by Kyle's (2004) findings, namely that labour market barriers for refugees include lack of access to formal and informal employment networks, poor provision of advice and the lack of labour market knowledge.

As the research participants expressed, the lack of local job experience also contributes to their unemployment. Their experiences prior to coming to South Africa are not recognized. This inhibits the research participants from getting a job in the formal sector. Due to their informal work activities and long hours worked, research participants cannot take time off for many interviews and lack the resources needed to conduct intensive job searches and to apply for jobs. The fact that South Africa already has a high rate of unemployment makes it even less likely that their applications will be successful.

As identified by the research participants, xenophobia also contributes to their unemployment. Scarce job opportunities breeds animosity on the part of local people (mostly poor black South Africans). They think foreigners come to South Africa to take the already too-few jobs. The findings of Amisi (2005), Uwantege (2007) and the interview with Murekatete during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002) concur.

Some employers see that there is hostility between foreigners and local people and prefer not to hire foreigners to negate the possibility of conflict.

5.3. Strategies to Survive

Although unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda are not formally working, they earn a living by being involved in informal activities. In order to survive, all research participants stated that they guarded cars when they entered South Africa. As a woman, it was not easy to do this because of the long hours, the physical challenges and because they were targeted by criminals and street kids looking to proposition them. In addition, very few clients treated them well – sometimes they even gave them rotten

food. Thus, research participants shifted from car-guarding to other informal activities. When they entered South Africa, car-guarding was the only available informal work they could do as there are no specific requirements. All one needed to do was just stand on the street and watch the parked cars.

Currently, some of the research participants are selling at the flea-market at The Workshop on the weekends. They also sell their wares on the streets. Once they got their refugee status documents, they were able to get trading permits allowing them to sell at flea-markets or on the streets. All research participants said that they became sick from doing car-guarding work, which was another reason to start trading. Some of them also do other piecemeal work, such as cleaning. Few research participants still guard cars.

5.4. Role of Refugee Services Providers

Research participants received assistance from Refugee Services Providers. These include Refugee Social Services, Refugee Pastoral Care and the Lawyers for Human Rights. Refugee Social Services and Refugee Pastoral Care deal with social services while Lawyers for Human Rights deal with refugees' rights and protection issues. All the research participants reported that they receive assistance from Refugee Pastoral Care. This kind of assistance consists of contributions towards school fees for their children and the provision of school uniforms.

Eight research participants received social assistance from Refugee Social Services. They have been assisted with contributions to rent for one month or more, contributions towards transport for school-going children, and contributions towards crèche fees for their children. Two of the research participants are involved in some of the Refugee Social Services' self-reliance projects, in the role of interpreting and acting as peer educators. They are given stipends. Some research participants give up and do not get assistance as it is often a lengthy process to do so.

The Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) based in Durban assists the research participants with legal services, notably by helping them get their documents from the Department of Home Affairs. The research participants expressed that would not have received their documents without the assistance of the Lawyers for Human Rights.

5.5. Experiences and Feelings of Unemployed Professional Refugee Women from Rwanda

There is a great variation of experiences among unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda. Three important components, namely psychological, social and economic experiences are considered. They also overlap. Their socio-economic as well as psychological experiences are discussed below.

5.5.1. Psychological Experiences

Psychological experiences include stress and trauma, isolation, hopelessness, despair, low self-esteem and personal losses. All research participants emphasized how being unemployed caused stress and trauma. They were forced to flee their countries. This means that they took nothing with them. They lost their human and material resources. In the host countries they incur trauma and stress disorders due to the various kinds of losses they experience. They find themselves in a trap of misery and hopelessness as they do not see a bright future ahead of them. This confirms the findings of Uwantege (2007), Hakizimana (2001) and Linda (2001).

Keison (1979, cited in Hakizimana, 2001: 37) distinguished three phases in refugees' traumatic experiences during the Second World War. The first phase deals with the increasing political repression at home. The second phase of major traumatic experiences is mostly connected with the emotional reactions, including guilt and self-blame, mortal fear, anger and denial. The last phase occurs in exile and includes stressful experiences such as receiving bad reports from home, cultural shock and adjustment to language problems, integration problems in the new society and so on. There is no doubt that Central African refugees mostly suffer from the second and third phases of trauma.

Research participants are always worried about the quality of their lives. They always feel angry, frustrated and tense. All these kind of stresses and worries influence their relationships with others. They isolate themselves from other people. They think that people look down on them. They feel neglected and useless. Their self-esteem and self-confidence are severely affected. Very few research participants still hope for a brighter future, even if they manage to get South African certificates.

