

**African immigrants in Durban: a case study of foreign  
street traders' contribution to the city**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation explores the livelihood activities of Durban's African migrant street traders. The study also seeks to gain insight into the challenges that confront them as well as the perceptions that local street traders have of them. The researcher argues that migrant street traders make a contribution towards the economic development of the city. Migrant street traders are attracted to Durban because of the economic opportunities that the city offers as well as the fact that it has a lower crime rate than cities such as Johannesburg. The concept of livelihood strategy was used to develop the theoretical framework that guides the research.

The study makes use of the qualitative research method. Fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted with migrant and local street traders, who were a mixture of male and female. Of the fifteen interviewees, ten were migrant traders (five females and five males) and five were local street traders (three females and two males). The research was conducted in the Central Business District (CBD) in the vicinity of the Workshop Shopping Centre. The findings of the study suggest that migrants make an economic contribution (albeit not a substantial one) to the development of the city. Some of the local street traders recognise this contribution while others do not.

Migrant street traders encounter difficulties in accessing the finance and capital necessary to start their entrepreneurial businesses. The other major problems experienced by the migrant traders in the city are to do with crime, the metropolitan police, local government officials, securing of a suitable accommodation, and accessing trading sites, education and healthcare. The research concludes by recommending that the business-training sessions that are arranged by the municipality of local street traders be open to migrant street traders as well. Local communities should also be educated about the positive role of the migrants in the city.

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## DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Population Studies, in the Graduate Programme in the School of Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was/was not used and that my Supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Population Studies in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ABMDP	Area Based Management and Development Programme
APF	Anti-Privatization Forum
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
CBD	Central Business District
CD	Compact Disc
CoRMSA	Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DVD	Digital Video Disc
ERP	Education Rights Project
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ID	Identity Document
IDI	In-depth Interview
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRS	International Refugee Service
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LFS	Labour Force Survey

MATRIC	Matriculation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SMME	Small-, Micro- and Medium-sized-enterprise
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISA	University of South Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Declaration .....	iii
List of acronyms and abbreviations.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Rationale.....	4
1.3 The purpose of the study.....	5
1.4 Research questions.....	5
1.5 Theoretical Perspectives upon which the study was constructed.....	6
1.6 Organisation of the study.....	7

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction.....	8
2.2 Global perspective of migrant traders.....	8
2.3 Durban research on migrant traders.....	9
2.3.1 Choice of Durban as a case study.....	9
2.3.2 Harassment from the police.....	10
2.3.3 Xenophobia.....	11
2.3.4 The role of the media.....	13

2.3.5 Fight against crime.....	13
2.3.6 The way migrant traders started trading.....	15
2.3.7 Major types of work .....	16
2.3.8 Rules and Regulations affecting migrant traders.....	16
2.3.9 Trade zones of migrant traders.....	18
2.3.10 Preference for entrepreneurship.....	19
2.3.11 Level of education.....	21
2.3.12 Exclusion from education facilities.....	21
2.3.13 Lack of access to health services.....	22
2.3.14 Lack of accommodation.....	23
2.3.15 Department of Home Affairs.....	24
2.3.16 Access to financial services.....	25
2.3.17 Economic contribution of migrant traders.....	26
2.4 Summary.....	28

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1 Introduction.....	29
3.2 Profile of Durban.....	29
3.3 Description of the site of Study.....	30
3.4 Qualitative Research Method.....	31
3.5 In-depth interviews.....	32
3.6 Sampling Procedure.....	33
3.7 Data Analysis.....	36



3.8 Limitations of the Research.....	37
3.9 Ethical Considerations.....	37
3.10 Summary.....	38

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS**

4.1 Introduction.....	39
4.2 Sample characteristics.....	39
4.2.1 Job creation.....	43
4.2.2 Contribution of migrant street traders.....	43
4.2.3 Xenophobia and <i>AmaKwere kwere</i> .....	45
4.2.4 Crime.....	47
4.2.5 Police harassment.....	48
4.2.6 Attitude of municipal officials.....	49
4.2.7 Scarcity of jobs.....	51
4.2.8 Lack of finance.....	51
4.2.9 Shortage of shelters and risks in storage.....	52
4.2.10 Price fluctuations.....	53
4.2.11 Competition.....	54
4.2.12 Lack of expansion.....	57
4.2.13 Social networks.....	58
4.2.14 Street trading as a means of survival.....	59
4.2.15 Lack of educational opportunities.....	60

4.2.16 Cost of accommodation.....	62
4.2.17 Implementation of skills.....	63
4.2.18 Local business support.....	64
4.2.19 Sale of illegal items and drugs.....	65
4.2.20 Availability of income.....	66
4.2.21 Migrants' wishes.....	66
4.3 Summary.....	68

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION**

5.1 Introduction.....	69
5.2 Discussion.....	69
5.3 Recommendations.....	74
5.4 Summary.....	77
References.....	79
Appendix: Examples of interview schedule.....	90

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

South Africa is often perceived as being the economic hub of Africa. The South African economy has, for a long period of time, been seen as the largest and one of the most diversified economies in Africa (Diarra et al., 2010). At present, South Africa is the second most competitive country in Africa, with Tunisia being the most competitive (Diarra et al., 2010). According to Rogerson (2001), South Africa is comprised of a dual economy; it is made up of the formal economy and the informal economy. The informal economy is an important contributor to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Walther, 2008). Informal activities generate 30 per cent of South Africa's GDP.

According to the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS), the rate of unemployment in South Africa decreased from 23.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2008 to 23.1 percent in the subsequent quarter of 2008 (Essop and Yu, 2008). Despite the decrease, almost 4.1 million individuals of working-age are unemployed. Since the informal sector is seen as a likely alternative, when employment in the formal sector is difficult to find, South Africa should have a fairly large informal sector (Essop and Yu, 2008). According to Essop and Yu (2008), the characteristics and size of the informal sector is therefore critical to researchers and policy makers. Chen (2001) states that in Africa, the informal sector accounted for over 50 percent of urban employment. Therefore the informal sector makes a large contribution to employment (Chen, 2001).

One of the problems facing South Africa is its rampant unemployment and poverty. Statistics South Africa (2009) states that during 2009, South Africa's official jobless rate increased from 23.6 percent in the second quarter to 24.5 percent in the third quarter of the year. This means that an astonishing 4.702 million economically active South Africans are now without work (Statistics South Africa, 2009). According to one study, poverty is not equally spread across South Africa (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2008). Certain provinces have much higher rates of poverty than do others.

At the end of 2007, the province of KwaZulu-Natal had the second highest proportion of people living below the poverty line 33 per cent; the Limpopo province had the highest proportion 34 per cent (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2008). It is mostly black African people who are poor. According to Jazbhay (2009), South Africa has outstripped Brazil to become the most unequal society in the world. Just less than half of the population lives below the poverty income line. In Durban, 44 per cent of the total population falls below the poverty income level (Jazbhay, 2009).

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) (2006) states that there can be no solution to poverty without more attention being paid to the informal sector and those who take part in its activities. According to UNESCO (2006), the informal sector plays a tremendous role in the economy, particularly with regard to employment creation. Becker (2004) argues that the informal economy is an independent, marginal economy (not directly linked to the formal economy) that provides income to the poor. The informal economy consists of self-employment as well as wage employment in jobs that are informal (ILO, 2002). Street traders and home-based workers comprise two of the largest sub-groups of informal workers (ILO, 2002). Motala (2002) defines street traders as people who are part of the informal economy and who trade in the streets. Street traders have been identified as the most visible segment of the informal economy and constitute a vital fraction of South Africa's informal workers (Motala, 2002). In Owerri, Nigeria, street traders constitute an important share of the urban informal sector. They make a significant contribution to urban life by supplying goods and services at affordable prices (which helps the poor) and by creating jobs (Chukuezi, 2007).

The contribution of the informal sector in terms of providing employment and generating income is crucial in the fight to reduce poverty (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2006). Migrant street traders who participate in the informal economy are playing a role in the economy by providing jobs (through self-employment and the employing of others). According to Kalitanyi and Visser (2010), migrants create jobs for themselves and for unemployed South Africans through their active participation in the informal economy.

Prior to 1994, South Africa has received an influx of migrants from African countries such as Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Congo, Mali, Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Senegal (Adepoju, 2004). According to Adepoju (2004), the foreigners from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mali, Sierra Leone and Senegal are mainly street traders who came to South Africa hoping to capitalise on its market. Many foreign street traders sell products such as clothes, bags, shoes and bedding in the city of Durban (Maharaj, 2009). Both legal and illegal informal economic activities take place within the informal sector (Losby et al., 2002). Income that is achieved through informal economic activities may be marked by the lawfulness of the production or supply of the goods and services as well as by legal status of the goods and services (Losby et al., 2002).

It is possible that there are migrant street traders operating in Durban who face similar circumstances and operate under identical conditions as street traders from other parts of the world. The present study seeks to explore the role that is played by street traders in the city of Durban. In other words, it attempts to discover whether or not street traders make any contribution to the development of Durban by selling their products to the local citizens. It further aims to examine the experiences of migrant street traders, and it therefore investigates the challenges that they face as well as the manner in which they are perceived by local street traders.

There are various reasons why so many African migrants have felt the need to leave their countries of origin in order to come and settle in South Africa. Among the factors responsible for their departure are: civil wars, natural disasters, political situations, and a lack of employment opportunities. Sub-Saharan Africa is known for its many conflicts (Luckham, 2001). These conflicts have had and continue to have a profound impact on the livelihoods of those who live there (Luckham, 2001). Rice, Graff and Lewis (2006) point out that as many as 4 million people died in the mid-1990s as a result of the fighting that took place between warring factions in the (DRC). Africa's civil wars usually occur in countries that suffer from poverty and a steep decline in the economy (Rice et al., 2006).

As a result of the strife in many African countries, thousands of asylum-seekers crossed the border into South Africa in the hope of finding sanctuary. After the first democratic elections of 1994, the Republic of South Africa developed a reputation for being a peaceful and democratic country.

Its peaceful transition to democracy had inspired hope in many people throughout the world (Athiemoolam, 2003). In comparison with the rest of Africa, South Africa is seen as having many economic opportunities as well as modern infrastructure. Many people left their home countries (countries such as Malawi, Nigeria and Zimbabwe) in search of economic opportunities in South Africa. It is against this background that scores of migrants, including the educated and highly skilled, arrived in South Africa with the purpose of searching for the means of a livelihood (Harris, 2001). The migrants received a hostile reception from a portion of the indigenous citizens. According to Maharaj (2009), migrants were given despicable names such as “*amaKwere-Kwere*”. Another newer name that is commonly used in the townships is “*amaGrigamba*”.

The unsympathetic treatment of foreigners by a portion of South African society was also reflected in the xenophobic outbreaks of 2008, which took place in major South African cities and left 62 people dead. Many of the 62 were African migrants, while a third of those who were killed were South Africans who physically resembled migrants (Nyar, 2010). When the white apartheid government was in power, thousands of Africans from South Africa fled the country and sought asylum in other African countries. These African countries extended a warm welcome to the South African refugees (ILO, 1992). They even provided them with material support which contributed towards the pressure being placed on the South African government to negotiate an end to the system of apartheid and thus helped bring about the country’s present day democratic government (Lubbe, 2009).

## **1.2 Rationale**

There were several factors that motivated the researcher to undertake the current study. Firstly, the study attempts to provide a more in-depth examination of the contribution of migrant street traders to the economy of South Africa. The researcher also attempts to highlight the plight of migrant street traders. They are marginalised and excluded in terms of opening bank accounts and accessing finance from financial institutions. According to Landau and Kabwe-Segatti (2009), patterns of exclusion are also apparent in financial institutions where poor migrants are not able to access even the most basic of banking services.

Finally, the researcher has observed that a great deal of the studies on African migrants who have settled in South Africa have been conducted by the migrants themselves.

Most of their studies are specifically focused on migrants from their respective countries. The researcher regarded it as necessary to conduct a study on African migrants from the perspective of African South African so as to gain further insights into the experiences of African migrant street traders.

### **1.3 The purpose of the study**

The overall objective of the study is to explore the range of experiences of African immigrants operating as street traders in Durban.

The specific objectives are:

- to document the experiences of migrant street traders in the city of Durban,
- to explore the perceptions of local street traders in Durban towards migrant street traders, and
- to document some of the challenges that migrant street traders face when settling in the city of Durban,
- To reflect on the contribution of migrant street traders to the economy of the city.

### **1.4 Research questions**

Specific questions that will be asked are:

- What skills do the migrant street traders display through their operating of their business activities within the Metropolitan Municipality of Durban?
- How are migrant street traders affected by the challenges that they encounter while trading in the city of Durban?
- How can the municipality, the national government and the private sector assist the migrant street traders of Durban?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the entrepreneurial activities of the migrant street traders in Durban?
- In which way do local street traders perceive migrant street traders in regard to the trade in Durban?

## **1.5 Theoretical perspectives upon which the study was constructed**

For its theoretical framework, the study draws on the literature on livelihood strategies and entrepreneurship skills, which are both essential for effective street trading activities. According to Chambers and Conway (1991), the term ‘livelihood’ refers to one’s means of living, which involves one’s assets, capabilities and those activities that are necessary to making a living. Livelihood approaches are based on evolving thinking about objectives, priorities and scope for development (Haidar, 2009). All the approaches put people at the centre of development. Their main focus is on reducing poverty, empowering the poor to make use of opportunities and to provide support for accessing assets (Haidar, 2009).

The principles of livelihood approaches suggest that they are people-centred, multi-level, responsive and participatory, conducted in partnership, and are dynamic and sustainable. Access to assets is important to the livelihood approaches (Arun, 1999). Five groups of assets or capital have been identified. These five groups of capital are: human, financial, social, physical and natural. Human capital is comprised of the skills, capacity to work, health, and knowledge that one uses to follow different livelihood strategies in order to attain one’s livelihood outcomes (Arun, 1999). Social capital includes informal together with formal networks as well as connectedness, all of which provides one with various benefits and opportunities in search of one’s livelihood (Ouwor, 2006). Physical assets consist of the goods and infrastructure – such as secure shelter and buildings, affordable transport, and adequate water and sanitation – that provide support to livelihood (Arun, 1999). According to Haidar (2009), the financial resources – such as credit, savings, income from jobs, remittances and trade – that are used by people to achieve their livelihood outcomes are referred to as financial capital. Natural capital refers to land, water, wildlife and biodiversity, which are services that are necessary for livelihood support (Serrat, 1992).

According to Arun (1999), livelihood strategies are the combination of activities that are chosen by people to meet their needs. They are the achievement of goals by the people who engage in livelihood strategies (Haidar, 2009). Livelihood outcomes include: more income, increased wellbeing, reduced vulnerability, improved food security, and increased sustainable use of natural resources (Arun, 1999). The present study examines the livelihood strategies that are pursued by African migrants and investigates how these affect their street trading activities. This study draws on the livelihood approach to better understand the situation of migrant street traders.



## **1.6 Organisation of the study**

The dissertation is made up of five chapters. Chapter One serves as an introduction and covers the rationale as well as the objectives of the research. It also examines the theoretical framework that guides the study. Chapter Two discusses the existing literature on migrant street traders living in South Africa and other countries. Chapter Three covers the methods used in this study. It describes the study population, the sampling techniques that are used, and the research methods. Chapter Four analyses the findings that emerged from the interviews that were conducted. Chapter Five provides a discussion of the results. Conclusions are then formulated and recommendations for future policy, as based on the findings, are presented.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the experiences of foreign street traders in various countries. The chapter first takes a broad look at the experiences of African migrants in different parts of the world. The focus then shifts to particular experiences and the contributions made by migrant street traders working in the city of Durban.

#### 2.2 Global perspective of migrant traders

Migrant street traders encounter difficulties when living in host countries. They frequently suffer from the following: the effects of xenophobic attitudes and actions, harassment from security authorities, persecution at the hands of competing street traders, and thefts, which are perpetrated by petty criminals. According to Halasz (2009), the arrival of Romanian migrants in many European countries has been portrayed by the media and regarded by the politicians as being a danger to the security of the local populations. Romanian street traders, who are known for selling ornaments, bracelets and second-hand clothes, are often disparagingly referred to as gypsies (Halasz, 2009). Halasz (2009) further states that the attacks against the Romanians in Italy (which were part of a wave of violence that occurred between January 2008 and June 2009) left eight Romanians dead and many others injured.

In Sweden, a gang of young men who think of themselves as 'ethnic Swedes' committed a series of burglaries in 2002 that were blamed on the African migrants in M-town (Petersson, 2009). When the Swedish police caught the gang members in the act and had evidence of their involvement in other criminal activities, the negative publicity about the migrants did not abate but instead actually worsened (Petersson, 2009). Extreme actions against migrants are sometimes taken by those in authority so as to appease the locals. The perpetrators of maltreatment and violence against the African migrants are almost always left unpunished. This may further perpetuate the abuse of migrants by the citizens of the host country.

Another example of the bad treatment of migrant traders comes from Falola (1990), who cites the case of Nigeria's Ife traders. The Ife traders lodged a complaint with their chief against the Lebanese street traders, who were seen as undermining the business of the local street traders by trading near the streets.

