

**AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN  
JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA:  
DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER**

By

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
AEC	African Economic Community
AU	African Union
BBP	Better Buildings Programme
CBD	Central Business District
CD	Compact Disc
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DHS	Department of Homeland Security (USA)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DVD	Digital Video Disk
EAC	East African Community
ECCSA	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HPCSA	Health Professionals Council for South Africa
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USA)
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INA	Immigration and National Act (USA)
JDA	Johannesburg Development Agency
JMPD	Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department
JMTC	Johannesburg Metropolitan Trading Company
KFC	Kentucky Fried Chicken
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
QLTS	Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme

SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANC	South African Nursing Council
SAPS	South African Police Service
SARS	South African Revenue Services
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro-enterprise Economy
STA	Street Traders Association
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UMA	Union du Maghreb Arabe
VAT	Value Added Tax

## **ABSTRACT**

African immigrants in contemporary South Africa can be perceived as a problem – the threatening other. Based on a case study of the Johannesburg inner city, this thesis aims to deconstruct this notion. It does so by investigating the nature and types and contribution of African immigrant traders' businesses to the Johannesburg inner city. In deconstructing the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other, and being infinitely aware that perception issues and the experiential realities hospitable to its centred on the human subject, this case study adopted a humanist geographic and critical realist approach by deploying a qualitative in-depth interview technique of both African immigrant and South African traders. This thesis suggests three important outcomes. The first is that: to view all African immigrants as the threatening other is too simplistic an assessment of an otherwise complex and dynamic set of relationships and interrelationships amongst and between African immigrant and South African traders. Second, some African immigrant traders do make a meaningful contribution to the Johannesburg inner city, whereas others do not. Third, the activities of African immigrant traders that may be considered as a threat by a section of the population are treated as a benefit by another. These nuanced insights and findings in this study not only render any analysis that projects all African immigrants negatively as an incomplete appraisal, but also suggest that it can never be correct to view them as such without capturing the dynamics that this work suggests. Such a finding not only challenges distorted and partial reporting by the media and also questions policies, which may be built on the wrong assumption that all African immigrants are a problem, but also extends the study of migration related issues in a South African context.

Key words: African immigrant traders, African immigration, deconstruction, Johannesburg inner city, threatening other.

# **CHAPTER 1: AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Migration and immigration – as both historical and contemporary processes – tend to result in negative perceptions of immigrants. The increased presence of immigrants in host societies usually results in tensions driven by notions of otherness, including the idea that immigrants are different to and a possible threat to the citizens. Such negative perception of immigrants may not always match the reality of what they actually and potentially contribute. For this reason, negative framing and perception are not only major points of conversation in many countries receiving immigrants and migrants, but have also generated scholarly investigation. By focusing on South Africa with its well-documented immigration and migration landscape, this chapter provides the context and scope of this research by illustrating how the negative perception of African immigrants provide a site for research relating to the investigation of whether the negative perception of African immigrants actually matches the reality of their contribution. On this subject, the chapter outlines the background of the study, its motivation and contribution to the discipline of Geography, the aims and objectives and a brief introduction to conceptual and methodological guidelines is present.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

Migration is the spatial movement of people (Jones 1990; Clark 2007; Rugunanan and Smit 2011), such as the movement of people from Angola, Cameroon, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe to South Africa. In addition, Papastergiadis (2000:2) defines migration or the movement of people 'as an integral part of the transformation of modernity' which, according to Gold and Nawyn (2013:2) results in the 'transmission of ideologies and identities, political and cultural practices and economic resources'. Thus, as noted over four decades ago and even being true today, migration is 'not just an unequivocal biological event' but also 'a physical and social transaction' (Zelinsky 1971:233). If it is accepted that migration transmits and introduces practices and resources and also involves transactions, it can be further posited that it has the potential to have positive impacts on, and also generate negative tensions in host societies. In this thesis, the term 'migration' includes refugees, asylum seekers and economic immigrants because, as Castles

(2003) and Neocosmos (2006) point out, many international immigrants – including refugees and asylum seekers – migrate for many, often interrelated reasons. Hence for the convenience of analysis, this thesis will not dwell on the difference between migrants and immigrants, but will regard all of them as immigrants.

Census data shows that in 2001, there were 1 025 076 immigrants from all regions of the world (Statistics South Africa, 2003) and in 2011, this figure stood at 2 199 871 (Statistics South Africa 2011). In addition migration to South Africa, especially from the rest of Africa, increased tremendously after 1994 (Adepoju 2010). For example, census data indicates that in South Africa in 2001, there were 687 679 immigrants from the SADC region and 41 918 from the rest of Africa. Furthermore, in 2001, 5.4% of the population in Gauteng was foreign born (Statistics South Africa 2003) and in 2011, this had increased to 7.1% (Statistics South Africa 2012). This suggests that South Africa continues to be a destination of choice on the African continent which is plagued by civil war, political instability and economic problems (World Migration Report 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Adepoju 2003; Crush et al. 2006; Campell 2010; Kalitanyi and Visser 2010).

The increase in the number of immigrants has led to tension (Crush and Frayne 2010; Krieger 2010; Landau 2010; McGregor 2010a). As is the case in many parts of the world (Mawadza and Crush 2010), the tension between immigrants and citizens of the host country is relevant in South Africa. Therefore, debate on immigration in South Africa dominated the social, political and cultural environment – especially after 1994 (McDonald et al. 1999). In some instances, it is suggested that stringent anti-immigrant laws are necessary in South Africa (Landau 2010, 2011). A number of researchers (Crush 2000; Nyamnjoh 2006; Laher 2010; Mawadza and Crush 2010) have focused their research on the anti-immigration debate and how it is aimed more at African immigrants, as opposed to other groups of immigrants – it is this debate that is important in this thesis. The anti-immigration debate in South Africa has often resulted in negative perceptions of African immigrants (Muzondidya 2010). The discriminatory nature of the debate has unfortunately had a negative social consequence (Geschiere 2010; Nyamnjoh 2010). Mawadza and Crush (2010) and Laher (2010) indicate in their research on African immigrants that the negativity of the debate increases the perception that these immigrants are not valuable members



of South African society. Their presence is associated with a number of problems within the host country (Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007, 2010; Crush 2008a; Campell 2010).

From a geographical, temporal perspective, the negative perception of African immigrants provides a current and topical issue worth researching. Based on these premises, this research seeks to test the validity or otherwise of the view that African immigrants are the threatening other – as they are perceived and portrayed as destroying the social and physical infrastructure and thus become threat. Therefore, by probing and investigating the negative perception of African immigrants, this research seeks to highlight and evaluate the contribution and benefits that African immigrants bring to the community where they have elected to live and/or work – the case study of the Johannesburg inner city.

In this regard, this particular research endeavours to broaden the study of African immigration in a South African context because of its adoption of a deconstructionist stance within the ethos of the discipline of Geography. For instance, taking an alternative view to the assumed negative perception of African immigrants is a critical stance, based on the fact that the term 'critical' refers to 'the thesis of the fallibility of social knowledge and to social criticism' mainly by engaging in 'explanatory critiques' (Potter and Lopez 2001 cited in Iosifides 2011:46). Thus, the critical stance in this study challenges this essentialist assumption on African immigrants in South Africa. This suggests that attention should be paid to differences in geographic phenomena and how these differences need to be highlighted and not hidden. What makes Geography unique as an academic discipline is its scope and methodology. It highlights, analyses and explains spatial relationships, interactions and variations in phenomena over time and place. By focusing on the case study of the Johannesburg inner city, this work attempts to remain true to this tradition by dismantling and testing the negative perception of African immigrants by making an effort to find the tiniest detail, which may challenge the almost 'taken for granted' negative view of African immigrants. On account of researching the migration and immigration debates and dynamics, this study is located in the broad field of Human Geography and the specific branches of population, migration, cultural and political Geography.