5.5.2. Economic Experiences

The research participants lack basic needs (shelter, food, education, clothes and sanitation). Due to their lack of employment, they and their families are unable to live a normal and decent life. It is not easy to provide healthy food, proper education and so on. Amisi's (2005) findings elaborate on this issue. As explained by the research participants, they are obliged to rent flats and endure hazardous living conditions. The flats are overcrowded and in most cases, they share accommodation with other people. Indeed, women and girls are at risk of sexual abuse. Uwantege (2007) and Amisi (2005) highlighted that refugees live in shared and overcrowded rooms. The majority of them stay at St. George Street and Point Road, where they can rent the cheapest flats and which have no regulations. They find it hard to provide for their basic needs, i.e., nourishing food, proper education and access to health facilities. Amisi's findings (2005) illustrate this.

The research participants described how unemployed refugee women are not economically independent. They are not able to buy whatever they want. As their husbands are also not working, they cannot ask them for money. Hence, they are deprived of some of their needs.

5.5.3. Social experiences

Social experiences include the inability to be a good mother, the toll unemployment takes on their marriages and xenophobia. Research participants felt that they cannot fulfil their roles as women and mothers due to their under-employment. Anger and depression

always characterize their emotional state. This inhibits their caretaking role and their children and husbands are deprived of their love. Further, the research participants were concerned about their children's behaviour and the effects that living in an overcrowded room have on them. The married couple also lacks space and privacy so that they can live a normal life. Research participants expressed that their reproductive choices are curtailed by resource constraints.

The research participants have experienced xenophobia. No connections or social networks exist between them and the locals, mostly black people. Hence they create their own social networks and this ultimately reinforces their isolation and encourages xenophobia. The research participants expressed that local people do not like them and undermine them. The research participants experience xenophobia on the streets, where they trade and look after cars. Local people think refugees come to South Africa to take their jobs. Research participants told of how they are called 'Makwerekwere'. In Murekatete's interview (2002) she also described how refugees are called 'Makwerekwere' and experience xenophobia when they sell their goods at the market. Research participants stated that they avoid wearing their traditional clothes so that they will not be singled out as foreigners. Similarly, Uwantege (2007) highlights that refugee women in Pietermaritzburg experience xenophobia, often because they are identified as being foreign when wearing their traditional clothes. Hence, they do not wear their traditional clothes.

During the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, the research participants personally experienced that many local people were not happy that there were refugees living in South Africa. However, some local people felt sorry for refugees. Research participants emphasized the protection provided by key Durban stakeholders during the xenophobic attacks of May 2008. Durban was less affected by xenophobia than other areas.

In order to cope with xenophobia, refugees avoid doing anything that will distinguish them. They prefer to stay in the Durban inner city as they feel more secure there than in

the townships. They have nowhere else to go. They put their hope in God, who strengthens them and gives them courage.

The research participants offered valuable recommendations regarding what should be done to improve their lives. Primarily, reducing the rate of unemployment in South Africa should lead to a positive impact. Research participants expressed that government should provide assistance with regard to learning language programmes. The English programme should facilitate promoting refugees' seamless integration into the local community. In addition, they need to be given proper documents from the Department of Home Affairs, which will enable them to get gainful employment. However, research participants expressed that there is a long way yet to go to integrate refugees into South African society.

5.6. Recommendations From the Researcher

In this study, it was found that unemployed professional refugee women from Rwanda living in the Durban inner city have various life experiences resulting from their unemployment. Although there are other specific factors contributing to their unemployment, problems related to language issues, inadequate dispensing of documentation as well as xenophobia are some of the leading causes of their unemployment. Therefore, the solution would comprise the implementation of a language programme, timeously issuing refugees the relevant documents to enable them to get jobs and countering xenophobia. Refugees also need to play a greater role in seeking solutions to their own problems.

Although the Refugees Act No. 130 of 1998 stipulates the guidelines regarding the treatment of refugees, those guidelines are seldom considered by the South African Government. For example, there are refugees who have been in South Africa for more than ten years but still do not have the relevant documents. The Department of Home Affairs always delays processing their applications. The latter inhibits refugee integration as the first step towards integration involves having proper documents. In addition, the

Refugees Act of 1998 envisages that refugees should enjoy full legal protection, which includes the rights set out in chapter 2 of the SA Constitution (1996). However, these rights are seldom enforced.