The chief favoured the Ife traders and banned the Lebanese from trading in their town (Falola, 1990). Despite being hardworking and successful in Nigeria, most of the Lebanese street traders wished to stay in exile for the time despite not being allowed to move to their motherland of Lebanon at a later stage (Falola, 1990).

Many African migrants living in Australia also experience racial discrimination and receive a particularly low income. They lack knowledge concerning the housing services of their host country and there are very few social networks to help them settle into their new society (Atem, 2003). The physical appearance of African migrants often sets them at a disadvantage (Atem, 2003). For the Senegalese street traders operating in New York in the 1980s, trading was a team effort (Skye, 2009). These traders deployed a network of watchers, who would wait on certain street corners so as to alert those who were selling their merchandise when the Alpha police were approaching. If these traders were arrested, their commodities would be permanently confiscated as a result of police corruption (Skye, 2009).

The Polish media has played a role in presenting African migrant street traders as a violent group of people. The way the Africans talk to one other, the intonation of their voices and their gestures. African men have been reported to be involved in unlawful activities and these activities are then contrasted with the heroic deeds of the white policemen who are obliged to enforce the rule of law in such supposedly volatile circumstances (Tegnerowicz, 2010). African street traders in Italy are frequently subjected to violence at the hands of vigilantes and their camps are often destroyed (Esperchidt, 2009). African migrant street traders experience abuse and violence in many countries around the world.

## **2.3 Durban research on migrant traders**

### **2.3.1 Choice of Durban as a case study**

According to Maharaj and Moodley (2009), a large percentage of migrants choose Durban because job and business prospects are seen as being better in Durban than elsewhere in the country. Forty-four percent of traders move to Durban instead of to other South African cities mainly because job and business opportunities are known to be better and more prolific in Durban (Maharaj and Moodley, 2009). Other migrant traders consider the city of Durban to be more peaceful and less crime-ridden than other cities, such as Johannesburg (Maharaj and Moodley, 2009; Hunter and Skinner, 2002).

The other advantage to the city of Durban is that there are not many languages that one needs to learn in order to live there, as almost all of Durban's residents speak either English or isiZulu (Maharaj and Moodley, 2009). Khanyile (2007), in writing for the *Business Report*, says that Durban was hailed at the Living in the Margins Conference as an example of international best practice in terms of the way that it, as a city, has been managing its street traders. Recent studies, however, have offered a different opinion of the situation in Durban. According to Amisi et al. (2010:9), "the Warwick Junction has been and continues to be a contested terrain where foreigners and South Africans fight together against their common threat(s)". The major threat that currently faces both local and migrant traders in Durban is the eThekweni Municipality's plans to demolish the Early Morning Market building in Warwick Junction. Many street traders fear that they will suffer the loss of their livelihood should this happen. There have been reports of municipal police violence against seven thousand street traders who refused to vacate the building to make way for the construction of the planned shopping mall (Tissington, 2009). This indicates that the metro municipality take decisions that affect the trading places of African migrants and implement them against their wishes.

### **2.3.2 Harassment from the police**

Security is the main concern of those involved in street trading and could argue that the municipal police are to blame for their insecurity (Mitullah, 2003).

According to Maharaj (2009), the police frequently link migrants with criminal activities without supplying proof for their assertions. In many cases, the police harass and threaten foreign street traders in order to obtain bribes from them, and detentions and arrests are frequently accompanied by incidents of abuse (Valji, 2003). Migrant street traders have often complained that the police often confiscate their goods during these periods of maltreatment. Municipal policemen frequently intimidate and assault traders and impound their commodities (Mitullah, 2003). The police regularly target migrant traders when they are short on money; the police are known to demand bribes from migrant traders in return for not arresting them for trading without a work permit (Mittulah, 2003).

Migrant traders who operate on the streets are easy victims for the police and have come to be referred to as mobile ATMs (automated teller machines) (Landau, 2007).

According to Jacobsen (2004), the informal businesses of the foreigners are perpetually raided by the police, who confiscate their goods or demand to be paid bribes or a protection fee. African migrants who are able and willing to pay the corrupt policemen are often released and those who are illegal migrants are repatriated quickly so that they do not spend much time in custody (Harris, 2001). It is common for the police in Durban to descend on migrants, such as the Congolese, to check that they have the proper documents (Amisi, 2005).

The police frequently arrest migrant traders without explanation or justification. Sometimes they bring broken items to the street traders, expecting the traders to repair the items for free (Amisi, 2006). It is for just such reasons that one Durban African migrant claimed that he “was exploited” as a migrant (Parsley, 2005:14). The permits that are legally acquired by the migrant street traders seem not to prevent corrupt policemen from demanding bribes. The harassment of migrant street traders is often the policemen’s way of evicting the former from their entrepreneurial premises (Mitullah, 2003). They think that the migrants will grow tired of harassment and move away. This victimisation of the migrant traders involves tactics that include verbal abuse, at times physical violence, the tearing up of valid documents, and the apprehension of the migrants (Harris, 2001). In their research, Bernstein and Dagut (2008) found that migrants tend to be law-abiding people. According to Skinner (2008), there has been harassment of street traders in Durban lately, which contradicted the approach which was seen as more progressive. The two most senior police officials that they interviewed stressed that the police have no proof that migrants are any more predisposed to commit crimes than are the local citizens. In the opinion of the two policemen, most migrants are really less likely to engage in criminal activities than are South Africans.

### **2.3.3 Xenophobia**

According to Crush and Ramachandran (2009), xenophobia refers to attitudes, behaviour and prejudices that excludes, reject and mistreat migrants based on the perception that they are ‘outsiders’ (i.e. those not belonging to the local society and community and not having the same national identity). The term xenophobia means ‘foreigner’ and it originates from the Greek words *xenos* and *phobos*, which together mean ‘to fear’ (Falconer, 2009:1).

According to Motha and Ramadiro (2005), xenophobia can manifest itself as Afro-phobia, which refers to the belief in and the maintaining of negative stereotypes with regard to Africans from other parts of the continent.

Xenophobia shows itself in fear (Gebre, 2007). The local people are frightened of a possible rise in crime, of economic competition, and of the loss of identity (Gebre, 2007). The label *Amakwere Kwere* is commonly used for African migrants. This is the derogatory term used mostly by black South Africans to refer to Africans who come from other African countries. The term means those who are not capable of speaking the local languages (Nyamnjoh, 2010).

In May 2008 violent outbreaks of Afro-phobia took place in many South African cities, Durban included. Previous xenophobic actions had been all but ignored by the authorities, but in 2008 many overt acts of violence and aggression took place in the streets of the townships and these could not be ignored (Lubbe, 2009). Mobs of enraged citizens ransacked the shacks of migrants and looted their property, and many people were violently attacked (Lubbe, 2009). The police forcibly removed migrants from the Durban City Hall where they had sought to the protection of the Metropolitan Municipality.

A ward councillor of the eThekweni Municipality was, along with six accomplices, arrested for murder after they were accused of having pushed two migrants out of a high-rise building in Durban (Anti-Privatization Forum, 2009). The councillor was reported to have alleged in an earlier interview with a newspaper that they would get rid of migrants in their municipal ward (Anti-Privatization Forum, 2009). There were extensive threats from various quarters of Durban that there would be violence against the foreign nationals after the Soccer World Cup of 2010 (CoRMSA, 2010). Those who make such threats are convinced, according to CoRMSA (2010), that they have the support of influential political leaders. Hakizimana (2001) states that, according to his findings, there is the prevailing impression in Durban that refugees and migrants deserve harassment, exclusion, humiliation and violence. According to Lubbe (2009), the subject that is debated by people across the world is why South Africans, who experienced racism and discrimination under the apartheid regime, should practise it towards other Africans?

### **2.3.4 The role of the media**

The media, and particularly the print media, has been accused of intensifying xenophobia by publicising and thus entrenching anti-migrant beliefs (Danso and McDonald, 2001). According to Gebre, Maharaj and Pillay (2011), the South African media has misled the public by reporting imprecise information. Street traders are particularly targeted by the media and have received much coverage in newspapers (Danso and McDonald, 2001). The media and politicians portray the migrants who come to South Africa as victims of corrupt traffickers and cruel smuggling networks, whereas in reality the majority of them migrate based on their own discretion (De Haas, 2006). African migrants are portrayed as criminals in the local press (Valji, 2003); such a perception may lead to locals feeling that violent actions against the migrants are justifiable. Newspapers are known to justify claims that migrants are intruding intolerably on the informal sector as well as on the livelihood of the unemployed (Danso and McDonald, 2001).

Media monitoring plays a critical role in exposing the media when they report falsely negative things about migrants. Media monitoring draws attention to the quantity of coverage and provides awareness of how people and issues are represented in the media (Dietz et al., 2008). Media Monitoring Association lodged an appeal with the press ombudsman against the newspaper, *The Daily Sun*, which it argued was spreading negative stereotypes of African migrants and was unhelpfully referring to them as “aliens”. The South African Press Appeal ruled that *The Daily Sun* should not use the word ‘alien’ in any future articles (Dietz et al., 2008).

### **2.3.5 Fight against crime**

Research shows that crime is a key factor in deterring visitors from coming to Durban. According to Ferreira and Harmse (2000:84), “the potential risk for a tourist in a crowd of 300 000 a day visitors to the Golden Mile Durban during the Christmas and Easter weekends is very high”. The phenomenon consequently changes the demand impression of tourists about the city (Ferreira and Harmse, 2000). Crime leads to the loss of customers, frightens tourists, cripples businesses, reduces income, and generally has a negative impact on trade (Mitullah, 2003). According to Dray et al. (2006), there are many cases of muggings and trivial thefts on the streets of Durban.

The Quality of Life Survey that was conducted by the eThekweni Municipality found that citizens of Durban consider crime to be one of the city's three most disturbing issues (Dray et al., 2006).

Small business personalities are concerned about the effects of crime on their business activities. As the SAHRC (South African Human Rights Commission) (2006) has argued, migrants are constantly accused of being part of the reason for South Africa's frightening crime level, even though it is difficult to validate such a claim. Migrants are perceived as violent and brutal because the locals presume that they do not have social attachments with other people (HSRC, 2008). Research has been conducted to review the issue of crime and African migrants. The evidence in fact points to the victimisation of migrants, perhaps because migrants are known to carry money on their persons in favour of depositing it into bank accounts (HSRC, 2008). It is certain that migrants are often blamed for common crimes because of their tenuous position in society (Harris, 2001). There are local citizens who either dislike or cannot tolerate the presence of the African migrants in South Africa.

Bouillon (2000) argues that the eThekweni Municipality's fight against crime has been used to endorse its clean-up policy (that is. its policy of removing the so-called eye-sore of the migrants). Police raids frequently occur against informal traders. Gema (2001) indicates that police in Durban regularly raid migrant residences claiming that they are looking for drugs and illegal weapons. Migrants blame the police for taking away their money and other valuable items during such operations (Gema, 2001).

According to Mitullah (2003), acts of crime threaten the lives and possessions of both migrant street traders and their customers. Recent research carried out in the city of Durban revealed that female street traders are vulnerable to sexual abuse (Lee, 2004). Hayangah and Ofosu-Kwakye (2009) have concluded that the crucial challenges confronting Durban today are, among other things, crime, poverty and the inefficiency of the local government. Since street traders are often themselves the victims of crime, they have consequently become involved in the fight against crime. In Durban's Central Business District (CBD), both local and migrant street traders have contributed towards a decrease in the crime rate through the groundbreaking organisation, Traders Against Crime, where traders work together with the police force in identifying and arresting criminals (Hentschel, 2007).



### **2.3.6 The way migrant traders started trading**

There is unwillingness on the part of South Africa's formal financial institutions to assist informal entrepreneurs (Rogerson, 2001). A study by Morris (2003) revealed that many entrepreneurs borrow money from friends and relatives who are still back in their countries of origin. The migrants use this money to start their trading businesses as well as buy materials. They mostly sell commodities imported from their home countries. One of the reasons for this situation is that the majority of the migrants who flee their home countries arrive in South Africa with only the barest of necessities (Hakizimana, 2001). Gebre et al. (2011) assert that many migrants do not possess sufficient money to set up a business when they arrive in this country.

Some of the migrants have the advantage of having been street traders in their home countries and thus may have accumulated the capital necessary to initiate their businesses (Steinberg, 2005). According to Steinberg (2005), in certain cases traders owe large debts to friends and family members as a consequence of having borrowed and taken out informal loans. Peberdy and Rogerson (2000) state that some 61 per cent of those African migrants not belonging to Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries owned businesses in their countries of origin that then furnished them with their start-up capital, while 28 per cent of SADC operators use capital brought in from outside of South Africa.

In many instances, the funds for street traders to begin their businesses come from their other business interests in other African countries or elsewhere. Other street traders obtain their start-up capital from humanitarian and religious organisations or from friends and relatives who live in their area (Jacobsen, 2004). This means that migrant street traders are thus positively contributing towards the revenue of the South African government, and more specifically towards the welfare of Durban, by spending their money and exercising their business skills in this country. The study conducted by Maharaj and Moodley (2009) found that 26 per cent of the migrants in Durban acquired their loans from friends in South Africa, whereas 19 per cent made use of savings from local employment. The South African Muslim Organisation provides loans for migrant traders to start up their own businesses (Maharaj and Moodley, 2009). Since there is a substantial demand for financing, Rogerson (2000) recommends that start-up finances be made available to street traders.

### **2.3.7 Major types of work**

Migrant street traders are engaged in different types of service and retail activities in Durban. For business activities, both local and migrant traders use a stall which is made up of a temporary covering, such as a tent or an umbrella, chairs and a table (Masonganye, 2010). Tents and umbrellas are used to protect the traders from adverse weather conditions such as the sun, wind and rain. These types of covering are inexpensive, light and readily portable (Masonganye, 2010).

Many migrant traders begin their entrepreneurial businesses by selling a few wares on the streets or to small shops and businesses, while others work as shoemakers, curio makers, and tailors (Jacobsen, 2004). The predominant activities engaged in by migrant entrepreneurs are hairdressing, taxi driving, carpentry, welding and shoe repair (Maharaj and Moodley, 2009). A large portion 47 per cent of migrant traders is involved in either shoe repair or the hair industry. Another segment 44 per cent is involved in selling items such as clothes, leather goods and craft items (Maharaj and Moodley, 2009). In their study, Hunter and Skinner (2001) found that 44 per cent of those involved in the hair industry in Durban originate from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), while 19 per cent are from Burundi and 11 per cent are from Kenya. Furthermore, 28 per cent of those who repair shoes come from the DRC and 25 per cent come from either Ghana or Tanzania.

### **2.3.8 Rules and regulations affecting migrant street traders**

Many problems arise from the continued imposition of municipal rules and regulations that began during the colonial era. Mittullah (2003) posits that almost all the municipal regulations and policies being imposed on street traders originate from colonial policies that were retrogressive towards small local enterprises. The municipalities of many South African cities have inappropriately placed responsibility for street traders on the Traffic Department and the Enforcement Department (Mitullah, 2003). Street traders are regarded by these departments as a problem that needs to be controlled instead of being regarded as production units that are instrumental in boosting the urban economy (Mitullah, 2003). Regulations that were imposed by the departments restricted the issuing of licences to street traders, increased licence fees, restricted the number of trading sites that could be issued, specified the activities, and prohibited certain activities.

Municipal authorities have a history of forcing street entrepreneurs off the streets. For example, Vahed (1999) states that in 1914 the Durban Licensing Officer admitted that his Department did not encourage street trading and made every effort to minimise the number of licences issued to hawkers and pedlars. Hiralal (2000) also notes that both the trade jealousy and the racism of whites were revealed by their enactment of the General Dealers' Licenses Bill of 1897, of the Immigration Restriction Bill of 1901, and of the Franchise Act of the 1896, all of which were formulated to limit the movement and economic freedom of Indians in what was then the British Colony of Natal. Street trading by-laws across South African towns are today almost the same as in colonial times in many respects as they are all derived from the National Small Business Act of 1996 (Motala, 2002). In their application, these by-laws can handicap rather than facilitate street trading.

In 2005, Durban's Legal Resource Centre fought, on behalf of the street traders, to cancel certain terms of the Street Trade By-laws and Business Act, which were regarded as being unconstitutional and improper (Von Broembsen, 2007). This Business Act consists of clauses that prevent street traders from hindering the movement of pedestrians and traffic, they restrict equipment being attached to the electricity supply of buildings, that prevent the unsafe piling of stock, and that insist that traders are responsible for the cleanliness of their trading sites (Von Broembsen, 2007).

The Business Act further stipulates fines and penalties for illegal trading operations: a penalty of R1000 may be imposed if a street trader does not have a valid street trading licence, the trader's operating goods may be impounded, and the trader may be imprisoned for a period of not more than three months (Von Broembsen, 2007). One of the difficulties for street traders that arise out of these regulations is imprecise stipulations. The government fails to appreciate the need for it to set regulations that are not overly burdensome so that entrepreneurs will be aided and not hindered in their business endeavours (USAID, 2005). It is the local government's responsibility to promote the economic development of the area and this should result in by-laws that aim to achieve such development. According to Mitullah (2003), street trading laws are often formulated without consulting street trader organisations. Accordingly, when local municipalities start implementing these laws, conflicts arise. The eThekweni Municipality acknowledged that conflicts over street traders' spaces would be alleviated if city officials entered into negotiations with strong informal workers unions (Kuiper and Van der Ree, 2006).