### 1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Internationally, immigrants are generally viewed negatively (Parekh 1994; Mohan 2002; Turton 2002; Toninato 2009; Campell 2010; Geschiere 2010; Solimano 2010). In some countries they are used as 'political footballs' in an attempt to 'enlarge political constituencies' (Arlacchi 2002:19). Furthermore, studies in Western European countries which receive immigrants from Eastern Europe, have shown that immigrants who suffer exclusion develop a course of action to beat the system and bend the law, which includes finding illegal employment through the agency of illegal middlemen (Morawska 2001). In several other countries – for example Greece – the story is the same (Black 1994). In the United Kingdom, immigrants who are thus excluded join the informal sector (McGregor 2010a), as is the case in southern European countries such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain (Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp 2009). A similar trend has been witnessed in, for example, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Germany (Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp 2009).

Some scholars (Landau and Freemantle 2010; Geschiere 2010), argue that in South Africa, the popular media implies and advocates the adoption of an anti-immigration approach. This research posits that hostility does not cause African immigrants to leave South Africa, but they rather learn to adopt strategies of survival and stay in South Africa. In this way, immigrants are in constant dialogue about their identity within the host country and this includes matters related to what they bring to the communities in which they live. In addition, their experience of living in the host country constantly defines them and allows them to adapt to the conditions within the community (Papastergiadis 2000). Given the often negative debate around African immigrants within South Africa, the result is that these immigrants battle to find employment within the formal sector. Despite their legal status, some African immigrants are subjected to exclusion and discrimination (Landau 2010) in the formal employment sector, and cannot access social services (*The Star*, 25 October 2012), such as health care (Crush and Tawodzera 2014). Krieger (2010) and Landau (2010) also report that these immigrants are often subjected to arrest, detention and deportation; this lowers the ability of the immigrants to successfully enter the formal employment sector.

For this reason, immigrants who are not able to access formal employment tend to rely on self-employment (Landau 2010) in the form of small, sometimes informal businesses in order to generate an income to sustain them within South Africa. Unfortunately, an added result of this exclusion does mean that immigrants who turn to the informal sector, in particular street trading, are sometimes arrested and harassed. This has resulted in encouraging immigrants to turn to illegal, 'irregular' and sometimes 'dangerous' economic activities (Landau 2010:175). While the phenomenon of African immigrants within South Africa is well documented in terms of the perception of these immigrants, little research has been done on the types and nature of African immigrant traders, nor has much research been undertaken on the contribution that these traders have made to the social and economic milieu of the Johannesburg inner city.

In this research, the nature and type of trading ventures that have been established by African immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city will be investigated by exploring, using a deconstructionist approach, the contribution made to the Johannesburg inner city by African immigrant traders. This will be achieved by posing and answering numerous questions, such as: What is the nature of African immigrant traders, in terms of registration status? Are the African immigrants traders self-sustaining? Do they, among other contributions, create employment and provide a variety of goods to the South African market? At another level, the question that arises concerns the registered versus the unregistered African immigrant traders: Do they coexist peacefully, and if not, are the registered African immigrant traders threatened by the irregular unregistered traders? Are South African unregistered traders threatened by unregistered African immigrant traders or are the registered South African traders threatened by registered African immigrant traders? Addressing among others, issues of the registration status of African immigrant traders assist this thesis in deconstructing the threatening other. Therefore, exploring these questions thus broadens the study of migration and immigration in contemporary South Africa. Furthermore, unpacking these questions illustrates human-environment dynamics. For example, the setting up of trading businesses by African immigrants suggests an interaction with the host society. The contribution of such businesses to the Johannesburg inner city may also result in a positive or negative interface. These are spatial interactions and relationships, the exploration of

which is at the centre of geographical enquiry. This suggests that this investigation is significant, especially with regard to the aspect of deconstruction, which entails dismantling perceptions and representing the unrepresented by highlighting the tiniest details.

While it is accepted that it is the prerogative of the South African government to rightfully implement immigration policies that control and regulate immigration (such as the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002, as amended by Immigration Act No. 19 of 2004, Sections 26 and 27), it is hoped that the research will inform policy changes that would include the relatively easy granting of business permits to African immigrant traders. This advocacy will be based on the outcomes of deconstructing the view that African immigrants are the threatening other. Geographers, such as Rogerson (1997), Peberdy (2000), Peberdy and Rogerson (2000), Peberdy (2002b) and Peberdy and Rogerson (2003), have done research on African immigrant entrepreneurs and traders, but their respective work did not adopt a deconstructionist stance. For this reason, work on this topic is relevant and this study attempts to expand this research area. In this regard, this research contests the negative perception of African immigrants by aiming to provide a balanced picture of the status quo in line with the geographic perspective in which human-space-environment interaction provides the platform for analysis.

Some researchers have asked questions such as: 'Why, in the era of globalisation, mass mobility and super diversity, are Africans from the rest of the continent so unfairly singled out as the other' or 'the foreigner' in South Africa? After all, there are thousands of migrants from other continents living and working in South Africa' (Dyers and Wankah 2012:234). This is a relevant geographical question and this thesis takes the debate further and examines the perception of whether African immigrants are the threatening other; if so, on what is this perception based and why? Following these questions, this thesis will assess the contribution African immigrant traders make to the Johannesburg inner city. By examining how and if the African immigrant traders contribute to economic revitalisation and employment creation among other impacts, the researcher hopes to contribute to the body of literature on African immigrants and the economic and social contribution they make to the Johannesburg inner city. This will assist in assessing whether the African

immigrants are the threatening other. A properly balanced evaluation may contribute to creating a positive perception of these immigrants. In the long term, the research can potentially play a part in promoting tolerance towards African immigrants, because lines of exclusion are not always impermeable (Herbert 2010).

That this should happen is relevant because the forces of globalisation have reduced the world to a global village, of which South Africa is a part. Globalisation and migration have pulverised the fixity of 'ourselves and others' (Gupta and Ferguson 2008:67), leading to the deterritorialisation of immigrants (Malkki 2008; Castles and Miller 2009) and putting 'greater stress on reimagining possibilities of belonging' (Papastergiadis 2000:80). This suggests that defining immigrants as 'others', according to nationality, is no longer desirable because globalisation and migration have resulted in the mix of nationalities and continues to do so (Papastergiadis 2000; Turton 2002; Castles and Miller 2009; Geschiere 2010). Even though migration and globalisation have not resulted in frictionless movement of people or 'less restrained global fluidity' (Kalir 2013:313), what is certain is that migration is on the increase as a result of globalisation (Papastergiadis 2000).

Consequently, migration cannot be wished away. With improvements in transport and communication, migration will not only increase, but will also be a permanent feature of all countries. This research amplifies and promotes the position that all people and countries must develop a 'more global sense of place, a global sense of local that conforms to the prevailing era of time-space compression' (Massey 2008:258). Therefore, tolerance, accommodation and inclusivity should be promoted to harvest positives from immigrants – increased and unstoppable migration across national boundaries demands this.

#### **1.4 CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCIPLINE OF GEOGRAPHY**

This is geographical research which focuses on the spatiality of migration in two respects: firstly, as immigrants move from different countries in Africa into South Africa and secondly, as the spatial dimensions are demonstrated in the choice of Johannesburg generally – and inner city specifically – once the immigrants are in South Africa (Figure 1.1). This environment is the focus of this work in terms of the results of human and space interaction during trading, as immigrants engage in, for example, employment creation, revenue generation, support for the formal economy

and the presence of destructive or constructive traders (Figure 1.1). As a result, the contribution of this research to the discipline of Geography is twofold: empirical and theoretical. The empirical broadens the deployment of the qualitative in-depth interview approach to the study of migration-related contexts. This is because the application of the qualitative in-depth interviews (consisting of three phases, as is fully explained in Chapter 4) to obtain information from both African immigrants and South African traders may provoke debate or provide guidelines on future research on African migration and immigration to South Africa.