- ❖ There should be strong advocacy groups to help refugees to fight for their rights. As the government has promised to fulfil the Refugees Act No. 130 of 1998 but does not do it, refugees are powerless to effect positive change. Organizations dealing with refugee issues, such as the LHR, try to lobby for refugee rights but in most cases it is not easy to challenge government's inaction.
- ❖ Many South African citizens do not know about refugees and their challenges. Therefore, better awareness should be promoted among the local population about who refugees are and what their rights are. The state should proactively use, for instance, its press office and the media to raise awareness about refugees in order to help local people to accept them. State officials should be the first people to protect the rights of refugees and not discriminate against them when posts become available. Employers should also employ refugees on the basis of competency.
- ❖ Given that language ineptitude, mostly in English, constitutes the main barrier to job opportunities, refugees should be given the opportunity to learn local languages. The inability to effectively communicate is also a barrier to social networking with local people. Thus, the government and non-governmental organizations, including UNHCR, should facilitate language programmes for refugees. When refugees come to South Africa, they have nothing and they do not speak English or isiZulu. Nothing is done to help them to settle in the country. Although they try to use their own limited means to settle in the new country, they encounter many problems due to this lack of assistance.
- ❖ The UNHCR and other relevant organizations should help refugees to settle in South Africa. Hence, there should be a language programme that lasts between six

months to a year to help refugees with language problems. They should also be financially assisted while they learn the relevant languages. In this way, they will be able to learn the local language without the distraction of having to juggle work, domestic responsibilities and language tuition, and they will quickly learn to communicate effectively. Thus, the language barrier will be removed and refugees will be able to compete in the job market.

- ❖ In order to help refugees settle in the new country, they should also be given appropriate training and be guided through accreditation processes. Companies should train and provide orientation sessions to refugees that are suitably qualified for available positions. For example, hospitals should train refugee nurses and schools should train refugee teachers.
- ❖ Many of the research participants are qualified as teachers and nurses. For them, the issue of registering with the South African Association of Nurses and Teachers was also a barrier to job opportunities. As such, support groups should be formed that are familiar with refugee problems and can help with finding employment. For example, they could assist with registration and could even act as refugee-oriented employment agencies.
- ❖ Refugees also need to play a role in finding solutions to their problems where possible. If nothing is done by the government or other institutions, refugees cannot just sit down and leave the situation as it is. Refugees must take an interest in learning and actively learn via whatever means possible. They must practise locally spoken languages in order to speed up the integration process. Some of them can teach the others. They can search for volunteer work or help at, for example, a school if they were teachers before. Sometimes a person starts as a volunteer and then becomes employed because s/he has earned the respect of the staff.

- ❖ Given the high rate of unemployment in South Africa, Murekatete's (2002) embroidery and sewing initiative shows how it is possible to become self-employed. Hence, they should initiate co-operatives and projects that enable them to make an income. However, these groups must make an effort to build strong social networks with local people. Each group needs to play a part in building rapport with local people as a means to stamping out xenophobia.

- ❖ As highlighted by the social justice perspective theory used for this study, in order to address social issues such as unemployment, a number of issues, namely disadvantage, empowerment, needs and rights need to be taken into consideration. Within the approaches to disadvantage, there is some value in all four approaches: individual, institutional reformist, structural and post-structural perspectives (Ife, 2002). Each one identifies particular aspects of social issues and social change and it is not realistic to concentrate on one to the exclusion of the others. The components of social justice, namely empowerment, needs and rights are also issues of concern for any society addressing social change.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter attempted to present the summary of findings and recommendations. The research participants identified various contributory factors to their unemployment, including: language problems, the issue of French qualifications and refugee documents, the high rate of unemployment, the lack of social contact and social networks with local people, the lack of local job experience, financial constraints and xenophobia. Research participants earn a living by car-guarding and selling at the flea-markets; they also get some assistance from Refugees Services Providers. There are diverse experiences resulting from their unemployment. These include a range of psychological, economic and social experiences. The recommendations were based on the social justice theory used for this study. The issue of language problems, not receiving refugee documents and xenophobia are highlighted. Refugees will be enabled to find gainful employment if they can access an appropriate language programme, access skills development programmes,

be given proper documents and if local people are made aware of refugee challenges and accept them into the community. Refugees should also try to initiate co-operatives and projects.

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APPENDIX

Guiding questions for in-depth interviews

1. How old are you?
2. How many children do you have?
3. How old are they?
4. How do you cope with paying for their school fees and pre-school?
5. What is your rental amount?
6. How many are in your flat?
7. What is the level of your education?
8. What is your qualification?
9. What were you doing in your home country?
10. When did you arrive in South Africa?
11. Why did you leave your country?
12. What happened to you and your family?
13. Why did you choose to come to South Africa?
14. What were your experiences on your way to South Africa?
15. What type of refugee document do you have?
16. What steps have you taken to look for a job?
17. What factors contribute to your unemployment?
18. How has your unemployed status affected your relationships with other refugees, local people and the state?
19. How do you earn a living?
20. What are your experiences (economical, psychological and social) resulting from your unemployment?
21. How do you cope with situations like xenophobia and so forth?
21. In your view, what should be done to assist you?