### **2.3.9 Trade zones of migrant traders**

Migrant street traders continue, however, to encounter difficulties in their business activities. The size of the forbidden trade zones and the way in which traders are accommodated in regulated zones determines the feasibility and extent of street trading (Von Broembsen, 2007). Durban, with a municipality that has the most progressive policy in the country with regard to street trading, is reputed to be ahead of other cities in terms of its reactions to the growth of street trading (Durban Unicity, 2001).

According to Mitullah (2003), the right to a trading site for their enterprise is the most significant challenge facing street traders. Many of the spaces taken over by the traders are regarded as illegal sites because the spaces have not been demarcated for trade (Mitullah, 2003). The challenge that faces the city's municipalities is that there is insufficient number of legal trading spaces already developed and those that are developed are often unsuitable for trade, as the traders require areas that experience much pedestrian traffic (Tissington, 2009). As Tissington (2009) argues, this problem of trading spaces often results in traders being evicted rather than being provided with viable alternatives. The bulk of street traders, including migrant street traders, do not have tenure for the sites they occupy and, as a consequence, they use temporary structures to display their wares (Mitullah, 2003). According to Mitullah (2003), there is only small number of licensed street traders as opposed to many unlicensed traders.

Street traders are particularly drawn to those inner city areas that have a transport junction network (Von Broembsen, 2007). The city of Durban, as Von Broembsen (2007) notes, has catered for street traders more than have the cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town. This accommodation of street traders by the eThekweni Municipality could be argued as applying to only a certain section of the population of the traders, namely those who are of local origin and who speak isiZulu. Amisi (2005), for example, argues that eThekweni Municipality officials constantly refuse to grant trading sites and licences to Congolese street traders. Hunter and Skinner (2001:18) interviewed the manager of the Informal Trade and Small Opportunities Branch of the city council. They report that the manager insisted that: "foreign traders have never been given permits to trade in the inner city" (Hunter and Skinner 2001:18). He argued that there was such a backlog of South Africans wanting sites that the city council feared an "explosive situation" if foreigners were granted permits (Hunter and Skinner 2001:18).

In instances where migrant traders are in fact given permits, the spaces they are allotted are deemed by the municipalities to be temporary and expulsions occur according to the whims of the authorities (Powerman, 2010). Schauffer (2008) refers to nine districts in Durban that have been identified as business sites by the Area Based Management and Development Programme (ABMDP). Migrant street traders are operating within three of these sites, namely, The Point, the Beach Front and in the core of the CBD. Harsh environmental conditions harm the street traders because the sites that are provided are usually open, which result in items such as clothes being affected by weather conditions and this in turn leads to a loss of income for the street traders (Powerman, 2010).

Furthermore, the spaces occupied by the migrant street traders are regarded by some sections of the citizenry as litter-strewn and filthy. Popke and Ballard (2004:103) cite the response of one Durban inhabitant who mentions that Durban's CBD is so shameful that "he would not take his worst enemy to the CBD because of the filth" and because it is occupied by vagrants, muggers and hawkers. According to Mitullah (2003), when street entrepreneurs are organised, as is the case in Durban, they hire people to pick up and dispose of refuse or the traders themselves clean the sites.

### **2.3.10 Preference for entrepreneurship**

Peberdy and Rogerson (2000) postulate that while many African migrant traders became involved in street trading in order to survive they are now keen to remain self-employed entrepreneurs and to develop their businesses. Newadi (2003) argues that while local Port Elizabeth street traders have been exposed to formal education, the education system in South Africa still fails to promote entrepreneurial values amongst its learners. This seems to be the reason that informal businesses run by the local inhabitants of Port Elizabeth's CBD do not yield very good financial dividends.

The failure of the South African education system to nurture entrepreneurial skills among its learners has a negative bearing on the future and will adversely affect a segment of the population that is interested in initiating small businesses for the sake of their survival. According to Rolfe et al. (2010), people who become entrepreneurs without having been previously employed tend to have limited information with regard to entrepreneurial alternatives. The limited information theory asserts that small businesses cluster together in enterprises that have a low profitability (Rolfe et al., 2010).

According to Jacobsen (2004), new occupations like street trade require training, which is usually available to the African migrants through networks and friends.

Bernstein and Dagut (2008) argue that the preparation of migrants participating in entrepreneurial activities compared to the preparation of the local people is also impressive, particularly as South Africa is consistently below the international average when it comes to measuring entrepreneurship. Peberdy (2009), in writing about the migrants who operate in Johannesburg, says that many of her respondents are progressing as small entrepreneurs. Less than 50 per cent of the migrants that she interviewed were keen to find formal employment and less than 5 per cent were actively searching for formal employment.

Some 29 per cent stated that they had entered the business because they like trading and they like being self-employed, while 7 per cent categorised themselves as artists (Peberdy, 2009). Likewise, through his study, Maharaj (2009) observed that the migrant traders in South Africa were initially poor, but then local people noticed that the migrants were making money through entrepreneurial activities. Many citizens of Durban then wanted to become street traders as well, and they started to use the strategies and techniques of the migrants (Maharaj, 2009). The limited information theory postulates that situations where imitative enterprises predominate over innovative entrepreneurship are an indication of shared poverty (Rolfe, et al., 2010).

According to Bernstein and Dagut (2008), many African migrants generally have economically beneficial experience-based skills. Many informal street traders in the handcraft/curio sector have some previous experience of entrepreneurship in their home countries (Peberdy and Rogerson, 2000). Migrant street traders bring employable skills with them when they come to South Africa and that they also have the ability to be self-employed.

The call, therefore, by certain sections of this country that the African migrants should be made to return to their countries of origin, could exacerbate the unemployment situation and result in difficulties for the unemployed local populace if that call is heeded.

### **2.3.11 Level of education**

Migrant street traders often have the advantage of having a better education than their local counterparts while African migrants are often depicted in the South African media as illiterate or semi-literate peasants (Maharaj, 2009). Over 90 per cent of the traders that were interviewed by Peberdy (2000) had a secondary education qualification. According to a study undertaken in Uganda (Lee, 2004), it was noticed that older female street traders generally earn a higher income than do younger female street traders, who tend to be less educated and have less experience. The migrant entrepreneurs from Sub-Saharan Africa are comparatively well educated when placed alongside the majority of South Africans (Peberdy and Rogerson, 2000). The type of education acquired by the African migrants is of a higher standard than those who have been schooled locally (Bernstein and Dagut, 2008). If it is assumed that migrant street traders possess great entrepreneurial prowess, then one must investigate whether or not they make an economic contribution to South Africa through their street trade.

A study conducted in 1997 found that among ten Durban-based Zairian, refugees there was a veterinary doctor, a primary school teacher, a science teacher, an assistant pharmacist, a gold prospector with a degree in commerce, a carpenter, a tailor, a bodyguard and a mechanic (Durban Unicity, 2001). The educated and entrepreneurial-minded migrants prefer to come to cities. Evidence exists that urban foreigners have more skills and education than do their host communities (Jacobsen, 2004). According to Rolfe et al. (2010), their research showed that higher standards of education correlate with higher enterprise-survival rates. The chosen occupation of migrant street traders does not, however, correspond with their levels of education and work experience (Jacobsen, 2004).

### **2.3.12 Exclusion from education facilities**

According to the South African Schools Act, no child may be excluded from school on the basis of nationality, language, documentation or failure to pay school fees (CoRMSA, 2008). The South African Constitution guarantees everyone the right to formative and further education (Motha and Ramadiro, 2005).

Yet despite the pledge laid down by the legal framework, research indicates that 65 per cent of migrant children of school going age are in school (CoRMSA, 2008). In some schools, governing bodies exercise subjectivity with regard to the admission of migrant children (ERP, 2006).

The parents of migrant children cite the cost of fees, the cost of transport, and the cost of books and uniforms as major reasons for why their children do not attend school (CoRMSA, 2008). According to CoRMSA (2008), teachers and pupils alike sometimes insult migrant pupils using xenophobic comments. According to Motha and Ramadiro (2005), many migrants have a limited knowledge of their right to education. The small numbers of migrants who are aware of their right to education are reluctant to fight their case because they fear the antagonism and ridicule that their children will receive at school (Motha and Ramadiro, 2005).

### **2.3.13 Lack of access to health services**

Whilst in South Africa, migrant informal traders have a right to free primary healthcare. The constitution (1996) of the Republic of South Africa guarantees everybody the right to basic health care. These services can, however, be difficult to access and they are sometimes of poor quality (Lee, 2004). Many African migrant street traders do not visit clinics because they cannot afford to be away from their businesses (Chazan, 2006). Furthermore, migrant street traders experience problems with regard to accessing health facilities when they are ill and this is due to discrimination that is meted against them at clinics and hospitals.

According to Landau (2007), healthcare deprivation aggravates the public health crisis and infectious agents worsen their effect. Since migrants do not have permanent street addresses in Durban, they are frequently sent away from public clinics (Chazan, 2006). Sometimes the health workers at clinics and hospitals refuse to attend to patients who are African migrants. Leonard, Bukurura and Poonen (2008) cite the case of the Congolese national who took his sister to be treated at a Durban hospital but was told to go to the United Nations or the Red Cross for medical care. Human Rights Watch (2009) asserts that a delay in treatment (owing to exclusion) makes the illness more relentless and resistant to drugs. Healthcare becomes expensive and contagious diseases endanger the health of both citizens and non-citizens as a result (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

The health of migrants is exacerbated by their having to survive in poor living conditions; they often live in overcrowded apartments where there is limited sanitation, little food, not enough clean water, and inadequate ventilation (Palitza, 2008).

These conditions, according to Palitza (2008), result in exposure to diseases such as tuberculosis and such circumstances also have a negative effect on HIV-positive individuals.



Landau (2007) stresses that to deny migrants the access to healthcare services will have negative long-term effects. By not having access to proper healthcare services, the health of the migrants is put at risk and additionally the welfare of those who depend upon them, such as children, is also placed in danger. For example, Palitza (2008) argues that migrants and refugees are increasingly vulnerable to contracting HIV/AIDS, and that girls and women are particularly vulnerable to contracting the disease because they are the most likely to suffer from sexual abuse, sexual molestation and rape. Male officials and traders sexually harass and intimidate female street traders and this places them at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS (Lee, 2004).

Medical treatment and services should be rendered by the Department of Health to all people (Department of Health, 2004). The country's health regulations further state that with regard to medical treatment the Department of Health is compelled to deliver services to both locals and migrants. According to the September 2007 notice that was released with regard to refugees and asylum-seekers, irrespective of whether or not a migrant possesses the requisite documents, all hospitals are required to charge them a lower fee than that which would be charged to citizens (Department of Health, 2004).

### **2.3.14 Lack of accommodation**

African migrants experience significant housing difficulties when they arrive in South African cities (Greenburg and Polzer, 2008). South African policy recognises that migrants should be fully integrated into urban settings, and this means that African migrants can claim for houses just like ordinary South Africans can (CoRMSA, 2008). The South African Government has pledged to improve the living conditions across South Africa in an impartial manner so that everyone can have affordable shelter with access to services such as water and sanitation (McDonald, 1998). In the past, local authorities have denied migrants access to Reconstruction and Development Houses (RDP) houses (Palmaray, 2002).

In Durban, the municipal housing department argues that those migrants who are legal residents qualify for housing subsidies provided that they meet the same standards as South African nationals (Greenburg and Polzer, 2008).

According to Greenburg and Polzer (2008), the eThekweni Department of Housing indicated that there are no cases to their knowledge of migrants who have obtained government subsidy schemes.

Migrants who lived in informal settlements such as Albert Park lost almost everything when their shacks were burnt down and their properties were looted during the xenophobic attacks of 2008 (CoRMSA, 2008; Maharaj, 2009).

Many migrants who were displaced during the xenophobic violence were accommodated by churches. Certain faith-based organisations, such as Emmanuel Cathedral, look after migrants at their refugee centres (Durban CBD, 2008). The eThekweni Municipality was criticised by the International Refugee Service (IRS) for being xenophobic; this claim was made because the municipality refused to build a hostel for the migrants (Maharaj, 2009). The local authorities claimed that the hostel would lead to indignities on the part of migrants as well as a decline of standards in the vicinity, which would negatively affect residential and commercial amenities (Maharaj, 2009). In spite of township accommodation being cheaper, xenophobia has forced migrants to live in the city (Leonard, Bukurura and Poonen, 2008). The majority of African migrants avoid the townships because of crime, xenophobia and violence, and as such choose to live in privately rented and expensive urban apartments that are often overcrowded (Parsley, 2005).

Sometimes migrants experience abuse and unfair evictions at the hands of their landlords (CoRMSA, 2008). The premises that they rent are usually quite small and in some cases two-roomed accommodation is shared by as many as twelve people (Amisi, 2005). There are buildings in the city centre that have been abandoned and have thereafter been taken over by migrants and indigent people (Badsha, 2003). Parsley (2005) proposes that the government develop policy guidelines in order to provide houses for the African migrants.

### **2.3.15 Department of Home Affairs**

Migrants who come to South Africa for economic reasons obtain legal status through the asylum process (Parsley, 2005). The Department of Home Affairs deals with issues that concern the legal position of migrants. It does this by ensuring, for example, that migrants obtain the maroon-coloured identity documents (IDs) that are issued to migrants.

According to Leonard et al. (2008), the maroon ID is designed to help its holder access employment, but migrants also apply for these IDs in order to escape persecution.

Under the Refugee Act of 1998, all asylum-seekers are entitled to free identity document, however, many asylum-seekers do not possess them owing to the huge backlog of applications at the offices (Jacobsen, 2004). Many asylum-seekers complain that they must wait for a period that sometimes exceeds a year in order to be given official refugee status (Motha and Ramadiro, 2002). The delays tend to favour corrupt officials because their bribes increase in accordance with the increasing number of applicants (Parsley, 2005).

According to Motha and Ramadiro (2002), the Department of Home Affairs at times issues incomplete or wrong IDs. In their study, Amisi and Ballard (2006) found that there were corrupt officials within the department who demand bribes from migrants. Palmary (2002) has identified three reasons for the slow pace of the asylum process. The first reason is that the Department of Home Affairs seeks to hinder migrants from permanently remaining in South Africa. The second reason is that the department wants to aid in the employment of migrants as a cheap source of labour. Another reason is that delays work to the benefit of corrupt department officials. Finally, Amisi and Ballard (2006) state that being granted asylum status does not guarantee one better or more opportunities. The majority of South Africa's banks accept only green bar-coded IDs and the holders of maroon IDs are thus unable to open bank accounts (Amisi and Ballard, 2006).

### **2.3.16 Access to financial services**

There are many African migrants who cannot obtain access to credit or open a bank account in which to store and build up their income (Steinberg, 2007; Crush, Williams and Peberdy 2005). CoRMSA (2008) argues that the consequence of this is that migrants' economic activities and their ability to survive are restricted. According to Landau (2007), African migrants' lack of access to banking services might well discourage them from investing in cities which include Durban. Harris (2001) maintains that the obstacle of migrants opening local bank accounts exposes migrant street traders to violence and theft since they are known to carry money on their persons, owing to their inability to keep it in the safe environment of a bank. According to Jacobsen (2004), the migrants' lack of credit renders it impossible for them to initiate or to expand their entrepreneurial businesses. Migrant traders are dependent upon their businesses alone for their livelihood (Jacobsen, 2004).

It is essential for migrants to be able to use banking services to keep their savings secure or to obtain access to credit so as to start small businesses (CoRMSA, 2008).

According to Parsley (2008), foreigners are prevented from opening bank accounts at most banks. In spite of the possession of a valid migrant ID, there is no assurance that the migrant will be supplied with credit that is needed (Jacobsen, 2004). According to Jacobsen (2004), the Department of Home Affairs is known to advise banking institutions to refrain from providing credit to migrants, irrespective of whether or not the potential client possesses a valid maroon ID.

There is no legitimate reason for the Department of Home Affairs to be giving banks such advice. Jacobsen (2004) has estimated that only 11% of African migrants possess maroon-coloured IDs. Some highly regarded banks do, however, allow migrants to open certain types of accounts at their institutions (CoRMSA, 2008). Despite this, African migrants experience difficulties with regard to supplying the proof of residence required by such financial institutions. According to CoRMSA (2008), many financial institutions consider migrants as non-residents who must have visas or passports in order to open bank accounts. Crush, Williams and Peberdy, (2005) observe that accessing a bank account is difficult for those traders who earn low incomes as well as for those who are semi-literate.

Although money-lenders apply high interest rates and can insist on tough payment terms, they are easy to access and have straightforward terms (Jacobsen, 2004). According to Mitullah (2003), money-lenders are more convenient when compared with those lenders that require collateral. In certain cases street traders combine their financial resources through credit associations (Mitullah, 2003). Since the banks in their home countries are not operated in the same way as are South African banks, migrant street traders cannot transfer money to the banks in their countries of origin (Harris, 2001). The costs involved in transferring money, particularly small amounts, tend to be significantly higher in formal banking systems than in informal banking systems (Mitullah, 2003).