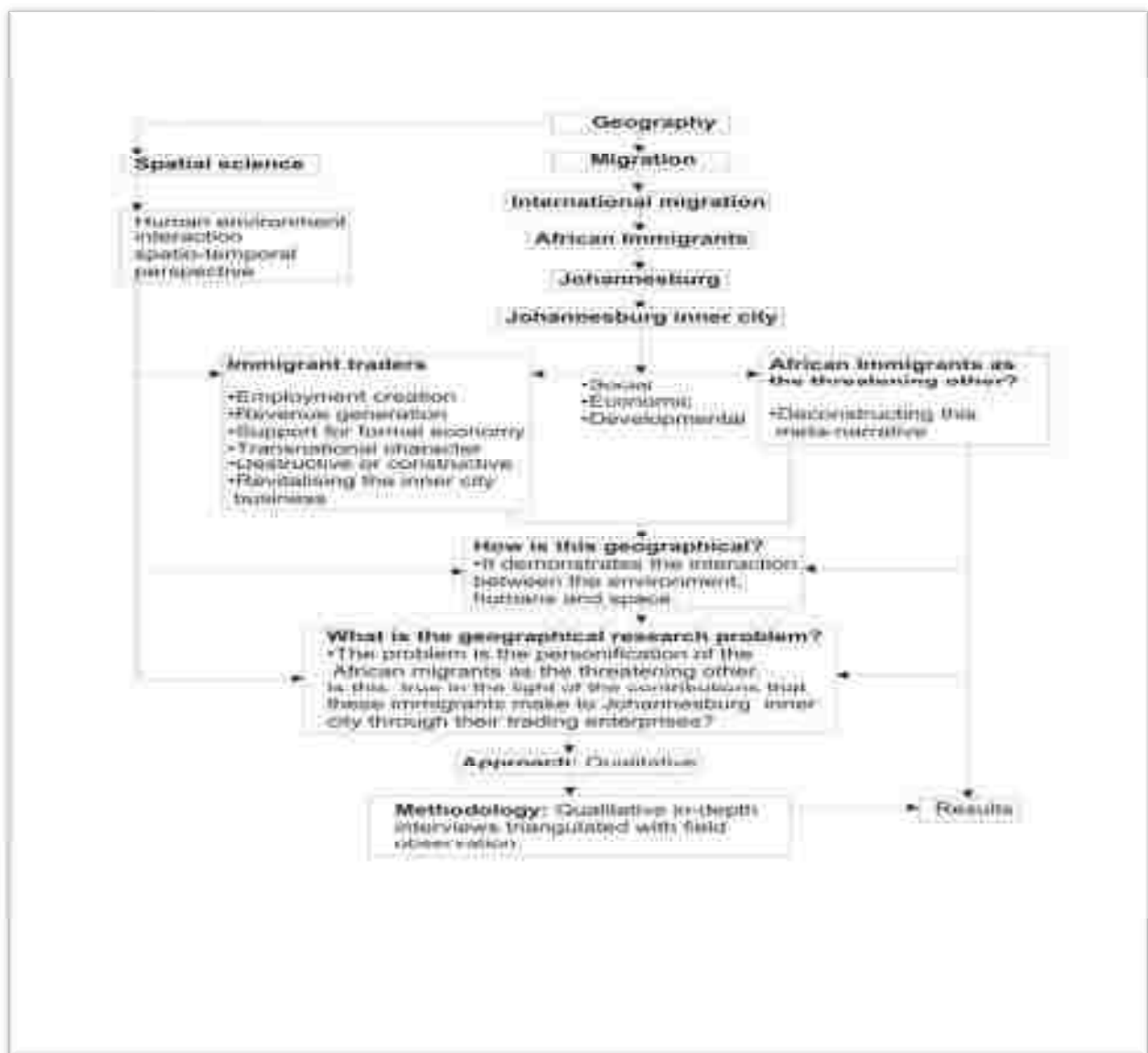


Figure 1.1: Framework of the thesis (Source: As conceptualised by the author in 2012)

For example, interviews with the same respondents of African immigrants and South African traders were held in three stages. For comparative purposes and in addition

to the South African traders, representatives of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) and officials from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Trading Company (JMTC) were also interviewed.

The theory also enlarges the adoption of deconstruction as an analytical guide to migration and immigration debates and contexts. By deploying a deconstructionist approach, which is an analytical strategy that 'allows interpretative flair which can stimulate new lines of thought on the other' (Norris 2007:31), this research uses evidence from interviews with African immigrants and South African traders to evaluate the commonly held perception that African immigrants are the threatening other. Thus, the application of deconstruction in research on migration and immigration issues extends the depth of critical social theory in geography as an academic discipline.

In addition, this thesis hopes to demonstrate the transformative potential of immigrants in their host societies in terms of contestations that arise in the places and environments where they live. An analysis of human-place/environment is an important geographical investigation and by deconstructing the portrayal of African immigrants as the threatening other, this study adds to the debates on migration, immigrants and the spatial re-conceptualisation of citizenship.

The study attempts to contribute to an objective understanding of the position of African immigrants in a time where increased migration has resulted in their depiction as problematic newcomers and threats in host societies like the Johannesburg inner city, South Africa.

This thesis argues that there is a need to understand issues and debates of African migration and immigration to South Africa beyond essentialist assumptions and rhetoric in which they are seen as a threat. Hence, this research is 'looking at migration as an integral part of the global transformation process, rather than a problem to be solved' (International Migration Institute 2006:9) and stopped by excluding the 'others'.

## **1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The unprecedented influx of foreigners into South Africa has increased the immigration debate, leading to exclusionary discourses where African immigrants are

portrayed as threatening the social and economic stability of South Africa. Based on a case study of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, the question that arises is: To what extent is the charge that African immigrants are threatening the social and economic fabric of South Africa true and sustainable? On the contrary, do these African immigrants really contribute to the economic and social development of the Johannesburg inner city, and if so, how?

## **1.6 AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The principal aim of the research is to deconstruct the perception that African immigrants in South Africa are the threatening other.

### **1.6.1 Objectives of the research**

The research is guided by three objectives, which are to:

- investigate the nature and types of African immigrant traders' businesses;
- evaluate how and if African immigrant traders contribute to the Johannesburg inner city milieu; and
- assess the view that African immigrants are the threatening other.

## **1.7 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND CLARIFICATIONS**

In an attempt to define, frame and specify the extent of this research, it is relevant to introduce and clarify the concepts that are used in this study. This section is devoted to this effort.

### **▪ Case study**

This research is based on a case study of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. The results are not representative of other case studies and there is no suggestion that the findings of this research are transferable to or representative of other cities in South Africa.

### **▪ African immigrant traders**

The term 'African immigrant traders' is used in this research to refer to Africans who are not South African citizens, regardless of their immigration status; for example, asylum seekers, refugees, temporary or permanent residents. This clarification is relevant because South Africans are Africans too.



- **The threatening other**

The actual or symbolic use of anti-foreigner, and especially anti-African, immigrant images (Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007, 2010; Dyers and Wankah 2012) and stereotypes (Neocosmos, 2006, 2008, Muzondidya 2010, Crush and Tawodzera 2014) in the South African migration and immigration debate as projected in the print media (*Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:8; *Sunday Times* 18 May 2008:6; *Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:1; *Daily Sun* 9 May 2008:11; *Sowetan* 2 June 2010:3; *Sowetan* 14 November 2011:9; *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011:21; *Sowetan* 2 May 2012:12) and political and public discourse (Neocosmos 2006; Landau 2010; Dyers and Wankah 2012) has placed the African immigrants in a position of undesirable persons (Nyamnjoh 2006; Laher 2010; Muzondidya 2010). As a result of these anti-African immigrant tropes and imagery, the African immigrant is portrayed and perceived as a problem in contemporary South Africa (Laher 2010; Mawadza and Crush 2010).