### **2.3.17 Economic contribution of migrant traders**

The economic worth of the informal economy is defined in terms of the jobs it creates, the flow of money that it generates, and the number of goods that it puts into economic circulation (Motala, 2002). Migration does not pose a threat to South Africa's economic security but instead leads to the creation of more jobs, to more investment, and to a more productive economy (Bernstein and Dagut, 2008).

There are many migrants that bring resources and skills into the country that generate more jobs (Jacobsen, 2004). According to Valji (2003), the claim that migrants take jobs away from the local citizens is a misconception. He argues that migrants are crucial contributors towards the economy (Valji, 2003). Contrary to the situation in Kenya, where most informal traders employ family members, migrant street traders in South African cities, such as Durban, employ many local citizens to help run their businesses (Kinyanjui, 2010).

According to Kinyanjui (2010), family members are generally preferred by the migrant street traders because of their perceived loyalty, reliability and honesty. Furthermore, family members are regarded as crucial to the business since they are less likely to belong to trade unions and therefore offer less of a threat to those who employ them (Kinyanjui, 2010). Rather than focusing on employing family members, migrant street traders prefer to employ local personnel. The Minister of Labour in South Africa, Membathisi Mdladlana, emphatically declared that the research shows that African migrants create jobs:

“It is a misconception to conclude that migrants steal jobs from South Africans. The opposite is actually true. They are job creators, first for themselves – and then for the rest of us”. (*ANC Daily News Briefings/Sapa*, 2008)

Other studies verify this claim. Street traders make a substantial contribution towards urban life by providing services and products and by generating employment (Chukuezi, 2007). Bernstein and Dagut (2008) back up this assertion further by stating that, on average, one in every four migrants employs a South African worker (Bernstein and Dagut, 2008). Peberdy (2000) states that the advantage of having migrant traders in Durban is that many of them employ local people, whereas a mere 10% of local street trade employees are employed by local street traders. Research has shown that more non-SADC migrant traders tend to employ South Africans than do those from SADC countries (Peberdy, 2000). Traders who are in Durban for political reasons appear to employ more South Africans than those who come to South Africa for economic reasons (Peberdy, 2000).

Contrary to popular belief, most migrants in non-service trades (i.e. 85 per cent of them) are buying their goods from South African producers, rather than from other countries. They are therefore benefiting the economy of the municipalities of the cities, which include the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality.

According to Peberdy (2000), 59 per cent of migrant traders state that they have suppliers in Durban, which clearly indicates that they are investing in local businesses. According to Morris (2003), migrant traders employ local workers, possess a relatively higher level of formal education, and have greater access to capital than do their South African counterparts. Migrant street traders create opportunities for tourism and for curio shops since they import between 10 per cent and 90 per cent of their leather goods, wirework, clothes, crocheted work, curios, and wood and stone carvings from other African countries (Peberdy, 2010). According to Peberdy (2010), the Mozambican informal traders bring nuts, vegetables and clothes not otherwise available in South Africa to be sold by street traders. This shows that migrant traders contribute, through the sale of their merchandise, towards the economies of South African cities, Durban included. As entrepreneurs and workers, therefore, African migrants substantially contribute towards the economy of the city of Durban (Maharaj, 2009). Valji (2003), states that much of the profit generated by African migrants (many of whom are street traders) is invested in South Africa, thus contributing towards the economy of this country. Since South Africa has a skills shortage, its government needs to take advantage of the economic potential of the African migrants that reside in the cities and who are well educated and experienced (Landau, 2007). It is necessary to recognise the migrants' contribution and to capitalise on their multifaceted potential (Bernstein and Dagut, 2008).

## **2.4 Summary**

The literature review has attempted to highlight some of the contemporary issues that confront African migrant street traders in South Africa, more specifically, the city of Durban. The maltreatment and discrimination that they face tend to be impediment that prevents them from efficiently conducting their businesses, which would benefit the city's customers. The review has explained the contribution that migrant traders make to Durban which can be regarded as an achievement that impacts positively on the economy of the municipality.

It can be seen through the literature review that migrant street traders spend much of their income in the Metropolitan Municipality. Rather than taking away jobs from the local citizens, African street traders create them by employing people in their street businesses. The artwork that they import from their countries is sold to tourists in the city either by way of curio shops or street side stalls. It appears that despite being sidelined by those in authority, foreign nationals continue to share their skills with local employees, who in turn gain adeptness at the street trade.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methodology that is utilised in the study. In-depth interviews were utilised for data collection. Fifteen interviews in total were conducted; ten were with migrant street traders and five were with local street traders. The process of data analysis will be comprehensively explained. This chapter deals with certain ethical considerations that are crucial to the study, such as informed consent. The challenges that were encountered during the course of the research study are briefly explained.

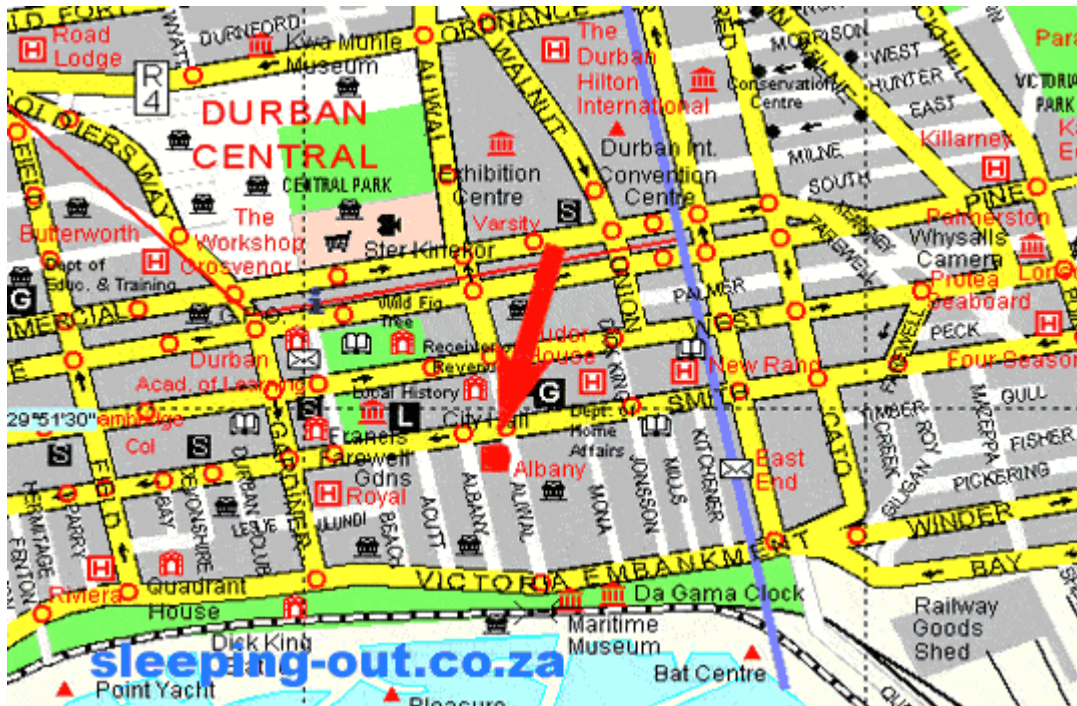
#### **3.2 Profile of Durban**

The city of Durban is a lively, multicultural city with a rich history (Ellmore, 2005). It has a harbour that is strategically located on the eastern coastline of South Africa. The city is distinguished by the high temperatures and high level of humidity that are distinctive of southern Africa (Ellmore, 2005). Durban is the biggest city in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), which is one of nine provinces of South Africa.

According to Statistics South Africa (2005), KZN has 9.4 million inhabitants. The ethnic language that is spoken by the majority of the population is isiZulu. Since it is the largest seaport on the continent of Africa, Durban plays a crucial role in the acquisition of revenue for the eThekweni municipality. According to Schaffer (2008), the economic growth of the city is attracting more and more people in search of employment.

### 3.3 Description of the site of study

#### Map of Durban's CBD



*Source: The satellite and street view options are provided by Google. We use the provided location information to display these and they should be used as a guide.*

The site that was used to collect data for the study was the central business district (CBD) of Durban. The CBD was chosen as the case study because much street trader activity is conducted there. It is therefore an important site for investigating the experiences of both migrant and local street traders. The CBD of Durban has undergone a transformation with regard to who works and lives there (eThekweni municipality, 2008). During the apartheid administration, the Group Areas Act of 1950 secured the CBD as an exclusively white residential area, but now, according to the eThekweni municipality (2008), the area is mainly populated by African people. The study was conducted in the area outside the business structure of The Workshop. The informal business site stretches from The Workshop, to business activities under the bridge and to many sites which are opposite the post office as well as the taxi rank and the metropolitan bus ranks.



The business site of the migrant street traders is characterised by many small business stalls, which consist of plastic coverings supported by removable iron rods. The site in the vicinity of the Workshop appears to be convenient for informal trade because it is close to both the taxi rank and the bus stop. The central post office, together with the municipal offices and many other businesses, are also in the vicinity.

On a daily basis, large numbers of people come to the city centre on a daily basis in order to travel to The Workshop (a shopping mall). On their way to this mall, these crowds pass by the street traders' stalls. Many people show interest in buying the items that are displayed inside and outside the stalls. The stalls are mostly operated by male African migrant street traders. Many African migrant and local street traders are found operating outside the formal shops, where they have their products displayed on small structures that are provided by the eThekweni Municipality. In terms of data collection, the researcher had to go to the business site of the African migrant street traders so as to obtain details about their experiences and business activities.

### **3.4 Qualitative research method**

The researcher made use of the qualitative research method. There are several advantages to using the qualitative research method. According to Patton (2002), qualitative research yields a wealth of valid data. Patton (2002) moreover states that qualitative researchers may involve their subjects in the research and this is a feature that is not common in quantitative studies. Qualitative research investigates the real-life situation of the people who are being studied and it yields extensive information (Wilson, 2000). It makes use of open-ended questions, which provide the opportunity for further probing. Respondents are afforded the opportunity to reply to the interviewer's questions in their own words instead of being limited to certain responses, as is the case in quantitative research (Buston et al., 1998). Yet despite its many advantages, qualitative research has its disadvantages as well. The collection and analysis of qualitative data is time-consuming and it can be difficult to determine the validity and reliability of information due to the subjectivity of some exploration. Since the present research is of an exploratory nature, a qualitative approach is most appropriate as the research is time-intensive and cannot accommodate a large number of respondents because it makes use of in-depth, field-based methods (Ulin and McNeill, 2002). The research questions were explored through the case study approach.

According to Bell (1995), the case study approach is particularly appropriate for researchers because it provides an opportunity for aspects of a problem to be studied in-depth within a limited timeframe. The experiences of migrant street traders and the social challenges that they face were examined for their relevance to this study.

### **3.5 In-depth interviews**

Studies that are centred on individual life experiences will frequently rely on a strategy that involves in-depth interviews (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Interviews are among the most frequently acknowledged forms of qualitative research (Mason, 2002). According to Opdenakker (2006), in-depth interviews are characterised by communication between the interviewer and the respondent at a certain time and in a particular place. The objective of the interview is to explore the perspectives, feelings and viewpoint of the respondent and it is in this way that in-depth interviews produce relevant information (Guion, 2006). The interview is beneficial in that it provides the researcher with the opportunity to explore the circumstances of respondents' experiences.

In-depth interviews are a qualitative research tool that involves conducting intensive one-on-one interviews with a small number of respondents (Boyce and Neale, 2006). In-depth interviews provide an opportunity to define what is ethical and what is interesting (Fox and Bayat, 2007). This assists in supplying the standard for judging research quality, the level of courtesy during the interviews, and the accuracy of the research report (Fox and Bayat, 2007). According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), the in-depth interview has the benefit of quickly providing a wide range of data. The primary advantage of the in-depth interview is that it offers very detailed information (Boyce and Neale, 2006). It also provides a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information. In the in-depth interviews, there is always the prospect of being able to promptly rectify any misunderstanding whilst still conducting the interview; this is not an option when one has respondents fill in a questionnaire (Amisi, 2005). Unlike the focus group interview, respondents sometimes feel more comfortable engaging in a one-on-one conversation with the interviewer about their experiences than they do talking about those experiences in front of a group of people (Boyce and Neale, 2006).

A further advantage of using in-depth interviews is that they are valuable sources of data when one is researching people in their home or place of work (Fox and Bayat, 2007)).

Moreover, in-depth interview provides the opportunity for the interviewer to improve on answers by noting down observations (Fox and Bayat, 2007). Standardised in-depth interviews are carefully written and ask specific questions in a particular order (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

Unlike the answers in a questionnaire, the answers of the interviewee tend to be more impulsive as there is less time for extended contemplation (Opdenakker, 2006). When conducted by an interviewer who has hearing challenges, an interview can be achieved with the aid of an interpreter or by writing down the questions and answers (Marshall and Rossman, 2011), however the way the interview may be conducted allows for precise follow-up questions to take place immediately. According to Opdenakker (2006), an interviewer can provide the respondent with clues that the end of the interview is near and the respondent then be thanked for the time he or she gave the interviewer.

In-depth interviews have the disadvantage that the interviewer may want to prove that research tool is working well. This could result in the respondent's responses being biased (Boyce and Neale, 2006). According to Opdenakker (2006), the visibility of both the interviewer and the respondent in the interview can sometimes lead to the interviewer interrupting the respondent. This arises when the interviewer behaves in a particular manner that leads or influences the respondent to respond in a particular way desired by the interviewer. There are times when the respondent may be reluctant (for whatever reason) to disclose information on certain areas that the interviewer wishes to explore (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), an interviewer's lack of fluency in the local language or his lack of skill in expressing himself may discourage an interviewer from asking questions that give rise to long narratives from the respondents. In-depth interviews can be a time-intensive activity: much time can be spent in conducting the interviews, transcribing them, and analysing the results (Boyce and Neale, 2006). The results generated by in-depth interviews are not normally generalised. This is due to the fact that small samples are chosen and random sampling methods are not applied (Boyce and Neale, 2006).

### **3.6 Sampling procedure**

There are several techniques that can be utilised to collect information; the researcher's choice of technique(s) hinges on the aims of the study.

For this research, in-depth interviews were used to collect data as these would enable the researcher to obtain valuable information from both migrant and local street traders.

In collecting data, the researcher sought to acquire knowledge and insights into the experiences, perceptions, challenges and contributions of local and migrant street traders. Such information was essential in achieving the objectives of the study. It is crucial that the researcher who engages in in-depth interviews handle the question of confidentiality carefully (Mason, 2002). In this study, the local respondents used their local language of isiZulu when responding to the questions that were asked in the interviews. Their responses were later translated into English. In the case of the migrant street traders, the questions were presented to them in English and they responded to them in English. All the respondents, including the migrants, showed an understanding of the questions that were asked them by responding accordingly.

The present study made use of the snowball sampling method to identify local as well as migrant respondents. Struwig and Stead (2001) state that snowball sampling deals with procedures in which the first respondents are chosen by probability methods. Additional respondents are then selected based on information supplied by the initial respondents. According to Krippendorf (2004), snowball sampling commences with sampling units, which the researcher should choose carefully. When the researcher of the current study had obtained the necessary information from the first respondents, he requested them to recommend other respondents. This did not prove to be a laborious exercise given the fact that most of the migrant and local street traders in the location the researcher visited knew each other, including those traders who work at different sites. It must be noted that snowball sampling has the problem of bias (Castillo, 2009). According to Castillo (2009), subjects tend to recommend people with whom they are acquainted and with whom they share characteristics and traits.

In order to acquire a representative and valid sample, the researcher selected reliable cross-sectional estimations from the prevailing foreign migrant and local populations. The researcher selected respondents from different African countries so as to be able to determine the reliability of responses. According to Faugier and Sargeant (1997), snowball sampling is more appropriate for studies of smaller dimensions. In this research a total of fifteen respondents participated in the in-depth interviews that were conducted. The required information was collected from two sources.

Firstly, it was mainly gathered from migrant street traders. Secondly, data was also collected from local street traders as the researcher wished to acquire knowledge on how they perceive the entrepreneurial activities of the African migrant street traders. In total, ten interviews were conducted with migrant street traders; five of the interviewees were male and five were female. Interviews were also conducted with five local street traders; three of them were female and two were male.

An in-depth interview guide was used to gather data from the migrant and local street traders. The respondents were interviewed, among other things, about their experiences and expectations as street traders. Flexibility was exercised during the interviewing process when it took place on the business site so as to grant time for the participants to attend to their customers. The flexible procedure also allowed for the interviews to be conducted at the respondents' places of residence, should the need for such an eventuality exist. In the in-depth interviews, follow-up questions were used when the researcher wanted to probe deeper into certain issues. With the permission of the respondents, all the interviews were tape-recorded.

Each tape-recorded interview lasted approximately twenty to thirty minutes. The researcher also utilised a notebook for recording non-verbal cues during the interview as well as additional information after the recorded session. Before the interviews began, the researcher indicated to the respondents that they were to feel free to attend to their customers. The tape-recorder was put on pause when the respondents were dealing with customers. Each respondent was informed that he or she was free to withdraw from the interview at any time should the respondent wish to do so. From the outset the researcher gave the respondents a detailed explanation of the objectives of the study. The researcher asked each local and migrant respondent for their permission to include them in the study. The respondents who agreed to take part in an interview were provided with an informed consent form. Informed consent increases the chances that the respondents understand what participation entails and also understand certain issues such as their rights to anonymity and confidentiality (Wiles, 2005). The respondents were then requested to sign the form, thus consenting to participate in the study.

During the course of each interview, the researcher displayed an attentive, non-judgemental and empathetic attitude.

The purpose behind this was to gain the trust of respondents and to allow them to feel free and comfortable enough to open up and yield the necessary information, preferably in detail.

The researcher made use of questions that probed deeper into those areas that were most relevant to the study. Synovate (2009) argues that respondents can sometimes feel that they are being placed under close scrutiny and may thus be reluctant to open up to the interviewer. The researcher tried his utmost to develop a good rapport with the respondents so as to build mutual trust, which would lead to him gathering the necessary information for the study.

As was mentioned earlier, Boyce and Neale (2006) have stated that in-depth interviews are prone to bias because a researcher may wish to prove that the interview is working effectively. He may thus be tempted to alter his findings accordingly. The researcher made every effort when interviewing to maintain objectivity. Follow-up sessions were organised with the respondents in order to search for more information on those areas that had proved unclear. The researcher sought the permission of the respondent after the completion of the initial interview. All the respondents fully cooperated and willingly provided the information that was required.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

The researcher used interpretive analysis as a research tool for analysing the data that had been collected. The interpretive approach attempts to “understand phenomena through meanings people assign to them” (Patton, Marlow and Ram 2003:815). According to Lewins, Taylor and Gibbs (2005), the advantage of the interpretive approach is that it is easy to use and its methods are clearly described. The interpretive approach was utilised by the researcher because it is relevant to the present study. Interpretive analysis was an essential tool for interpreting and analysing all the data that was collected so as to use the findings to formulate a conclusion.

There are, however, limitations to the interpretative approach, such as subjectivity in interpretation and imagination. It became essential that the researcher address these limitations by enhancing the objectivity of his study. A digital tape recorder was utilised to capture the essence of the in-depth interviews, which was important for transcription purposes. Interviews were translated from isiZulu into English soon after the data had been collected, which was before the commencement of the interviews on the following day.

According to Creswell (2003), the researcher should employ coding to create themes from the data. Codes should be interpreted according to their relationship with other codes within a particular context (Struwig and Stead, 2001). The themes were recorded and set aside, where they were placed according to segments for the purpose of comparison.

### **3.8 Limitations of the research**

It is not easy to obtain a specific representative sample of foreign street traders working in Durban. A migrant woman from Zimbabwe did not cooperate because she suspected that the researcher had other motives for interviewing her.

She enquired as to why the researcher had ignored the other street traders but chosen her. The researcher had to explain that he did not have ulterior motives that would land her in trouble with the law in any way. The researcher had to provide all of the respondents with proof of his being a student and also explain to them what he was doing in order to convince them that the motives behind the study were honourable.

One migrant street trader, who was from Burundi, did not want the tape recorder to be used for the interview. He was convinced that photographs could be taken without his awareness. The significance of the audiotape to the research was explained and any questions regarding its use were addressed. No photographs were taken of any of the respondents at any time and thus no photograph-related arrangements were made in connection with this study. The times for the interviews presented a challenge given the busy nature of informal street trade during the afternoon hours. Flexibility had to be exercised by the researcher, who frequently had to reschedule interviews.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues, which differ in magnitude, appear in almost every study that deals with individual respondents (Saldaña, 2009). Ethical considerations are an important matter in qualitative research since research is always intrusive (Neuman, 1994). The qualitative researcher must, therefore, according to Neuman (1994), be cautious not to subject participants to embarrassment or anxiety. When the researcher initiated the appointments for the in-depth interviews, he assured the respondents that the information emerging from the interviews would be treated as confidential. As a researcher, it is expected that the confidentiality and privacy of all participants be respected (Struwig and Stead, 2001).

Those African migrant and local street traders who were at first reluctant to take part when they learned a tape recorder would be used (because they feared negative repercussions) agreed to become involved after the researcher assured them that no harm whatsoever would befall them as a result of their participation.

Creswell (1994) argues that the researcher must not put participants at risk, and vulnerable people must be respected. It was necessary for the researcher to explain that pseudonyms would be used in the research instead of the respondents' real names. This arrangement was made in order to protect the identity of the respondents.

The researcher gave the respondents the assurance that the information collected through the interviews would be treated as confidential. None of the respondents were coerced into taking part in the research. The researcher advised the respondents that taking part in the study was voluntary. He also stipulated that no rewards could be expected as the result of their participation. In other words, no false pretences were used to encourage them to participate.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter has provided an outline of the methodology utilised to gather data. The approach used to analyse data, the sampling method, and in-depth interviews were all discussed. Ethical considerations together with the limitations of the research were also explained.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The findings of the research are presented in this chapter. It provides some basic background information about African migrant street traders that are living in Durban. Information is given about their social networks as well as about who serves as their contacts in order to help them get started as street entrepreneurs. The motive behind their involvement in the business is expounded upon. The advantages and disadvantages to being involved in the street trade are also described. The foreign street traders' experiences of conducting their business activities at their work sites are discussed. Woven into the discussions is the examination about the way the migrants are perceived by the local street traders. The views of the local street traders cast light on how the migrants conduct their businesses and on what their economic contribution to the city is considered to be. The chapter concludes by reflecting on how the African migrant street traders would like to be assisted by the government and, more particularly, by the Metropolitan Municipality.

#### **4.2 Sample characteristics**

In total there were ten migrant street traders who served as respondents in this study; five of them were female and five were male. The level of education of these migrant street traders was relatively high. Four of them had some form of tertiary education, however only three of them had actually completed their degrees. One of these migrant street respondents was completing her medical degree when she was forced by political circumstances to interrupt her studies. Among those with a tertiary education was one who received a degree in mathematics from the University of Dakar. The other two migrant respondents that had received a tertiary education possessed a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Zimbabwe and a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Congo respectively. A further five of the ten respondents had completed their secondary education. Only one of the migrant street traders had less than a secondary education. The ages of the migrant street traders varied from twenty-two years old to forty-three years old. The migrant respondents' actual periods of stay in Durban ranged from two to thirteen years.

The length of time that these migrant street traders engaged in their entrepreneurial activities covered an average of six years. Data concerning the profile of the African migrant street traders that were interviewed is outlined in the following table:

**Table 1: Demographic information about the African migrant street traders that were interviewed**

No.	Name (Pseudonyms)	<i>Age</i>	Sex	Level of education	Country of origin	Length of time in Durban (years)	Items that are sold
IDI#1	Bisimwa	38	Male	Completed high school education	DRC	3	Male and female shoes, belts, bags
IDI#2	Rhopa	27	Female	University graduate (Economics)	Zimbabwe	5 or 6	Jerseys, African-sewn female clothes
IDI#3	Mesi	22	Female	Completed high school education	Malawi	2	Second hand female clothes
IDI#4	Habib	24	Male	Completed high school education	Nigeria	2	Shoes, male and female clothes
IDI#5	Asale	39	Female	Did not complete high school education	Malawi	7	Shoes, female underwear
IDI#6	Willermine	35	Female	University graduate (Nursing)	DRC	10	Male and female clothes and shoes
IDI#7	Jawara	33	Male	University graduate (Mathematics)	Senegal	4	Male and female clothes and shoes
IDI#8	Furaha	34	Female	University dropout (Medicine)	DRC	9	Shoes, bags, suitcases and belts
IDI#9	Ngunda	42	Male	Completed high school	Malawi	13	Female and male

				education			clothes, bags and shoes
IDI#10	Ntire	43	Male	Completed high school education	Burundi	12	Bags, suitcases, belts and shoes

[The names that are used in this study are pseudonyms. Pseudonyms have been used in order to protect the identity of the respondents.]

Five local street traders took part in the interviews; three of them were female and two were male. The age classification of the local street traders ranged between twenty-eight and fifty-five years old. The level of education of the local respondents was lower than that of the migrant respondents. One local respondent had received a high school education and achieved a Matric certificate. Four of the local respondents had been unable to afford to study further than Grade 10 (junior high school). The length of time that the local street respondents have been involved in street entrepreneurship averaged five years and ten months.

Data concerning the profiles of the local (Durban) street traders that were interviewed is outlined in the following table:

**Table 2: Demographic information about the local (Durban) street traders who were interviewed**

No.	Name (Pseudonyms)	Age	Sex	Level of education	Country of origin	Length of time as street entrepreneur in Durban (years)	Items that are sold
IDI#11	Londiwe	35	Female	Did not complete high school education	South Africa	11	Fruit and vegetables sweets, airtime, and lose cigarette
IDI#12	Jabulani	28	Male	Completed high school education	South Africa	7	Male and female clothes, earrings, bangles, airtime and sweets
IDI#13	Nonhlanhla	55	Female	Completed Grade 6 education	South Africa	5	Fruit and vegetables, lose cigarettes and sweets
IDI#14	Muzi	37	Male	Completed Grade 8 education	South Africa	1	Second- hand male and female clothes
IDI#15	Sandisiwe	32	Female	Did not complete high school education	South Africa	8 months	Fruit and vegetables and loose cigarettes

[The names that are used in this study are pseudonyms. Pseudonyms are used in order to protect the identity of the respondents.]

All the respondents, both migrant and local, possess valid permits that allow them to operate as street traders. Six of the African migrant respondents conduct their businesses from shelters that are hired from the municipality, while three of them conduct their businesses by selling clothes that are placed on plastic sheets in an open space. One migrant respondent makes use of a self-made shelter to conduct his business. Three local respondents sell fruit and vegetables, which they place on top of self-made tables. The other two local respondents sell items such as clothing; one of them makes use of the municipal shelter while the other runs his business from a canvas that is stretched out on the pavement.

### **4.2.1 Job creation**

Seven of the ten migrant street traders employ local people as staff and these staff members assist them in the sale of their merchandise. According to the migrant traders, local staff members who have sales experience are paid a sum of R350.00 each for six days of work. Newly employed staff members are paid R300.00 each for six days of work. Migrant street traders seem to appreciate the role of salesmen/women in selling their commodities:

*“I used to have two people that I employed. I had two tables and two local employees working for me. I would wake up at six o’clock and come to this place” (IDI#10 male).*

*“I have one girl who works for me at present because the business is not going well now. She is a faithful girl. I love her so much. She has been working for me for quite a long time” (IDI#8, female).*

All the local street traders concede to the fact that migrant street traders contribute towards the reduction of unemployment by providing jobs for the youth. The jobs that are generated by the migrant street traders are considered to be beneficial to those who did not previously have a source of income:

*“They employ. They employ [for emphasis]. In other tables I have noticed that foreign street traders have employed local girls to work for them. Yes, they help a lot. When you do not work you wish even for a small amount of money so that you can go to sleep having had something to eat” (IDI#14, male).*

*“Foreign traders employ local people and they do not have a problem with that. I cannot say local people who are given jobs earn very little income. I have never heard them complain about their wages” (IDI#15, female).*

The employing of local citizens by the migrant street traders occurs regardless of the survivalist nature of their entrepreneurial businesses. Such an action could be perceived as an attempt to give back to the city that hosts them.

### **4.2.2 Contribution of migrant street traders**

All the migrant street traders that were interviewed reported that they contribute towards the economic development of the city.

Many traders maintain that it is necessary to play their part in the development of the city since they are able to continue operating their entrepreneurial businesses despite the challenges that prevail. One respondent had the following to say:

*“We contribute. We have got the boys who use trolleys to take our things we sell to the buildings for storage. We pay them money for the job they do. We buy our stock from wholesalers and other shops that are here in Durban to keep them running. That is a contribution. I pay for the instruments such as tents we hire. In places where we live in town we pay rent. That is a contribution because the landlords pay the municipality for electricity and other things”* (IDI#10, male).

Some of the migrant traders said that they regard the money they pay for bus and taxi fares as a contribution towards the city’s economic development because the Metropolitan Municipality is responsible for the bus services. For instance, migrant street traders who reside in the outskirts of the CBD (in places like the Berea) have to pay taxi fares that total R10.00 a day in order to travel to and from work. This money amounts to approximately R300.00 in total per month.

*“I contribute to the development of Durban every day. When I wake up in the morning I take my bag. I use a taxi to come to The Workshop. I contribute by paying money for the taxi because the taxi uses petrol. When I am at The Workshop I use money to buy food. That is part of development of Durban. I go to buy stock. That is part of the development.*

*At the end of the month we pay for the space we use for our business. I pay rent to the municipality”* (IDI#4, male).

Depending on the number of trips that they take and the distance that they travel, the trolley boys who ferry stock between storage places and business sites can be paid up to R350.00 per week by a single migrant street trader. The income of the trolley boys is based on the morning and late afternoon hours that they work when the street traders need their stock moved. Migrant street traders do not make as substantial a contribution as do the large corporate industries, but with the little money that they are able to generate from street trading activities they make their presence felt in the city and provide jobs for many locals.

### 4.2.3 Xenophobia and *AmaKwere kwere*

It appears that the foremost issue that comes to the mind of most migrant street traders when the subject of fear is raised is xenophobia. According to their reports, most of them think of the xenophobic attacks of 2008 when asked about what scares them. Many migrants in different parts of the country were maimed and even killed at that time (Mwakikagile, 2008). Most of the migrant traders are apprehensive that the atrocities of 2008 may one day recur. One DRC respondent has the following to say:

*“There is this problem of xenophobia which worries me sometimes. There are some citizens who do not like foreigners. They do not hide how they hate us. They say bad things about us as foreigners. They even threaten us sometimes. That is why I am sometimes scared”* (IDI#6, female).

Some migrants live in fear, nervous that some incident may stir up a new wave of xenophobic violence against them.

*“Sometimes fear come. Two years ago this xenophobia happened. Foreigners were killed and others were injured in many places. Now we do not know what will happen on any day. Anything can happen at once”* (IDI#2, female).

Many of the migrant street traders indicated that they have adjusted to the street trade regardless of having been the victims of xenophobia at various times.

They seem to understand that they cannot, by themselves, change the attitudes that are held by some local individuals who dislike their presence in the city. Other migrants seek spiritual solace in order to bear up under these difficult times:

*“There are people who come to abuse us. They abuse. We do not care. They abuse in many ways. We can even hear them talking and others swearing. Fear can come but I do not let it stay in my heart. I just give everything to God”* (IDI#8, female).

Many of the migrant street traders expressed their dislike at being insolently referred to as *amakwere kwere*. It puzzles some migrants that the term *amakwere kwere* is commonly used in reference to them and other African migrants but not applied in reference to migrants from outside of Africa (such as Pakistanis, for example). The use of the term *amakwere kwere* is not only demeaning but it also makes them feel lower in terms of their value:

*“What I do not like is a person who sees you as a kwere kwere. They do not see you as one of their brothers and sisters. We are all Africans. How can you people refuse to accept us? Sometimes people do not respect you because you are on the street. More than that, you are a foreigner, a kwere kwere”* (IDI#1, male).

On one occasion, the researcher attempted to negotiate an interview with a female street trader from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She flatly refused to participate and her remarks, which were voluntarily captured on the micro tape, were a source of intrigue. She indicated that she knew about research interviews. The woman stated that she has a master’s degree in management. She came to South Africa and she could not find a job because, in her opinion, migrants are treated like they are worth nothing and are accordingly referred to as *kwere kwere*.

A Senegalese street trader’s mild comments concerning the use of the term *ikwere kwere* were in complete contrast to the emotionally bitter remarks of the DRC street trader cited above. This man’s response to the term revealed an attitude of acceptance, which seems to be how he copes with the use of the term *ikwere kwere* by the locals:

*“Sometimes people just come to you and say, “You are a foreigner, a kwere kwere.” I do not have a problem with that. To me, that is a nice thing to say”* (IDI#7, male).

One local respondent argued that it would be counter-productive to advocate for the expulsion of migrant street traders from Durban. Xenophobic actions sometimes manifest themselves as calls for the migrants to be expelled from this country. This local respondent explained that the expulsion of the migrants would have dire consequences for those who are employed by them:

*“I see them as creating jobs. People who come from Africa create jobs. Some people [i.e. locals] who return back from work in the afternoon, as you can see them, come from the employment of the foreign migrants. Others come from the shops owned by the foreigners. If we can say, “Let us expel people who come from Africa,” children of other families will go hungry. In other houses there will be no food”* (IDI#14, male).



It is significant to observe that it cannot be assumed that all the local street traders advocate for the expulsion of the migrant traders from the city. This research concludes that there are local street traders who are in favour of the migrants being allowed to pursue their business activities as these activities are seen as benefiting the unemployed of Durban.

#### **4.2.4 Crime**

Many of the migrant street traders live in fear of being attacked and robbed by Durban's criminals. Some of them admit that they have already been victims of crime. They are also soft targets because sometimes the criminals that roam the streets have heard through informal channels that migrant traders hide money in their homes and also sometimes carry some around on their persons for the sake of making purchases and having an on-hand reserve. One Malawian respondent claimed:

*“We are afraid of the robbers who are usually armed with dangerous weapons. Those are the challenges we face”* (IDI#3, female).