These views can be theoretically framed in the notion of the threatening other (Michlic 2006), in which African immigrants are seen as a problem that must be excluded and eliminated in South Africa. Hence, the deployment of the concept of the threatening other targets conveying and presenting the image that African immigrants in contemporary South Africa today are a problem and a threat which must be excluded, if not eliminated. While it is understood that the concept of the threatening other may either frame or be framed by xenophobia, the exclusive focus is still on the threatening other. For example, the fact that African immigrants are perceived as the threatening other may generate xenophobic attitudes and acts. In this regard, xenophobia may easily be regarded as the effect of the perception of African immigrants as the threatening other. This is not the focus of the research. The aim of this research is to deconstruct the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other.

- **Deconstruction**

Based on a case study of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, the research considers alternative views of these immigrants to firstly, assess and secondly, dismantle the idea that they are the threatening other. As fully explained in Chapter 2, the analytical strategy of dismantling perceptions that African immigrants are the threatening other constitutes deconstruction in this research.

▪ **The migration and immigration contestation in South Africa**

A Southern African Migration Project study undertaken in 2006 found that South Africa is a highly intolerant and hostile country for foreign nationals, more so than any other country in the world (Crush 2008a). This observation confirms earlier research by several scholars such as: Crush (1996, 1997, 1998; 2001a, 2001b); Mattes et al. (2002); Dodson (2002); and Crush and Pendleton (2004). Foreigners, typically African immigrants, are blamed for taking jobs away from South Africans (Laher 2010), engaging in criminal activities and draining the country's resources (Mattes et al. 2002; Landau 2009). Such views are also held by government officials, some South African citizens, the police and private organisations (Mattes et al. 2002; Landau 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010).

Consequently, it can be argued that this anti-foreigner context, especially against African immigrants, provides the basis for actions which can be interpreted as victimisation and harassment of these immigrants. For example, in 2003, the City of Johannesburg, together with the Department of Home Affairs, unleashed helicopters and close to one thousand security officials to fight crime (Landau 2006). This initiative was meant to get rid of African immigrants, although it was portrayed as a crime fighting move (Landau 2006). Soon after the democratic elections in South Africa, Alexandra Township organised a campaign called Operation Buyelekhaya (Operation Go Back Home) with the calculated purpose of getting rid of African immigrants in South Africa (Palmary et al. 2002).

A study by Peberdy and Majodina (2000) suggests that Somali children faced challenges of access to education in South Africa. Research by Crush and Tawodzera (2011) found that Zimbabwean children faced obstacles in accessing education in public schools. African immigrants are excluded and discriminated against in health facilities (Crush and Tawodzera 2014), schools, general service provision and various other types of personal services (Neocosmos 2006; Nyamnjoh 2006; Landau 2010; Muzondidya 2010). In the recent past, (from 2011 to 2013), Somali shops were specifically targeted and attacked (Brooke 2012, 2013; Ivier 2013b, Ivier 2013c; *The Star*, 19 May 2011:6; *The Star* 31 October 2013a:2, 2013b:13, 2013c:13) and some of the Somalis were even killed in May 2013 (*The*

*Star* 29 May 2013:4) and in September 2013 (Ivier 2013c). The attacks on African immigrants are on the increase (Ivier 2013b; *The Star* 31 October 2013b:13).

Therefore, the study of African immigration to South Africa and the resultant tensions is of geographical relevance because it illustrates the dynamics between people, space, place and the environment. This is where this research is located, with the aim of probing the negative portrayal of African immigrants based on a case study of the Johannesburg inner city.

#### ▪ **Humanistic geography and critical realism**

Humanistic geography is a critical geographic approach which explores human actions (Nayak and Jeffery 2011) based on their experiences and meanings which they attach to social reality (Entrekin and Tepple 2006; Nayak and Jeffery 2011). Thus, in an attempt to deconstruct the view that African immigrants are the threatening other, the people involved in the scene are considered in order to understand the deeper meanings of their lived worlds.

In focusing the research on the human subject (Entrekin and Tepple 2006), this thesis will deploy critical realism as a research paradigm, because of the need to understand the social reality around the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. Thus, the research will adopt a humanistic approach and critical realism as a guiding research paradigm.

## **1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.8.1 Comparable qualitative research using in-depth interviews**

Qualitative research using in-depth interviews has gained popularity in Human Geography, as demonstrated by such scholars as Talbo (2006) in the exploration of the geography of homelessness in Buffalo, New York; Burns (2006) in the study of space-people-language; and Razack (2009) in the exploration of women's cricket spaces. Similar studies in Geography are also identified by, for example, Perry (2003); Borgman (2005); Stewart (2006); Gormley (2006); Shawki (2007); Wilson (2009); Jones (2010); Place (2010); Skinner (2010); Migliore (2011); Herron (2011); MacDonald (2012), and Robbins (2012). Hence, the deployment of the qualitative approach using in-depth interviews in this study is not isolated and unusual, but an

acceptable research endeavour in the discipline of Geography, specifically Human Geography.

### **1.9 QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

The study deploys a non-experimental research design and methodology of collecting, presenting and interpreting data. It starts with a literature review of books, journal articles, reliable Internet sources, newspapers and other authentic sources of information on migration and immigrant traders. This is followed by an account of data collection from the field using a qualitative approach, which involves studying social reality in its natural setting, 'attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln 2000:3).

In-depth interviews serve as the main research instrument for the collection of qualitative data. This is dealt with in detail in Chapter 4. The research uses the qualitative approach based on the assumption that aspects relating to migration, African immigrant traders and their impacts can be measured accurately through the in-depth interviews. The interpretative and subjective aspects in this study are best suited to the qualitative approach, which is well documented as common practice in comparable contexts (Cresswell 1994, 2009; Burns 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, 2011).

### **1.10 JUSTIFICATION OF A HUMANISTIC APPROACH**

The research is sensitive to the fact that not all reality can be completely and accurately captured through the scientific method espoused by natural scientists or positivist thinking. Where human beings are involved, the importance of the subjective experience that cannot be directly measured and expressed through the use of numbers and symbols can only be captured through conversation and verbalised thoughts during in-depth interviews, characteristic of a humanistic approach. This is important to avoid 'curbing the explanatory power of social scientific enquiry' (Losifides 2011:49). For this reason, critical realism is the guiding philosophy of this research.

Hence, on the ontological level of what social reality is, the research locates itself in the view that social reality is subjective (Creswell 2009), as seen by those under study. The emphasis in this research is what Losifides (2011:55) calls 'ontological

depth'. On the epistemological level (Creswell 2009), the researcher is aware of the implications of interacting with the interviewees whose experiences were analysed. At an axiological level, the researcher understands that reality is value-laden and affected by bias (McCallum 1996; Burns 2000; Grbich 2004). For this reason, the study aims to know more about the subjective and qualitative aspects of migration, African immigrant traders and their contribution to the Johannesburg inner city.

### **1.11 DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS**

In-depth interviews were administered in three rounds or phases. In the first round of interviews, 40 African immigrant traders and 40 South African traders were interviewed; in the second round 10 from each group were interviewed, and finally, three from each group were interviewed (the sampling procedure is fully explained in Chapter 4). The interviewees for the second and third rounds were chosen from the original sample of 80 traders; both African immigrants and South Africans. The data gathered from these interviews was manually analysed by reading through all the data, identifying and establishing themes and descriptions, interrelating themes and descriptions and interpreting the meaning of themes and descriptions, a method recommended by Creswell (2009). This is fully explained in Chapter 4.

### **1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

The study is organised into eight chapters. Chapter 1 provides a background to the research, establishes the research problem, aims and objectives and the methodology. Chapter 2 is a conceptualisation and contextualisation of the study in terms of grounding and locating it and establishing its scope. The chapter also outlines the key theoretical frameworks which drive the study. The third chapter is a literature review which situates the thesis within the broader debates of migration to and immigration in South Africa generally, focusing more specifically on African immigrants in post-apartheid South Africa. In Chapter 4, the thesis provides a detailed explanation of the research process which was followed. Chapters 5 and 6 provide an analysis of the qualitative data by identifying, connecting and explaining the emerging themes and perspectives. Chapter 7 is a critical discourse which targets a synthesis of the analysis of the data. The final chapter is a critical appraisal, reflection and conclusion.

### **1.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has established the foundations, impetus, and purpose of this work. In doing so, a clear indication emerges that issues of migration to and immigration into contemporary South Africa are not only historical and current phenomena, but also significant, due to the contestations that they generate. From a geographical point of view, it is necessary to understand how these contestations are of geographical importance, the analysis of which needs further and detailed conceptual and contextual framing which is the subject of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALISATION AND CONCEPTUALISATION**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter positions the South African migration and immigration context within the global context. This is achieved by providing a brief overview of selected international migration experiences, trends and debates, followed by the location of the South African experience; African immigrants generally and traders specifically. The chapter also clarifies the concepts which frame the study, such as deconstruction, humanistic geography, critical realism and the threatening other.

### **2.2 CONTEXTUALISATION OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS**

#### **2.2.1 Comparable immigrations in other parts of the world**

In 2005, about '191 million people worldwide' – nearly '3% of the world's population' – were not living in the country in which they were born (Solimano 2010:4). Globalisation has played a role in this increase in international migration (Heisler 2008). Yet, in spite of this increased migration across national boundaries, immigrants are generally treated with hostility (Alarcchi, 2002; Solimano 2010) and 'individual rights are fundamentally tied to citizenship and nationality' (Solimano 2010:47), suggesting that immigrants are discriminated against. In fact, 'globally, there is a surprising consistency in the dominant negative metaphors used by the media to describe those deemed to have "violated" national territory and sovereignty or are poised to do so' (Mawadza and Crush 2010:364). Therefore, it is relevant to provide a brief comparative overview of international migration scenarios and debates in other parts of the world in order to contextualise South African immigration and the case of African immigrants.

#### **▪ Australia**

A case study of the settlement of African refugees in Australia by Kivunja et al. (2014) suggests that Australia has a definite positive support agenda for immigrants. 'It is clear that government and non-governmental service agencies provided crucial support to ameliorate the inevitable barriers and challenges that are part of the experience of moving into another culture, thus empowering migrants' (Kivunja et al. 2014:76). Although there were issues of discrimination against immigrants of African

origin, (Kivunja et al. 2014), which made the settlement of African immigrants in New South Wales a challenge, what is implied by this Australian study of immigration is that there is no open hostility against immigrants. This contrasts sharply with the case in South Africa where African immigrants are targeted by the media (McDonald 2000; Crush 2000; Crush and Tevera 2010), some government officials and some citizens (Laher 2010; Landau 2005, 2006, 2010).

- **European Union (EU)**

Migration within the European Union (EU) is high and frictionless (Ryan and Mulholland 2014); it has been likened to a 'form of internal migration' (Santacreu et al. 2009:71). It is important to add that immigrants from outside the EU face stricter immigration regimes, because 'European countries display negative attitudes towards immigrants in general and immigration in particular' (Davidov and Meuleman 2012:770). For example, Zimbabwean 'teachers, engineers, scientists, traders, health professionals, financiers and those with IT and technical skills' were not recognised for their skills in Britain due to structural barriers (Block 2010:165), and 'accountants, mechanics, development professionals and bankers' (McGregor 2010b:181) and some of the Zimbabweans who have not been able to practice their skills have joined the care industry 'as a result of restrictive migration policies, constraints on entering other parts of the British job market' (McGregor 2010b:201).

For instance, Swedish immigration regimes have changed towards a restrictive one but generally demonstrate a liberal approach (Bevelander 2010). Wettergren and Wikstrom (2014) record that in Sweden, Somali asylum seekers are granted a subsidiary refugee status (which can be defined as partial refugee status), which does not quite 'fit the refugee category', when in fact they qualify for complete refugee status (Wettergren and Wikstrom 2014:567). The reason for not granting the Somali asylum seekers a full refugee status could be motivated by anxieties of too many Somali refugees with definite status in Sweden (Wettergren and Wikstrom 2014). However, there is no suggestion that once the Somali refugees are in Sweden, they are harassed and victimised. This is the difference with the South African experience of African immigrants. A similarity would be the desire to limit the number of Somalis with full refugee status, which would give them full measure of rights and protection. In addition, immigration policies against immigrants from other



African countries have been generally tightened in Britain (Barou et al. 2012). A UK study of asylum and refugee regimes by Stewart and Mulvey (2014) suggests that as a result of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act of 2006, there was:

‘the move from permanent refugee status to a temporary one, the so-called “cessation clause”. The notion being that country information is to be kept under review to determine what would happen to refugees at the end of the temporary period. This effectively removes the provision of permanent protection of refugees and replaces it with temporary status, at least in the first instance’ (Stewart and Mulvey 2014:1025).

This UK example is similar to the Swedish stance on offering Somali asylum seekers subsidiary protection instead of full refugee status. In France, immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa 'cannot enjoy the benefits of the French welfare system and instead depend on the solidarity of their countrymen' (Barou 2010:89), and in Britain other African immigrants 'had experienced discrimination and prejudice in employment, education and everyday neighbourhood spaces' (Waite and Aigner 2012:121).

Thus, the situation in the EU, when compared to the Southern African region generally and South Africa specifically, is relatively different; particularly the latter where there seems to be a deliberate effort to keep African immigrants out. Perhaps it is unfair to compare the EU and the Southern African regions, because the former is more economically integrated than the latter. Nevertheless, this shows differences in immigration scenarios. For example, in the Southern African region, Namibians (Namibia) and Batswanas (Botswana) are 'less tolerant to immigrants' (Campell 2010:183). Other research (de Vletter 2000; Frayne and Pendleton 2000; Gay 2000; Zinyama 2000) also suggests that migration in the Southern African region – to South Africa in particular – is met with hostility and xenophobia. Entry into South Africa is made more difficult and those who make it into the country often experience various forms of hostility, discrimination and xenophobia (Laher 2010; Rugunanan and Smit, 2011). Based on the examples of France and Britain where African immigrants in the EU experience discriminative immigration regimes, it can be argued that it is not on the same scale as it is in South Africa, where African immigrants 'experience a much harder discrimination than in France or Britain' (Attias-Donfut et al. 2012:186) and:

'the South African immigration regime is distinctive from the French and British in that it takes a more ambivalent approach. Consequently, larger numbers of African immigrants live there with little or no access to formal citizenship; these exclusionary tensions are further enhanced by the resentment experienced by immigrants from some groups within the local population and the oppressive machinery of the state, which emphasises their non-belonging to South Africa' (Attias-Donfut et al. 2012:179).

- **Israel**

Kalir (2013) shows that those Chinese migrant workers in Israel who are granted working documents, suffer exploitation and victimisation, especially from the employers. In addition, 'the Israeli police appeared to be uninterested in enforcing the law when it came to the protection of migrant workers' rights. It was for example well known to the police that a Chinese mafia operated in Israel among workers, collecting protection fees and debts from illegal gambling' (Kalir 2013:320). From a comparative point of view, it can be suggested that the Chinese migrant workers in Israel are not subjected to a virulent anti-immigration debate which is similar to the one suffered by African immigrants in South Africa. Although Chinese workers in Israel may be exploited, there is no suggestion that they are unwanted and need to be expelled.