Another respondent expressed her anxieties and disapproval thus:

*“What I do not like are people who just come and take the things you sell and leave without making any payment”* (IDI#5, female).

In an attempt to secure themselves and their property, migrants hire security personnel to look after their safety in the area around The Workshop. Each migrant street trader contributes a stipulated amount of money every week towards the wages of the security guards. This form of protection does not, however, provide the African migrants with security when they go shopping and when they have to buy stock outside the perimeters of the Workshop area. Hence some of them sometimes fall prey to muggings:

*“In April this year I was robbed of money, which was about R4 000, and a cell-phone in town by two criminals. One of them pointed a gun at me while the other one kept searching my pockets. No one came to my rescue. I was on my way back to The Workshop during lunchtime. It was a bad day for me because I had borrowed the money on the previous night”* (IDI#1, male).

#### 4.2.5 Police harassment

The majority of the migrant street traders expressed negative attitude at the treatment they receive from the police (and more specifically the Metropolitan police). Durban's policemen are perceived as misusing their legal powers by arresting, charging and maltreating the migrant street traders simply because they are not citizens of this country. In some instances, migrant traders become, during the course of their business activities, the victims of situations that they cannot control. This was the response of one of the respondents:

*“Policemen sometimes come to us. Municipal police come to you to look for the slips of the clothes that you sell. We sometimes buy our stock from Johannesburg and we do not get slips. When the police come looking for the slips and you do not have them they take your clothes away”* (IDI#9, male).

Many migrants have had negative experiences with local law enforcement agencies.

Some Durban-based migrants seem to have accepted victimisation as a part of their lives:

*“I can say ... you know, policemen are supposed to protect us. They are also human. They also have their culture. They do abuse sometimes. One day one policeman said to me, “Take all your things and go back to the Congo.” I have got my licence with me all the time. “This is not your country. Go, go!” Other people who were around simply laughed and I started wondering, “Ha! Is this the way we live”* (IDI#8, female)?

Many local street traders have observed the victimisation of the migrants, but they themselves also experience police harassment at times as well. The type of treatment that they encounter may appear to be less severe in application than that received by the African migrant street traders. One local respondent had the following to say:

*“My business worked well over there in that spot [i.e. site]. But the Municipality removed us from that place because of their preparations for 2010 World Cup. We were kicked out of our places and we were abused. My stock [of fruit and vegetables] was not recovered. When I later went back to the police, they said they got rotten. As local traders we consulted the lawyer. That is why I got this place”* (IDI#11, female).

It can be seen from the above response that local street traders have better opportunities than do migrant street traders when it comes to having legal recourses because of their South African citizenship. Locals have better access to lawyers and courts of laws, whereby their cases can be fought in order to overturn any unjust decisions.

Several of the migrant street traders claimed that policemen have on numerous occasions demanded bribes from them, even though they had committed no offence. Some street traders oblige and pay the bribes because they fear the adverse consequences should they fail to provide the required kickbacks. The following responses reflect these experiences:

*“We worry about the police. You show them the permit when they want it. Sometimes they take your stuff. That is not good”* (IDI#3, female)

*“Sometimes police just come and ask you to give them R200. If you do not have the money, they take your goods, and you lose. You cannot pay rent as a result”* (IDI#9, male).

It seems that the migrant traders’ possession of a valid municipal permit that allows them to trade legally does not guarantee the protection of the migrant traders from the police when a bribe is demanded. Some migrant traders are given no choice except to make such payments as otherwise they could face the confiscation of some of their stock, which they are often unable to recover.

#### **4.2.6 Attitude of municipal officials**

Some of the migrant street traders maintained that officials in the Metropolitan Municipal offices are not keen to assist them when they are asked by the migrants to respond to the problems that are confronting traders. This situation has been discouraging to some and some have developed a sceptical attitude towards municipal officials as they feel that they cannot obtain any worthwhile support from the municipal offices:

*“We have got some problems. Municipality is not working as it is supposed to work. If I have a problem with the member of the committee, the official of the municipality should investigate the problem that I have. What the officials of the municipality do they just sit in the offices and they do not give any help.*

*If you come to them to report about the problem that you have, the officials just look at you and see you as nothing. They do not give you the right answer and help you” (IDI#10, male).*

Some of the migrant street traders observe that the municipal officials are involved in bribery. Some of the traders are of the view that the officials will only assist locals and those who offer them bribes while the migrants suffer discrimination.

*“I had a shelter I rented to the municipality over there. Then the other lady from South Africa came and took my place. She went behind my back and paid the money. There and then they took my place. When I met her I said, “This is my place!” She said, “Oh! No. I did not take your place. If you want to sell here, you can put your things under the shelter.” Then I went to the municipal offices to complain. The man in the office said, “You foreigners are getting the permits to work whereas local people do not work.*

*You must put your things next to her and it’s none of our business!”*

*We pay the permit every year for that shelter although we do not use the place that was taken by that woman. But we do not want to fight. We live in this way” (IDI#8, female).*

Some migrant street traders feel that they are not treated the same as local street traders. They claim that while some municipal officers treat migrants in a humane manner, there are others who are unkind to them. A respondent from the DRC had this to say:

*“As I say, they are just different on how they treat us as the foreigners. They have a.... There are those who are for us and there are those who are against us. Sometimes you can find abusive words from the municipality people. Those who are abusive are not among all of them” (IDI#6, female).*

It would appear that the staff members of the Metropolitan Municipality sometimes resist interacting with migrant street traders, hence they cannot easily know some of the migrants’ needs concerning their business sites.

#### **4.2.7 Scarcity of jobs**

As has already been briefly discussed, many migrant street traders became involved in entrepreneurial businesses in order to obtain a livelihood. The migrant respondents reported that they came to Durban with the hope of earning more money than they did in their home countries. Contrary to their expectations, there has been a lack of job opportunities for them in Durban, which has forced them to resort to street entrepreneurship. One respondent stated:

*“There were no jobs. No papers, no jobs. The only thing one can do is to sell as a street trader”* (IDI#9, male).

It becomes clear from the above quotation that it is difficult for migrants to obtain jobs in South Africa when they do not secure a valid South African identity document.

The absence of decent employment opportunities in the city for the migrants and the availability of only a few low-income jobs have obliged many migrants to resort to street trading as a means of securing their livelihood.

*“Before I started as a street trader I earned R350 a week in a shop that sells clothes. I thought that was small money for me. I cannot manage myself with that money. How can I support my family with R350? I want to go back to school. How do I pay for school fees with the R350 I got”* (IDI#3, female)?

The above quotation indicates that some of the migrant street traders who currently obtain piecemeal jobs save their income with the sole purpose in mind of eventually being able to start up their own businesses.

#### **4.2.8 Lack of finance**

Virtually all of the migrant traders that were interviewed maintained that they came to Durban without the capital required to start their business. They depended on friends and relatives to assist them with the money needed to start their businesses. One respondent reported as follows about how he started his trade:

*“When I came here I did not have money in the bank. I borrowed money from my family. Even when I was at school I wanted to be a businessman. My parents at home are involved in business”* (IDI#10, male).

In most cases, the money the migrants were able to secure was not enough to start a profitable business. Many migrant street traders still struggle to make a profit due to stock shortages. These struggling migrant street traders declared that they sell goods on a small scale and their business operations are insecure, especially at the middle of the month. These traders experience financial hardships when their businesses experience a slump because of poor sales. One migrant street trader stated:

*“A day before yesterday I did not sell anything. I felt lonely because I did not have money. I had to borrow money for transport. Sometimes business is like that”* (IDI#4, male).

Some migrant respondents said that their fervent wish was that financial institutions would assist them with finances when their situations necessitate them borrowing money. Migrant street traders find it difficult to access money from financial establishments. The reason for this is that financial institutions consider migrants to be high-risk clients.

African migrants require money in order to purchase more supplies for their enterprises. One respondent voiced his concerns thus:

*“I need to have money. As you can see, I do not have much stuff with me. If I can get somebody or I can get the money I need, my business would be easy to operate”* (IDI#4, male).

The migrant street traders reported that the money that they earn is spent on accommodation which they usually share, on the rental of a work site and shelter (both of which are provided by the municipality), on their assistants’ wages, and sometimes on purchasing more supplies.

#### **4.2.9 Shortage of shelters and risks in storage**

Most of the African migrant respondents said that unfavourable weather conditions can ruin the goods that they sell. They are therefore forced to close down their business operations when it starts to rain or grows windy. When this occurs they do not generate any income on those days.

The shelters that the migrant street traders hire from the Metropolitan Municipality do not provide adequate protection from the elements because they are temporary structures constructed from sail and metal rods.

*“We are in difficulties in winter when it is very cold. You cannot be on the street to sell your stock. Sometimes when it is raining you don’t want to be outside to sell. It is not everybody who can cope with this situation” (IDI#1, male).*

The street traders who are the most affected by adverse weather conditions are those who do not have access to municipal shelters, despite having permits to sell.

*“When it rains it is difficult to sell to customers. You cannot display the clothes because they will become wet. You have no way to sell and in that way the business goes down. It will be helpful if the government can give us a place to sell and allow us to pay for the tent so that we can be safe” (IDI#5, female).*

The provision of structurally secured shelters would help protect migrant traders’ products, which sometimes deteriorate in quality through exposure to the elements.

The migrant street traders reported that sometimes their items are stolen from the storage facilities. The marking and numbering of their cardboard boxes does not provide them with protection from theft. Such storage facilities are also vulnerable to fire:

*“In 2007 I lost stock that was worth R90 000. The room where we kept our stock in Commissioner Street caught fire. I kept all my stock there. Even now I have not fully recovered from what happened” (IDI#10, male).*

The migrant traders hire security guards to secure the storage facilities from break-ins and thefts. Small-scale traders usually make a deal, at a reasonable price, with nearby cafés and shops to keep their stock on the premises of the latter overnight. Many shop owners cannot be held responsible for any losses that are incurred because the traders are aware that they choose to keep their items there at their own risk.

#### **4.2.10 Price fluctuations**

Emerging migrant street traders often incur losses when large-scale migrant traders drop the prices of their goods in order to attract customers.

Small-scale migrant traders are therefore left with no other option but to drop their prices also, so that customers will buy their products too. This situation leaves the small-scale traders with reduced profits. Sometimes, as a result of the decline in prices, these traders conduct their business activities at a loss. One respondent stated:

*“The problem that we have as street traders is that some [migrant] street traders are not using the same price. If you have much money you can tolerate the problem. If you have got small business you have got no choice. You need to survive for the day” (IDI#7, male).*

Furthermore, it is difficult for most migrant street traders to maintain their prices or increase them in order to achieve a greater profit. Price-cutting has disastrous effects on migrant street traders because clients will generally choose to purchase products from those traders who offer the lowest prices. Such price-drops sometimes result in tensions and conflicts between local street traders and migrant street traders.

*“Sometimes they [i.e.(that is) established migrant traders] sell their items cheaply and this affects our sales because customers ignore our products and buy theirs” (IDI#13, female).*

Price reductions, according to some respondents, sometimes take place when the successful traders want to get rid of certain slow-moving merchandise. Some items can be negatively affected by severe weather conditions when they are on display.

#### **4.2.11 Competition**

In the interviews that were conducted, many of the migrant street traders reported that they do not encounter problems with regard to competition with local street traders. Some of the respondents actually argued that there is friendly competition with local traders and it does not generate any hostility.

*“The competition is nice. Everything is fine. There is a good competition between foreign and local street traders” (IDI#7, male).*

Some migrant street traders attributed the occasional flare-ups of certain local traders to jealousy. These migrants argued that local street traders sometimes grow jealous because of the greater success of some of the migrants in street trade:

*“Foreign street traders are optimistic about their future business. Local street traders like to enjoy themselves too much over the weekend. So they do not have money to buy stock on Mondays. Your local neighbour sees your business growing and he does not like it sometimes” (IDI#10, male).*



Some local street traders do not want the migrant street traders to earn large profits. This creates some feelings of distrust and unhappiness.

*“Foreign traders have got skills and resourcefulness to run their businesses well. They are able to buy expensive stock. We do not as local traders have enough money to buy expensive stock” (IDI#11, female).*

Most of the local street traders reported that they have not noticed any antagonism between the local and the migrant street traders with regard to competition. Furthermore, one trader claimed that each party is simply concerned with the activities of his or her own business:

*“I have not seen competition between local and foreign street traders. I am selling my items and foreigners are selling theirs. I have not seen any conflicts between local and foreign street traders ever since I started with this business of selling in the streets” (IDI#12, male).*

One local street trader argued that there is competition between migrant and local street traders but that it is not perceived as unpleasant. Instead, this trader perceives the competition to be healthy and beneficial. The local street traders also learn from the work ethic of the migrant street traders:

*“There is a competition right now. It is the foreigners who showed us that there is money in working as a street trader. They opened our eyes because they are the first people who started to work as street traders near The Workshop and local citizens did the same. They also show local traders that if you do not work hard enough you will not get profit in working on the street” (IDI#11, female).*

There was only one local street trader who expressed a contrary view with regard to the good nature of the competition. This respondent noted negative competition between local and migrant street traders and that it has nasty side to it. According to this local trader, such negative competition arises when migrant street traders lower the prices of their products:

*“Foreigners gain and we do not. It’s them who compete against the local street traders. It is the foreigners who succeed in their businesses while our businesses suffer” (IDI#13, female).*

It can be deduced from the above response that migrant street traders are sometimes deliberately held accountable for lowering their prices so as to attract customers to purchase their products.

Some of the migrant street traders regard competition between the locals and the migrants to be unhealthy at certain times. Local street traders are sometimes heard using impolite terms to refer to the migrant entrepreneurs:

*“The competition occurs [between local and foreign street traders]. It is just that sometimes other [local] street traders make you feel that you are a foreigner. You can understand that they do not like even the language that we use because maybe they do not know it. Some traders do not like that customers suddenly come to you when your business goes well” (IDI#1, male).*

There is competition among the migrant street traders themselves, as many of them recognise, but it cannot be regarded as harmful to their relations.

Many migrant street traders do not appear to be threatened by competitors and it could be that they know that they need the competitors in order to improve the standard of their businesses. One migrant street trader claimed that the migrants even tend to help each other in their businesses:

*“I buy and sell handbags. My neighbours buy bags from me. Sometimes we [i.e. foreigners] support each other as street traders. If there is something that I need, I buy it from another foreign street trader” (IDI#10, male).*

By cooperating and working together in the trade, migrant street traders tend to maintain cordial relations amongst themselves and support each other. Each migrant trader seems intent on improving his business despite the existence of competitors.

#### **4.2.12 Lack of expansion**

There are few migrant street traders who are successful enough to earn a high income. Such successful entrepreneurs, according to migrant street traders, are to be found among those

street traders who were engaged in the business in the early 1990s. During that period there were few street traders operating in informal trade in Durban. The experience these early traders acquired over that period provided them with the knowledge of how to run their businesses profitably.

*“When you are doing business ..... you buy few things. Your business grows through the customers. The more they ask for something the more you must bring it” (IDI#10, male).*

*“You must know how to talk with customers and you must not become angry. You must always have a smile in on your face. When a customer comes back and complains about the size of the shoe he bought, I treat him well and tell him he should fit the shoe next time he buys. The customer must be satisfied when he leaves” (IDI#9, male).*

There are migrant street traders who are not satisfied with the way in which the officers of the Metropolitan Municipality allocate trading spaces. These traders believe that being given small trading spaces deprives them of the opportunity of expanding their businesses. They aspire to enlarge their businesses so that they can perform their trade more effectively and thus earn a greater profit. One of them expressed his feelings as follows:

*“I am not happy how the municipality allocated me [this space]. I was given this space and I am selling suitcases. I wish the municipality can come and measure the place and see where I can fit the clothes I sell. I need a big space to spread [my business]” (IDI#10, male).*

In reality, migrant street traders have come to accept that it takes a long time for one's business to grow, regardless of their efforts to save much of their income. Business growth does not happen overnight. And it is difficult for them to save much of their income as their income is low, they have to pay for accommodation, and they have to renew their trading permits.

Some of the migrant street traders argued that they are able to expand their entrepreneurial businesses because they know how to save, whereas the local traders usually lack sufficient money to proceed with business activities:

*“What I notice is that local street traders do not have enough money to continue with their businesses. When they have money they use it to buy food and other things. Foreign street traders have money to run their businesses. That is what I can tell you. You know, they [i.e. foreigners] start smaller and when they have enough money they make their businesses bigger”* (IDI#4, male).

One of the challenges that the respondents mentioned is that the market is seemingly at saturation point, as there are so many local and migrant traders who operate in the vicinity of The Workshop.

*“Before ... when I started the business ... the business was profitable at that time. There were few people who sell near the street and we could make a lot of money than now. There were not many problems that we had”* (IDI#9, male).

The majority of the migrant and local street respondents sell similar products, which does not encourage business growth. Emerging local traders, as some of them indicated, who have only a few items to sell, tend to suffer, as clients are apt to prefer those migrant entrepreneurs who have a large varied stock. As a result, small-scale entrepreneurs find it difficult to grow their businesses.