- **The United States of America (USA)**

Even though immigrants are generally welcomed by the United States of America (USA), in the recent past, immigration laws have been tightened (Golash-Boza 2012; Wong 2012). This is evidenced by immigration raids, vigorous interior enforcement of immigration laws, militarisation of the border, and home and work raids (Golash-Boza 2012). In 2010, the state of Arizona institutionalised the 'criminalisation of undocumented migrants' as evidenced by the Arizona Senate Bill SB 1070 'that made undocumented migration a crime of trespassing and carried a punishment that involved a fine and jail time' (Golash-Boza 2012:15-16). In addition, the 287(g) programme also mandates the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which is 'a federal agency under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to train local enforcement officers to enforce federal immigration laws as authorised through section 287 (g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)' (Wong 2012:739).

This implies that there is a general anti-immigration debate in the US, with suggestions that immigration is not good for the country because 'the concern for securing the border and protecting the US citizenry from predatory migrants has also become a more prominent feature of the public discourse on immigration' (Kretsedemas 2012:5). The US immigration debate depicts striking parallels with that of South Africa. As in the United States, immigrants in South Africa, especially Africans, 'were the targets of severe assaults, burning, looting of shops and being displaced from their homes. These attacks were perpetrated by South Africans who believed that African immigrants have no place in South Africa and should be sent back to their home countries' (Laher 2010:11). This is similar to the interior immigration enforcements, home and work site-based raids and the sending of people to deportation centres in the US described by Golash-Boza (2012). While in the USA there is an anti-immigration debate and immigration is generally encouraged, it could be argued that the difference in South Africa is that African immigrants are specifically targeted, whether legally or not. The reason is that they are viewed as not deserving to be in South Africa (Laher 2010).

Clearly, therefore, the issue of African immigrants in South Africa appears to be compelling in terms of their being targeted and blamed for problems afflicting South Africa. It is thus relevant to introduce the issue of African immigrants in contemporary South Africa.

### **2.2.2 South African immigrations and the case of African immigrants**

Census results for 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2003), show that South Africa receives immigrants from all parts of the world, including Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Central and South America, and Europe and North America. In addition, there is an indication that the numbers of immigrants in South Africa from different parts of the world is increasing significantly (Statistics South Africa, 2012) and the international migration projections for South Africa for 2011-2015 (Statistics South Africa, 2013) generally suggest the same geographical spatiality and temporality. On the basis of this, it is relevant to emphasise that it is not only immigrants from African countries who enter South Africa, but also those from other regions of the world.

What is significant for this thesis is a comment on whether all immigrants in South Africa suffer the same hostility and discrimination. This is deemed important so as to justify fixing the focus of this research on African immigrants. Several scholars (Crush and Williams 2001; Crush 2000; McDonald 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Landau 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2010; Laher 2010; Mawadza and Crush 2010; Abdi 2011; Dyers and Wankah 2012; Crush and Tawodzera 2014) suggest that other immigrants in South Africa do not suffer the same discrimination and hostility directed against African immigrants. For example, Neocosmos (2006) established the fact that:

'It is only working people from Africa and not Whites from the West who are the objects of xenophobic practices testifies not only to the inherent racism of the state apparatus and weaknesses..., but also the inability of workers' organisations such as unions to state politically the commonality of all working people in South Africa irrespective of communitarian origins' (Neocosmos (2006:76).

Nyamnjoh (2006) demonstrates that in South Africa, there is almost no reference to West Europeans and North Americans, despite the possibility that some of these immigrants may be in the country illegally and may also commit crimes. In the same vein, there is no widespread publicity of 'Thai, Romanian and Bulgarian women involved in prostitution or about Taiwanese and Chinese illegals responsible for smuggling contraband' (Nyamanjoh 2006:67). Laher (2010) also argues that it is the African immigrants more than those from regions such as Western Europe who are targets of discrimination and bad publicity. As African immigrants are the archetypical illegal aliens, this has led to them being referred to as *makwerekwere* (Laher 2010). The term *makwerekwere* 'depicts the phonetic sound of foreign African languages and is used in an attempt to ridicule' (Laher 2010:15). It also implies primitive people who are 'attempting to graduate from naked savagery, are usually believed to be the darkest of the dark sinned and to be less enlightened... they are also thought to come from distant locations in the remotest corners...north of Limpopo' (Nyamnjoh, 2006:39). Thus, *makwerekwere* is also 'a derogatory term African foreigners are referred by' Neocosmos (2006:113) or is used to refer to African immigrants 'who do not speak the language of the people' (Mawadza and Crush 2010:366). Many South Africans believe that those African immigrants 'take away jobs from South Africans'

(Laher 2010:7). African immigrants are 'uneducated and desperate people who are fleeing poverty and chaos in their home country to find work, peace and shelter in the "land of milk and honey" by crawling under the fences or paying off corrupt border officials and are entering by the millions' (McDonald 2000:2). They are 'hostile, unwelcome, a threat to the culture, way of life and economic life of the citizen' (Mawadza and Crush 2010:366). Hence:

'a racialised splitting of immigrants thus ensures that non-African migrants may be accorded a status of respect and admiration, while Africans are vilified as *Makwerekwere*...while a practice of splitting may make their situations highly precarious, its residual topographies are the very site where some kind of ongoing presence has been consolidated' (Nyamnjoh 2007: 231).

It appears that African immigrants are the ones who are perceived to be a problem. Even though there could be immigrants from other parts of the world whose languages have some phonetic sounds which are difficult to understand, such immigrants are not called *makwerekwere* or an equivalent. This perception of African immigrants results in them being called the black tide from the north (McDonald et al. 1998), 'barbarians at the gate' (McDonald 2000:2) or 'parasites...stealing jobs of South Africans' (Maharaj 2010:367). This perception of African immigrants in contemporary South Africa is where this research is situated. The above detail thus sketches and problematises African immigrants in contemporary South Africa to further highlight, justify and contextualise the focus on these immigrants in this research. Furthermore, from a geographical spatio-temporal perspective, it can be suggested that immigrants to South Africa come from all parts of the world and this has been the case in post-apartheid South Africa too. However, from the discussion in this section, several scholars (McDonald et al. 1998; McDonald 2000; Crush 2000; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Crush and Tevera 2010; Laher 2010; Mawadza and Crush 2010; Maharaj 2010; Abdi 2011; Attias-Donfut et al. 2012; Dyers and Wankah 2012; Crush and Tawodzera 2014), seem to suggest that African immigrants are regarded negatively and from a temporal perspective, this view has been maintained in post-apartheid South Africa and has remained static. Could this research shake this fixed perception of African immigrants or even validate it? While investigating this

perception of African immigrants in South Africa, this thesis focuses on a case study of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city in an effort to unravel how and if African immigrants are the threatening other. It is pertinent to define these African immigrant traders and describe the environment in which they occur in relationship to South African traders and both the formal and the informal economy.

### **2.2.3 African immigrant and South African traders, formal and informal economy**

African immigrant traders refer to people from African countries who – regardless of immigration status in South Africa – produce or buy and sell different types of goods and services, ranging from small-scale activities, such as vending, to relatively big retailing shops. Studies suggest that there has been an increase in the number of African immigrant traders in South Africa (Skinner 2008; Dyers and Wankah 2012; Venter 2012). Although the focus of this study is on the Johannesburg inner city, the activities of African immigrant traders have been identified in other parts of South Africa; for example those in Cape Town as described by Dyers and Wankah (2012).

In addition, African immigrant traders are not only limited to South Africa or the African continent. For example, they have taken root in and established 'trading posts' in Guangzhou, China and Hong Kong (Bertoncello and Bredeloup 2007:94). Research by Lyons et al. (2012) confirms this development. Furthermore, the activities of African immigrant traders have been recorded in Dubai, Bangkok and Jakarta (Bertoncello and Bredeloup 2007). In these regions, African immigrant traders are playing a positive economic role because they provide a channel of distribution for goods produced by both Africa and China (Bertoncello and Bredeloup 2007). This confirms that:

'Similar to the consortia involved globally in the retailing industry, the African traders who have set up shop in Asia have the ability to link the centres of production to the markets. Not only are they redrawing the trading routes, but, what's more, they are contributing to the creation of new products for an African clientele, while negotiating directly with the Chinese factories and increasingly taking control of the transport logistics chain...have set up shop in the strongly Asian locations...playing the role of an interface between their communities and the local society, a role which has allowed them to consolidate their status as economic operators. These businessmen have thus made an extensive

contribution to the construction of these African trading posts in Asia' (Bertoncello and Bredeloup 2007:97).

Thus, the insights gained from the experiences of African immigrant traders in Asia and South East Asia fall directly into the analytical framework of this research which explores the nature and economic activities of African immigrant traders and how these could contribute to the Johannesburg inner city. Such an analysis will assist in addressing the objectives of the study. In investigating the contribution of African immigrant traders to the Johannesburg inner city, it is imperative to examine the interface between, firstly, the formal and informal economy, and secondly, South African and African immigrant traders, as African immigrant traders do not operate in a vacuum. How their operations straddle the formal and informal economies, and also the nature, dynamic and extent of their interaction with South African traders needs to be exposed to fully grasp whether they make any contribution to the Johannesburg inner city and what that may be.

- **Informal and formal economy**

A study by Potts (2008) shows that sub-Saharan countries have vacillated between separating the formal and informal economies, where the latter has been regarded as being subordinated to the former. However:

'general observation and many case studies indicate that most workers in African towns today are informal; that is the dominant form of employment and that the trend is increasing,... fairly obviously, any conceptualisation of the informal and formal sectors in terms of duality and some notion of gradual absorption of the former by the latter, with no dynamic interaction between the two, have to be discarded' (Potts 2008:157).

The introduction of the terms 'formal economy' and 'informal economy' in this research serves to clarify the activities and operations of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city in terms of whether they are formal or informal or a combination of both and how and if they contribute to the Johannesburg inner city. Considering the fact that 'the small, medium and micro enterprise policies' had their origins in the capacitation of the informal economy (Potts 2008:158), what are the possibilities in the Johannesburg inner city? What does the case of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg demonstrate?

## ▪ **South African traders**

African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city operate in areas where there are also South African traders. In an attempt to achieve a balanced understanding of African immigrant traders and to bring to the fore the nature and depth of the interactions in the Johannesburg inner city, it is also paramount to consider what the South African traders do. What do they say about African immigrant traders? Questions relating to whether South African traders are formal or informal and how and if the activities of African immigrant traders play out in such an environment will help highlight the contribution, if any, which they make to the Johannesburg inner city. Thus, this will assist in deconstructing the threatening other. Considering African immigrant traders together with South African traders shows the geographical interplay of people-place/space-environmental interaction and the effects of this interaction. How this interaction has materialised over time illustrates the geographic temporality of the study. Since the thesis targets the deconstruction of the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other, it is appropriate to declare and reveal the conceptualisation of the threatening other.

## **2.3 THEORISING AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS AS THE THREATENING OTHER**

Michlic (2006) explored how Poles, in the different stages of the development of the Polish nation state, have constructed and perceived Jews, with whom they have lived for many years, as the threatening other. They have done this by projecting the 'Jew as the chief harmful alien' (Michlic 2006:76). For example, since the 1880s, the myth of the Jew as the threatening other has been sustained and led to the anti-Jewish violence between 1918 and 1939. From 1939 to 1945, there was an increase in Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism (Michlic 2006). Furthermore, from 1945, various political parties promoted different forms of virulent anti-Semitic rhetoric and idioms. These survived the collapse of the USSR. The result is that they led to discrimination and violence against Jews and even their death (Michlic 2006). In the name and will of the Polish nation state, politicians and other writers have used exclusivist ethno-nationalist language, with some political parties even opposed to the 'inclusion of Jews in the definition of the Polish state' (Michlic 2006:182). Therefore, informed by the work of Michlic (2006), which shows how Jews have always been unfairly blamed for Poland's economic, political and social problems



(the threatening other) – leading to their exclusion and murder – the present research invokes this concept in order to conceptually frame how African immigrants are perceived as the threatening other in contemporary South Africa. Based on a survey of the popular press from about 2008 up to 2012, it became clear to the researcher that some newspapers attempted to objectively report on African immigrants in South Africa in terms of what these immigrants do and contribute. In the same context, the researcher noted that some newspapers regretted the precarious existence of African immigrants as a result of xenophobic attacks. Examples include an article in *The Citizen*, (20 July 2010:6), titled 'Fellow Africans worry over threats', which describes the manner in which African immigrants were being threatened and in some cases attacked. In the same vein, *The Citizen* (15 July 2010:13), in an article titled 'Rainbow nation's dark side', castigated xenophobic attacks.

Another report in the *Sunday Times* (2 January 2011:21), titled, 'A living to be made from fear and loathing, so they say', states that African immigrants are not liked, even though through their shops, they provide a service to South African consumers. This idea is corroborated by the *Sunday Times* (29 January 2012:12). *Sowetan* (14 July 2010:13) carried an article titled, 'Criminals are behind xenophobia', which argued that xenophobia is caused by criminals. In addition, *Sowetan* (25 May 2011:12) reported that, 'Talks can stop thugs causing xenophobia', by claiming that, although local businesses complained that African immigrant traders were taking away their livelihood, the accused immigrants argued that they were doing business legally. However, the article concludes by stating that: 'Though some foreigners might be trading without proper documents and are here illegally, threatening and attacking them won't solve the problem' (*Sowetan*, 25 May 2011:12). Even though there is an attempt at positive reporting on what the African immigrants do and bring to South Africa, the majority of reports consulted for this thesis transmit the idea that African immigrants are a problem in South Africa. An article from the *Daily Sun* (17 April 2008:8), by referring to foreigners from African countries gives the impression that African immigrants are a problem because 'too many South Africans are walking around unemployed while many foreigners, often prepared to work for less money have jobs. Job creation has not kept up with reality in our country.' Another article from the *Daily Sun* (17 April 2008:1) displayed the headlines: 'Bob's Tsunami',

suggesting that Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa were a tsunami. Yet another *Daily Sun* article (14 April 2008:3) asserted that 'many of us live in fear of foreign gangsters and conmen. Much terror has been caused by gangs of armed Zimbabweans, Mozambicans and others', and the *Sunday Times* (18 May 2008:6) declared in its editorial that 'Poor people feel the competition first-hand. They see the limited benefits of the liberation for which they struggled hard being usurped by newcomers'. Another article from the *Sunday Times* (2 January 2011) amplifies this idea in an article titled, 'Our future needs tough calls' by arguing that:

'South Africa, like any other civilised country, must look after its own interests if it wants to guarantee its citizens prosperity and protect its national security. Given the poor state of many African economies, it is not surprising that large numbers of Africans have entered South Africa illegally. In this regard, South Africa – now and in the near future – will have to cope with three internal threats: over-extension of its limited human financial and other resources, social, political, economic and ecological instability and a renewed spate of xenophobia. The presence of many undocumented foreign nationals in the country surely exacerbates the problem of food security. These foreigners can threaten the national security on many fronts. Locally these foreign nationals form stakeholder organisations, which they use to demand their own rights in the country as per the dictates of our constitution. This is something that also requires decisive action from the government because South Africa could, in the long run, encounter situations similar to the one that led to civil strife in Ivory Coast' (*Sunday Times* 2 January 2011: 21).