#### **4.2.13 Social networks**

Many of the migrant street traders stated that they chose Durban because of the information they had obtained through their networks of friends and relatives. It is clear that these networks played a critical role when it came time for them to choose a South African city in which to settle.

*“My mother came and stayed here. That is why I came to Durban”* (IDI#3, female).

*“The pastor of my church is here. I had that information and I decided to come to this city”* (IDI#6, female).

Most of the migrant street traders came to Durban because they were told, through their networks, that the city is a secure place to live and conduct business. It became clear to the researcher that Durban has been seen as having a relatively low crime rate.

*“When we talk about choosing ... the thing is ... Durban is a safe place in South Africa. It is not like Johannesburg. We heard that there is much crime in other cities like Johannesburg. That is why I chose to come to Durban. I wanted a safe place”* (IDI#1, male).

*“Durban is a nice place. People are nice. They do not have much crime”* (IDI#9, male).

The migrants’ social networks also assist them in applying for and obtaining the work permits that they need in order to legally sell items on the streets.

*“I have a permit to sell my stuff. I applied for the permit when I was still working for my brother. He borrowed me money to hire the shelter from the municipality and I sold much of his stuff and some of my stuff. I saved money until I became independent. I am on my own because of the help of my brother”* (IDI#4, male).

The above quotation indicates that some of the migrant street traders depend upon their contacts to obtain the jobs that then enable them to save money so that they might eventually start their own businesses.

#### **4.2.14 Street trading as a means of survival**

Many of the study’s respondents said that they would take on any form of employment that can generate an income in order for them to survive. Migrant street traders display a lot of positive characteristics towards their occupation. One migrant street respondent indicated that he chose street trading so as to be able to earn some money by which to live:

*“I just do not want to stay at home. I have to do something to help myself. That is why I chose to become a street trader”* (IDI#4, male).

Some of the migrant street respondents indicated that they enjoy being street traders and that they will continue in this occupation.

Some of the migrant respondents, especially those who arrived in Durban in the 1990s and early 2000s, said that they are striving to become successful entrepreneurs:

*“When I came to Durban in 1998, there were few street people who were working as street traders. I am not looking for a job. The only aim I have is to*

*expand my business because these tents are small. I want to get a small shop in the long run” (IDI#10, male).*

Many of the street traders reported that they are satisfied with working as street traders. They feel that they have no other alternative except to continue as street entrepreneurs for their survival. Being engaged in the business of street trade is the only way they can ensure that they will survive in South Africa. Some of the respondents spoke of the situation in this way:

*“Yes, of course. I am satisfied with working on the street because I have no option. I do stay to make a living” (IDI#1, male).*

*“I am satisfied. It comes to something. I can solve some of my problems that need money. I can buy food, pay the rent and do other things. Yes, I am satisfied” (IDI#7, male).*

#### **4.2.15 Lack of educational opportunities**

Almost all the migrant respondents are more educated than the local traders, with some of them possessing university degrees and others possessing secondary education. Two of the migrant street traders stated that their foremost ambition when they first arrived in Durban was to pursue their educations at institutions of higher education in the city.

The lack of adequate funds to register at the local university was a challenge for one of them. This respondent stated:

*“I tried to register at the university. I could not make it. That is why I started my business as a street trader” (IDI#6, female).*

Some of the migrant respondents hoped to utilise their educational qualifications in order to obtain decent employment. The following responses reflect some of their frustrations because they cannot use their qualifications to secure stable employment:

*“I have a three-year degree in mathematics from the University of Dakar in Senegal. My qualifications cannot be used in South Africa. Why? I do not know” (IDI#7, male).*

*“I am fine but I am not satisfied with working as a street trader. Here I am, I find myself on the streets. I have a degree in Economics from the University of Zimbabwe and I cannot get a job with my qualifications” (IDI#2, female).*

The migrant traders' educational aspirations could not be fulfilled in the city and they thus had to resort to street trade in order to survive. One respondent has, however, refused to abandon her dream of studying further:

*"I tried to study for nursing here. But, because I had to take some breaks, I did not do well in my studies. Nursing wants you to be dedicated in your studies and if you are not dedicated you fail. I failed as a result. I am trying to save some money this year. Maybe I can do teaching through UNISA. I do not want to spend the rest of my life being a street trader"* (IDI#8, female).

Although some of the migrant entrepreneurs that were interviewed still desire to pursue their education further, they are confronted with the challenge of obtaining sufficient funding to cover the necessary tuition fees. The demanding work that they perform as street traders also leaves them little time to focus on their academic studies.

However, a large number of the migrant respondents are not satisfied with their type of work. Given the opportunity, they could perform other types of work, especially those jobs for which they have received training. The lack of job opportunities for foreigners has put them in a difficult position.

*"No. I am not satisfied. Because I have my career but I am not using it. I am doing this to get a little bit of money for my kids and for my husband"* (IDI#6, female).

Operating as street traders is a source of frustration for some of the migrant street respondents. These individuals feel that their skills are under-utilised. Some of the migrant street traders express frustration since they are not able to participate in the formal economy as they have the necessary qualifications. Furthermore, they feel that they are looked down upon because of their street trading.

*"Some local people see me as a poor person. Selling like this to them is like being down. They don't know that you are educated"* (IDI#6, female).

According to a few of these street traders, any opportunity that arises that will enable them to pursue their studies should be seized so that they might one day be able to earn a decent income. It is, however, costly for migrants to pursue their studies given that they have to fund

their own education. There are a limited number of bursaries for a few fortunate migrants. In addition, migrant street traders also have to cover their living expenses.

#### **4.2.16 Cost of accommodation**

Many of the migrant street traders indicated that they live in flats in the CBD. Rent is high and the landlords insist that they receive it on the due date. Given the survivalist nature of the migrants' businesses, rent drains a great deal of their hard-earned money from them:

*“I pay R850 for the house in which I live in. It is a small one room. I cannot take in all the stuff that I have to the place. I am lucky. Others pay R1 500 and R2 000 every month” (IDI#8).*

There were some migrant traders who hinted that in order to reduce their accommodation costs, some migrants share their rooms in a practice that is called squatting. Such a practice is forbidden according to the rules and regulations of many flats. However, some migrants secretly allow others to squat. They are careful to not attract the attention of the landlord, who will evict foreigners who are found to engage in such a practice.

The law forbids migrants to access the RDP houses in the townships that are subsidised by the government and that are available to the poor and unemployed free of charge.

According to one of the municipal project managers who participated in the interviews and who is responsible for houses, there are some African migrants who apply for an RDP house and who have their names on the lists for RDP houses in the townships. He stated that there are a few migrants who manage to obtain low cost houses in the townships. He claimed that the migrants buy them from the local people. This official further stated that the law forbids this practice. The official reported that some community leaders have raised objections to the sale of the houses, which is occurring even though other local people have waited for years to be given houses.

There are some migrant street traders that prefer to avoid the former townships. Staying in the townships is regarded as risky because of the high levels of crime and xenophobia. These respondents indicated that xenophobic violence usually starts in the townships. They also said that under normal circumstances they would wish to stay in the townships, because accommodation prices are lower in the townships than they are in the town.



#### 4.2.17 Implementation of skills

Many migrant street traders point out that good customer service is a necessary to attract buyers for the products they sell. Many of the migrants stated that they adopt a friendly approach by talking to their customers and showing them their products. A few of the migrant street traders reported that they go to the extent of chatting with their potential clients in a relaxed manner, which results in them developing friendship with some of their customers. They stated that they use these methods as a strategy to encourage their customers to continue supporting their businesses. One female respondent had the following to say on the matter:

*“I am hundred percent friendly. If someone sees me, even if I do not ask her to buy, she decides to buy because I was open and very friendly with her when she came to take a look at my stuff” (IDI#8, female).*

It would appear that migrant traders are aware that a warm, courteous attitude is more likely to attract customers. Customers who are treated well usually come back to buy products when they have money and thus become loyal clients.

In situations where there are only a few customers around who are actually able to buy goods, the migrant traders are able to persuade these potential buyers to come over and take a look at their goods. The migrant traders seem to realise that it is crucial to establish a rapport with potential buyers to encourage future purchase of their products.

*“I invite the customers to my business. This time around the business is quiet since it is in the middle of the month. When the business goes well we are usually busy. We see them come to buy. They turn up here and go. They come to The Workshop to buy something for themselves” (IDI#4, male).*

A number of the local traders perceive the migrant traders as possessing good business skills that enable them to perform better in their businesses:

*“Many of these foreigners have got skills and we also have some skills. They allow themselves to accept small wages from those companies that employ them. They can save their money whilst we do not because when we obtain money we have to buy a lot for our families” (IDI#13, female).*

*“They do have skills more than us since they had many opportunities than us in their own countries. They were exposed to training about how to run their*

*businesses. They were trained to work even with their hands. They can make artwork and craft. They have a lot that they can do which we cannot do. Most of us work in the streets out of unemployment” (IDI#12, male).*

The above responses show that African migrants are perceived as performing better in their business activities than local traders. The participants provided various reasons to explain the situation. Local street traders only work as traders because of the limited number of jobs they are eligible for. As much as most of the migrant street traders do not obtain significant financial benefits from their businesses, they know that good customer service leads to better sales.

#### **4.2.18 Local business support**

All the traders that were interviewed acknowledged that the local people support the migrants’ businesses by coming to buy the items that are sold by them. One of the migrant respondents spoke as follows:

*“Ladies and men come to buy the things I sell” (IDI#7 male).*

Many of the migrant street traders reported that they appreciate the support they received from the locals who come to shop in the city.

*“People just come to The Workshop to do window shopping. When it is the end of the month, I see people come to buy some things they need. It is just like Christmas time. So, I am very proud of the South African people because they come to buy. They make us to be able to pay for the rent and other things. I love South African people” (IDI#4, male).*

This response is indicative of the gratitude that migrant traders feel for the support that is given to them by the ordinary people of the city who purchase from them.

The response further acknowledges too that South Africans contribute towards the migrant street traders being able to make a livelihood.

#### **4.2.19 Sale of illegal items and drugs**

Some of the local street traders perceive the migrant street traders as criminals. This is paradoxical, given that African migrant street traders express their own anxieties about the

city's criminals. The following are some of the comments that were made by the local street traders:

*“The problem I know about the foreigners is that they sell drugs. They also sell fake music stolen from other musicians. That’s the problem I know about them” (IDI#15, female).*

*“Some people who come from African countries sell CDs and DVDs illegally. This kills business of the musicians. Every musician is engaged in music because he wants to go to sleep having had something to eat. When we, as traders, sell a DVD for R10, what do we want another person to survive on” (IDI#14, male)?*

The above responses give the impression that it is only migrant street traders who are involved in the sale of fake items such as CDs and DVDs. Many local street traders were observed by the researcher to be in possession of large quantities of these items and were busy selling them with ease. Certain responses reflect that some local street traders tend to generalize about the issue of crime associated with migrant street traders. There appears to be a lack of consensus among certain of the local street traders with regard to the migrants’ connection with crime. Some of the local street traders were inclined to defend the migrants from claims of such involvement in crime:

*“I do not see them as criminals. They are also poor and they are not like us. They rent and they buy food. We have our own affordable houses here in Durban. Even if we go to our rural homes we do not pay expenses as they do. If they become criminals, they are forced by circumstances. Even those who are wealthy South Africans do not give them jobs” (IDI#11, female).*

It is worth noting that the above response came from a local street trader who has been participating in the trade over a long period of time.

This could indicate that the experienced local traders have had time to observe the migrants’ activities and have thus developed different views from the newer street traders with regard to claims about migrants being criminals.

#### **4.2.20 Availability of income**

All the migrant street traders derive satisfaction from the fact that they earn an income from the sales of their goods. Their turnover may not be very large, but the minimum earnings that they derive from their trade make a difference in their lives.

*“I like being a street trader because sometimes I get money which I cannot get if I am employed. Sometimes, when things are right in business I sell my stuff and get R1000. That is enough money for me. I cannot get that money if I am employed”* (IDI#3, female).

Some of the migrant street traders, as they indicated during the interview, have come to realise that the few migrants who are employed in the formal economy suffer from exploitation because they are paid a small income in the workplace. The money that the street traders earn may not be enough to live a successful life, but they find it preferable to not obtaining any money at all.

*“What I like about being a street trader is that I am doing a job. It is better than nothing. I am doing the job for myself”* (IDI#7, male).

The advantage of being street traders is that they are self-employed and that they have control over money that they make. Other factors aside, the failures and successes of street entrepreneurs depend on how they manage their businesses.

#### **4.2.21 Migrants’ wishes**

Since the majority of the migrants stay in town, they are in many cases prone to exploitation by their landlords.

*“I do everything for myself. Sometimes it is difficult because you have to pay the rent. There are times when two days pass and you do not sell anything. Sometimes you do not have money to solve your problems such as rent”* (IDI#7, male).

The above quotation indicates that rent is a constant source of concern for the respondents because it requires money that they are sometimes unable to earn. The migrant traders require a regular cash flow if they are to be able to successfully conduct their businesses.

The accessibility of financial loans would enable the migrant street traders to counter stock shortages in times of need. A Burundian respondent indicated that the municipality should provide an advisory office where they can go and obtain counsel on how to solve their problems.

*“It can be good if the municipality can have programmes to help us as street traders. The problem that we have is that we do not know where to go or which office we can come in and ask for help in the municipality. The challenge here is that you depend on yourself. If you do not have money you are out. There is no way you can go and get some help” (IDI#10, male).*

From the interviews that were conducted, it was found that most of the foreign street traders were unaware of the Metropolitan Municipality’s programmes that have been established to support street traders. In the late 1990s, the Durban Metropolitan Municipal Government initiated by the department was responsible for the promotion of the informal trade (Lee, 2004). In 2002, the municipality launched an informal economy policy, the aims of which were to provide support for the specific activities of the survivalist and micro-enterprise sectors and deal with micro-finance establishments in terms of the provision of credit. It has been the local street traders alone who have benefited from some of these training programmes. According to the respondents, the migrant street traders have not as yet been invited to participate in these programmes, despite the challenges that they also face as traders.

As it was mentioned earlier, adverse weather conditions can wreak havoc on the businesses of the migrant street traders, since many of them deal with items such as clothes, shoes, bags, suitcases and other accessories. Those who are the most heavily affected are the migrant entrepreneurs who have permits to sell their items but do not have shelters to protect their merchandise.

*“We have a problem with rain and wind. If the municipality can provide us with good shelters to protect us, that would be wonderful. I like selling. It’s a very good thing. If I can find work I will not stop my tables” (IDI#5, female).*

One migrant respondent expressed her concerns about the costly fees that street traders have to pay to the Metropolitan Municipality for the business sites that they hire. This trader wishes that the authorities would reduce the rent:

*“I wish that the municipality may reduce the money we pay for the spots [sites] we use. The money that I am paying can be useful in other things. The money we pay now is too much” (IDI#2, female).*

The rent that has to be paid for a business site is clearly a challenge for those migrant traders who are just trying to make ends meet. The situation is not easy for the street traders given the fact that at certain times they are only able to sell very few or no items at all.

### **4.3 Summary**

Migrant street traders play a critical role in the informal business activities of Durban. Many of them came to the city without any capital to start up their businesses mainly through their social network systems they have been able to start up their own informal street trade businesses. Good customer service plays a crucial role in the success of many street traders' businesses. Migrant street traders encounter challenges such as crime in the city. Another challenge is that many financial institutions do not allow the foreigners to keep money in their banks.

Migrant traders are sometimes the victims of verbal abuse from locals who have xenophobic attitudes. The migrants claim that sometimes they receive unpleasant and unfair treatment from municipal officials and policemen. The migrant and local street traders that were interviewed outlined how the African traders contribute towards the reduction of unemployment in Durban as well as towards the economic development of the city.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to show how migrant street traders contribute towards the economic development of the city of Durban. The experiences that they encounter during the performance of their trade will be highlighted. The implications of the maltreatment of the migrant street traders by locals, police and municipal officials and how this can affect their business operations are briefly explained. Recommendations are then given as to what should be the way forward in dealing with the issues surrounding foreign street traders.

#### 5.2 Discussion

The contribution of the migrant street traders in terms of job creation in the city is a beneficial one and does not seem to be clearly recognised by the municipality as well as by members of the public. These findings concur with those of Maharaj (2004), who states that the contribution of the migrants to the development of South Africa is often disregarded. There are three entrepreneurial activities that are presumed to affect economic growth, namely job creation, competition and innovation (Karlsson, Friss and Paulsson, 2004).

In terms of the findings of this study, the evidence confirms that the migrant street traders directly contribute towards the economic development of the Metropolitan Municipality of Durban by creating jobs for some of the unemployed citizens of the city. Migrant traders tend to create environment for competition from which some local street traders benefit by learning the manoeuvres of the street trade such as selling a variety of items, hard work and customer service. In spite of the survivalist nature of their occupation, most migrant street entrepreneurs pay some of their earnings to the local assistants that they hire to help them sell their merchandise. The average amount of money that the local assistants earn is R350.00 per person per week. The wages that the migrant street traders pay their local assistant salespersons exceeds the minimum living wage for domestic workers, which amounts to R347.79 per week.

Many of the migrant street traders who participated in the study also create even further jobs for locals by hiring barrow boys who are tasked with pulling the migrant traders' stock, which is placed on carts, to the places of storage at the end of the workday and then back to the trader's work sites the next morning. These barrow boys do this on a daily basis. This means that the barrow boys have a guaranteed source of income, which is irreplaceable. Migrant street traders also hire security guards to look after their goods while they are in storage, which they do because they fear their stock will be stolen. The income that these migrant employees derive from the tasks that they perform contributes towards the alleviation of poverty, which is one of the key priorities of the government. It is worth noting that almost all the local street traders who participated in the interviews acknowledged the valuable role that is played by the migrant street traders in terms of reducing unemployment.

Even if it can be argued that migrant entrepreneurs do not create jobs in substantial quantities when compared with huge corporations, it is worth noting that their input may be justified by an argument that the opportunities for the benefits they provide by their engagement in job creation, provide income for others on accommodation rental, on transport for drivers together with owners and purchase of their stock from formal traders contributes to the development of the city of Durban. The goods that the migrant traders buy from the suppliers in the city help keep the business activity of the city vibrant, and the migrant traders therefore add to the revenue of the Metropolitan Municipality. In the interviews that were conducted, the migrant entrepreneurs stated that they pool their money and use it to pay for security guards to watch over their goods.

The migrant street traders that served as respondents demonstrated through their responses that they are well aware of the financial benefits of good customer service. They reported that they make use of a kind and courteous approach when they deal with their customers and that this approach is employed with the purpose of inducing customers to buy their merchandise. Customer service has been classified as one of the top three factors that lead to the success of small entrepreneurial businesses (Hussain and Yaqub, 2010). The other two factors that lead to success are an entrepreneur's experience and his or her specific know-how. Therefore, Durban's migrant street entrepreneurs utilise the skill of customer service so as to benefit their trade.



In the interviews, the CBD local street traders recognise that the migrant street traders possess certain skills because of training and the experience they had obtained in their countries of origin.

As can be seen through their responses, migrant entrepreneurs tend to realise the immediate and future rewards of treating potential clients with courtesy and respect. This conduct sooner or later tends to give rise to increased sales. In support of this position, Human Rights Watch (1998) has noted that migrant street traders have a competitive advantage over local traders in terms of their hawking experience.

Based on the skilful manner in which the migrant traders tend to conduct their enterprises, it can be assumed that if many migrant entrepreneurs were to have access to loans from financial institutions, more earnings could be generated because of their astute business practices. The success of their businesses would then further contribute towards the economy of the Metro Municipality. Migrant street traders tend to be more prudent in terms of savings; they save as much of their income as possible so that they can invest in more stock and attain even further financial returns. This skill of being able to save one's finances demonstrates the shrewdness with which the migrant traders operate their businesses. The migrant traders save so that, among other reasons, their enterprises will not collapse during difficult financial times.

In the interviews, the migrant street traders reported that they have to pay rent to their landlords for the accommodation in the CBD where they live. Many of the migrants are unable to live in the townships because xenophobia tends to be common in such places (Maharaj, 2004). Furthermore, they are not allowed to benefit from the government's RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) housing programme because the policy is designed for South African citizens. There is also the problem of hostile attitude of the local communities towards migrants, who include the traders; the locals can grow angry at the prospect of migrants receiving houses instead of locals. Therefore the landlords who provide the migrants with accommodation in town are able to make use of the migrants' plight by demanding that the latter make regular rent payments.

By paying rent, the migrant entrepreneurs are making an indirect contribution towards the well-being of the Metropolitan Municipality because the municipal services rendered to the flats and houses that they share are constantly being paid.

If it were not for migrants, many buildings in town would possibly remain vacant, which might well have led to such places becoming havens for robbers and thugs.

These findings are consistent with those of Peberdy (2000), who points out that the migrant traders spend between 40% and 50% of their income in South Africa. Large parts of migrant traders' income therefore go towards food and other items that they buy in the city. According to their own reports, the migrant street traders have to endure maltreatment by certain Metropolitan police and municipal officials, some of whom demand bribes. Migrant traders face continuous harassment even when they possess legal permits that allow them to trade legally. It can be presumed that this hostile treatment of the migrants hinders any further potential contribution that they could make towards the city's economy.

The perpetuation of this state of affairs could have negative repercussions because the migrant traders might eventually become unwilling to ply their trade anymore, which would mean the loss of jobs for locals as well as less employment opportunities in the future. It is possible that those migrant entrepreneurs who manage to become successful street traders may realise that expanding their businesses exposes them to even further victimisation at the hands of criminals who might conclude that they are generating huge earnings from their trade. This finding corresponds with the findings of Berry (2009), who conducted research on female vendors in the informal economy in Pretoria. Berry (2009:82) states that:

“The implications of intimidation by criminals are that informal traders might decide not to expand their businesses due to crime. They may keep lower levels of stock out of fear of their goods being stolen. Passing trade may be lost due to clients being scared away by criminal activities. All of the above results in the lack of growth and sustainability of these businesses”.

In other words, the harmful and illegal actions of certain policemen, some of the municipal officials and the city's criminals could become insurmountable obstacles. If this happens, the positive spin-offs of the migrant traders' business activities (i.e. the creation of further jobs for locals and the financial benefits to the municipality) may disappear. The bribes that corrupt policemen demand from the migrant street traders could be put to better use for the welfare of the city. They could use that money to increase their businesses and consequently create further jobs.

This situation with the police is counterproductive to the aims and ambitions of the municipality and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim to alleviate poverty in the country by the year 2015.

In spite of the notable contribution that the migrant street traders make to the development of the city, they live in constant fear. Sometimes they fall prey to xenophobic attacks. They are insolently referred to as *amakwere kwere* who steal jobs meant for the local citizens. The allegation of job stealing that has been made against the migrant traders might be argued as invalid when compared with the evidence (that is, they actually create jobs for unemployed locals). According to McKnight (2008), the Department of Home Affairs has, in terms of Section 29(20) of the South African Immigration Bill, the duty of both educating the country's citizens and civil society on the rights of migrants and refugees and carrying out activities that discourage and prevent xenophobia. The government, together with its police force, has failed dismally in this regard.

Migrant street traders, along with all street traders, lose many working hours and much income each year due to bad weather conditions. Those lost hours could have been profitably used under different conditions because migrant street traders are usually prepared to work long hours. The standard quality of the containers, that are the size of the sites, provided by the municipality to the street traders compromise contribution to the city's economy in terms of job creation and income generation. Some of the local street traders are convinced that the migrant street traders are selling DVDs (Digital Video Disc) and CDs (Compact Disc) on the black market. This is ironic, as the migrant entrepreneurs also complain about crime in the city, only they are concerned about the crimes perpetrated by the locals. Some of the local street traders that were interviewed stated that there are migrants who produce these counterfeit DVDs and CDs and the migrant street traders then sell these products cheaply. In this way the migrants are accused of supplementing their income at the expense of local and migrant musicians and actors. While these allegations cannot simply be discounted, it is also interesting to observe, as the researcher has already done on several occasions, that several local street traders sell these products in the CBD on a daily basis.

Migrant entrepreneurs whose businesses are seen as performing better than do the businesses of others are at times held responsible for exerting pressure on other traders to lower their prices in order to stay competitive.

This upsets low-earning migrant and local street traders who have to drop their prices in order to survive in the business environment but then struggle to sell their products at a profit. These traders may know that they should continue to sell their products at the standard price, but if they do not they risk losing customers.

Traders who struggle to make ends meet are left with no alternatives but to adapt or go out of business. The local street traders that were interviewed reported that the migrant street traders sell cheap products from countries as far afield as China and South Korea. These items, such as clothes, shoes and handbags, are generally of a poor quality and the locals refer to them as the 'Fong kongs' because they are regarded as fakes. Many local people, especially those who come from poor backgrounds, buy these items when they have the money. They generally buy these inferior products because they are poor, unemployed or earning only a low wage and thus cannot afford to purchase the 'real' versions sold in retail stores. According to the migrant street traders who were interviewed, some of the products that they sell are within the reach of the lower socio-economic groups in society who come from poverty-stricken communities.

One of the major limitations faced by the migrant traders with regard to their businesses is the unwillingness of the financial institutions to provide them with credit. This reasons the institutions give for denying them credit are: migrant street traders do not have proof of a fixed address, they do not possess a South African identity document (ID), they struggle to open bank accounts, and they do not have assets such as cars and houses which could serve as collateral. It is therefore necessary for the municipality to include the migrant traders in their plans so that the latter can provide an even greater contribution towards the development of the city of Durban.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been formulated in accordance with the findings of the study. First of all, the Metropolitan Municipality should seek ways of attending to the wishes and aspirations of the migrant street traders, as they are a crucial component of the municipality. According to the study, migrant street traders have a long list of needs, such as affordable accommodation, easy access to clinics and educational institutions, and larger trading sites, and all their needs require attention from the municipality.

Training sessions and workshops by their relevant institutions should be run for the policemen and municipal officials, who need to be taught extensively and re-educated about the implications of discrimination and bribery and how these mar the image of the Metropolitan Municipality. Municipal officials should also be encouraged to adopt a positive attitude and be more willing to assist the migrant street traders.

Officials should be educated about the rights of the migrants in the municipality. Meetings and other forms of gatherings can be productively used to teach the migrants about their rights. The municipality should devise means for providing safer and more secure structures for the street traders so that adverse weather conditions will not negatively affect their products and their ability to continue selling. The availability of convenient shelters of better quality material at their business sites would mean that migrant and local street traders' businesses are not disrupted by rain and strong winds. With better structures and the presence of containers migrant traders' business activities would be able to proceed under adverse weather conditions and more income will be generated.

Migrant entrepreneurs should convene a mass meeting of migrant street traders to deal with the factors that affect them. Paramount among the issues to be dealt should be for migrant traders to access the programmes that are aimed at improving the condition of the Metropolitan Municipality's street traders. They should set up an interim committee that will arrange a meeting with municipal officials so as to address their needs and improve their relations with the municipality. The committee should also arrange meetings with government officials and NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) so that they can be taught about the rights of migrants. They should also arrange meetings with existing trade unions for local traders and hold bilateral talks on issues that are related to their common experiences and how they can work together on issues that affect them all.

All spheres of government should be proactive in educating the local communities about the negative and long-term effects of xenophobia. The municipal government should teach these communities that xenophobia tarnishes the reputation of the city and, as a consequence, discourages further economic investments in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. All the participants, such as faith-based organisations, the business sector, community-based organisations and political organisations, should convene joint meetings. These meetings should concentrate on various methods that can be used by various formations to educate locals about the migrants.

Anti-xenophobia campaigns should be launched by the community organisations. The media should also assist in highlighting and educating the public about the worthwhile contributions of the migrants. The municipality should incorporate in their policies a clause that stipulates how they expect the media to assist them in educating the public.

In forums that involve the media and the municipality, the officials should, in appropriate circumstances, highlight the importance of educating the public about the migrants. Workshops and educational sessions dealing with the importance of co-existing with people of different colours, creeds or ethnic origins should be held within the various communities. Various community stakeholders should be allocated a role to play in such programmes. It is crucial for community members to participate in and own such resolutions, rather than perceive them as being government meetings. The municipality needs to create conditions that are more favourable for the migrant street traders to obtain business training. The eThekweni Municipality has in the past played a role in helping the local street traders to acquire these skills. Since many of the migrant entrepreneurs come from French- and Portuguese-speaking countries, interpreters should be used and the reading material should be written in simple English that the migrant traders can understand. Training sessions should be conducted during those working hours when the migrant traders are not very busy so that the meetings do not seriously interfere with the migrants' work.

The Metropolitan Municipality should engage NGOs in assisting them to run these training sessions since many NGOs have expertise and experience in working with communities where there is a high rate of illiteracy. The training sessions should be informal in approach and they should empower the migrant street traders by teaching them the skills involved in starting a business, marketing, selling and keeping accounts, and the migrants should also be trained in human resources. The skills that are taught at these training sessions should be those that will equip the migrant traders to be more productive, thus enhancing their contribution to the Metropolitan Municipality.

The eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality should intervene and hold meetings with the city's micro-financial institutions. The municipality officials should aim at these meetings to convince the financial establishments to exercise flexibility in their stringent policies so as to accommodate migrant street traders in order for the latter to access loans. Migrant street traders should be assisted by the government to form associations.

Members of these associations should be allowed to obtain credit as a group. The terms and conditions of repayment by the migrant street trader groups should be clearly formulated. The failure of one member to make payment should oblige the other members to pay the deficit.

## **5.4 Summary**

The researcher has made an attempt to demonstrate through this study that the migrant street traders contribute towards the development of the city of Durban. The research has described the challenges encountered by migrant entrepreneurs as they conduct their business. An attempt was made to document how migrant traders are perceived by local traders. The social challenges encountered by migrant street traders were also explored in this research. Through constant reference to the recorded comments of the migrant traders, the researcher has tried to map the way forward as to what could be done to support the migrant traders in their business endeavours as well as develop greater cooperation between them and the government. Many migrant street traders, as has been revealed in the study, resorted to this type of trade in order to survive due to the lack of job opportunities in the city.

This research has attempted to show that migrant street traders who come from African countries make a contribution towards the economic development of Durban. The contribution that they make is not on a grand scale, but the jobs that they create in the municipality help alleviate poverty and such a contribution should not be underestimated. The migrant traders have focused on forward-looking approach in their business, trying to expand and grow and, as such, have yielded the rewards, such as loyal customers, greater profits and an expanding business. Many of the local street traders who were interviewed did admit, and provided reasons for why the migrants perform as well as they do. The migrants' lack of access to financial institutions serves as an impediment to those foreign street traders who need credit to keep their businesses running. Some migrant street traders need money to make their businesses grow so that they can generate greater profits.

It has been revealed in this study that tensions sometimes arise between migrant and local street traders because of the success of the migrant traders, who often drop prices at the expense of other traders.

The competition between local and migrant street traders was reported as not posing too much of a problem, but sometimes there is conflict when prices are suddenly cut.

Many of the migrant respondents expressed their fears with regard to the xenophobic attitudes of some of the local citizens. Migrant street traders are often contemptuously referred to as *amakwere kwere* by certain locals in the city.

The study has also shown that migrant entrepreneurs are sometimes unfairly victimised by policemen who demand that they pay bribes and by some municipal staff members who maltreat them. It is a challenge for the migrant street traders to obtain accommodation within the city. Many of them stay in town and pay enlarged rents. The migrants are also sometimes robbed of their possessions and/or their money by the city's criminals.

An area that requires further research is the failure of the government to provide support to the migrant street traders. The contributions of the migrant entrepreneurs warrant further quantitative research and explanations should be backed up with relevant statistics. This could lead to further insights into the migrants' role in the city. The information could also be of use to the government, as it could highlight appropriate ways for it to provide the migrant traders with support in the future. Institutions of higher learning could also use the information.



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## **Appendix 1**

### **Interviews schedule**

### **Foreign migrant street trader**

**Age at last birthday**

**Gender:** Female

Male

**Level of education:**

**Marital Status:** currently married / not married

**Ethnic Group:** Black

- 1. When did you arrive in Durban?**
- 2. Why did you choose to come to Durban?**
- 3. What is your level of education (primary, secondary, university, FET College)?**
- 4. Did you have money in the bank when you arrived in South Africa?**
- 5. How long have you been working as a street trader?**
- 6. Why did you become a street trader?**
- 7. What type of goods do you sell?**
- 8. Which skill do you have that is not possessed by most local street traders?**

- 9. Do the local citizens buy goods sold by the African foreign street traders?**
  
- 10. Do you have fears that something bad can happen to you for being foreign street traders?**
  
- 11. Are you satisfied with working as a street trader?**
  
- 12. How is the competition between local and African foreign street traders?**
  
- 13. Do you have a permit to work as a street trader?**
  
- 14. How are you perceived by the customers, local street traders and the municipal authorities?**
  
- 15. Have you faced any harassment from the police? What form has it taken?**
  
- 16. What are some of the challenges of the street trader?**
  
- 17. What do you like about being a street trader? What don't you like?**
  
- 18. Will you continue to be a street trader?**
  
- 19. Do you wish to contribute to the economic development of Durban as a street trader?**
  
- 20. What would make your life as a street trader easier?**

## **Interviews schedule**

### **Local street trader**

**Age at last birthday**

**Gender:** Female

Male

**Marital Status:** currently married / not married

**Ethnic Group:** Black African

- 1. How long have you been working as a street trader?**
- 2. When did you start as a street trader?**
- 3. Are you satisfied with your work as a street trader?**
- 4. What are the challenges of working as a street trader in Durban?**
- 5. Do foreign migrant street traders employ local citizens?**
- 6. How do you perceive foreign migrant street traders? In which way do you see them in regard to crime or jobs?**
- 7. Is there any competition between foreign and local street traders?**
- 8. What are some of the problems, if any, of the foreign street traders?**
- 9. Do you perceive them as having more skills than local street traders?**
- 10. Do you think foreigners have any contribution to make to the economy of Durban?**