Several *Daily Sun* issues consistently publish dramatic and sensational stories which portray African immigrants in a negative light. Many examples abound, for example: 'They wait for darkness before they attack! Aliens use muthi to steal our cattle' (*Daily Sun* 9 May 2008:11); 'War against aliens! Thousands forced to flee Alex' (*Daily Sun* 14 May 2008:2); 'Blood and flames! Aliens killed and injured as new attacks stoke flames of hatred' (*Daily Sun* 19 May 2008:3) and 'The Alien Terror! Helicopter chases warring crowds! Fleeing the mighty wind! Going home to Moz' (*Daily Sun* 20 May 2008:3). The idea propagated in these reports is that African immigrants deserve this terror, they deserve to be pushed out of South Africa for causing problems, ranging from the use of magical powers to theft of livestock (*Daily Sun* 9 May 2008:11) to promiscuity as suggested by this heading: 'Bloody end of alien

lover' (*Daily Sun*, 9 May 2008:2). Furthermore, *Sowetan* (2 June 2010:3) urged the government to 'Control the borders', highlighting and justifying the deployment of the army at the Mozambican and Zimbabwean borders with South Africa, and because not only were immigrants entering South Africa illegally but South African citizens and farmers in these areas should be protected from criminal activities. Again, *Sowetan* (14 November 2011:9), in an article titled 'Making sense of xenophobia', argued that African immigrants were worsening the South African problems, by stating that 'South Africa has its own serious social and economic problems which include poverty, a high rate of unemployment, high levels of illiteracy, homelessness and a myriad of socio-economic challenges'. The tone of this article is basically that African immigrants are a problem. In addition, *Sowetan* (2 May 2012), in an article titled 'Foreigners do not benefit South Africa', expressed the feeling that South Africans who engaged in civil and xenophobic unrest were justified because:

'People engaged in civil unrest, service delivery protests or xenophobic attacks saying that foreigners are taking their jobs are not as wrong as many people would like to believe. Just go to any restaurant, supermarket, construction site, petrol station and any other work place to see this. For every unskilled job that a foreigner holds, the unemployment rate rises and crime by South Africans motivated by hunger increases. How can a Zimbabwean, Nigerian, Ethiopian or Mozambican be a refugee if there is no war in their countries?' (*Sowetan* 2 May 2012:12).

Furthermore, Nyamnjoh (2010:61) has shown that the media in South Africa has succeeded in projecting African immigrants in the country as '*cam-no-gos* – thereby likening them to a stubborn skin rash that itches terribly.' The media in South Africa sustains the image that there is a deluge or tide of immigrants that is flooding into South Africa (McDonald 2000; Fine and Bird 2006, Vigneswaran 2007; Nyamnjoh 2010). Therefore, this representation or misrepresentation of African immigrants makes them a problem; they are a threat to South Africa. Linked to this media tendency, African immigrants are victimised for having foreign names and even misperceptions are widespread (Nyamnjoh 2006). There is one case where a foreigner 'was arrested for walking like a Mozambican' and accused of being an illegal immigrant (Nyamnjoh 2006:51). Firstly, based on the above reporting by the popular press, it is clear to the researcher that in the media reports consulted for this

case study, African immigrants are often depicted as the threatening other. Secondly, the idea is widespread that South Africa is separated from the rest of Africa (Mamdani 1996; Dyers and Wankah 2012), which yields dark-skinned (Nyamnjoh 2006) backward and primitive people (Muzondidya 2010) who are making efforts to attain civilisation (Nyamnjoh 2006). Thirdly, this insinuation amounts to the depersonalisation of these immigrants.

Indeed, the recent comments by the South African president, Jacob Zuma that the roads in Johannesburg needed to be paid for because 'We can't think like Africans, in Africa, generally. We are in Johannesburg, this is Johannesburg. It's not some national road in Malawi' (Ivier 2013d) were interpreted by many African immigrants as not only rude, but indeed a confirmation of the idea that South Africa is separated from the rest of backward Africa. A political scientist, Ralph Mathekga, cited by Ndenze and Seale (2013), argued that: 'You can't clarify that unfortunately. And my view is very simple. It was an expression of Afro-pessimism and he made a clear emphasis. We can't have afro-pessimism coming from the highest office in the land. The comments were "beyond undiplomatic" and fed into the perception that South Africans thought highly of themselves in relation to their fellow Africans' (Ndenze and Seale 2013)

The popular press in South Africa – from about 2008 to 2012 – suggested to the researcher that African immigrants are oftentimes regarded and portrayed as a burden in contemporary South Africa. Even though there is an attempt at positive reporting, two issues emerge. Firstly, the researcher could not find thorough and extensive attempts to clearly highlight the positives which African immigrants actually and potentially bring. Secondly, the same newspapers that attempted to objectively report on African immigrants also print accounts that transmit the views that African immigrants are a problem in South Africa. Furthermore, some of these newspapers (such as *Sowetan*, 14 July 2010:13) also deny the existence of xenophobia (within the limits of this study, this debate and the issue of xenophobia is examined in Chapter 3) by apportioning the blame on criminals. Hence, there is no inherent contradiction to the suggestion that while there is some positive reporting, the insinuation that African immigrants are a problem in South Africa still prevails; their being a threatening other is still sustained more than the actual and potential

positives. It appears that media tendency towards African immigrants is negative. Consequently, and in the final analysis, African immigrants are seen as people who:

- take away jobs from South Africans (Mamdani 1996; Mattes et al. 2002; Landau 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2008; *Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:8; Rugunanan 2011; *Sowetan* 14 November 2011:9);
- import and spread diseases (Crush 2008a; *Daily Sun*, 9 May 2008: 2; Crush and Tawodzera 2014);
- invade and generally take over from South Africans and do not bring and/or add value to the economy (Fine and Bird 2006, Vigneswaran 2007; Nyamnjoh 2010; *Sowetan* 14 November 2011:9; *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011:21; *Sowetan* 2 May 2012:12);
- are responsible for criminal and other anti-social activities (*Sunday Times* 18 May 2008:6; *Daily Sun*, 9 May 2008:11; *Sowetan* 2 June 2010:3; Muzondidya 2010);
- exploit and destroy the social and physical infrastructure and are a burden on South Africa and its patrimony (Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; *Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:1);
- bring competition for resources (Crush 1996, 2001a, 2008; Landau 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011: 21);
- do not benefit South Africa (*Sowetan* 2 May 2012:12);
- become a problem (Mattes et al. 2002; Landau, 2008; *Sowetan* 14 November 2011:9);
- deserve to be harassed, arrested and deported (*Daily Sun*, 20 May 2008:3; *Sowetan* 2 May 2012:12) and;
- 'swamped' the South African health services (Crush and Tawodzera 2014:656).

This is how the concept of the threatening other is framed and located by the researcher, and will be adopted by this research.

## 2.4 DECONSTRUCTION

Deconstruction is 'an analytical strategy which exposes multiple ways through which discourse can be interpreted and it is able to reveal ideological assumptions in a way that is sensitive to the suppressed interests of members of disempowered, marginalised groups' (Martin 1990:340, cited in Boje 2001:19), it is 'openness to the other' (Gormley 2012:375) and this constitutes 'Enlightenment without conditions' (McQuillan 2009:ix). It also involves 'unconditional critical liveliness to the world around us, its histories and its futures' (McQuillan 2009: xi). Royle (2000:11 cited in Royle 2003:25) defines deconstruction as 'what remains to be thought'.

Furthermore, deconstruction seeks to attain a 'critical perspective above and beyond the consensus beliefs in place' (Lyotard 1984 cited in Norris 2007:30). It does this by celebrating difference and paying close attention and 'maximum fidelity' to research (Wylie 2006:301). This is because deconstruction is sensitive to the fact that any discourse excludes and legitimates a central point of view and ideology (Boje 2001). Deconstruction is a strategy and not a method (Boje 2001; Biesta 2010), which makes less visible aspects more clear, because the idea of deconstruction is 'to see both images, to do a double vision' (Boje 2001:29). In addition, deconstruction challenges those discourses that are taken for granted, not in a destructive way, but by giving insight to qualitative techniques in order to get to authenticity and knowledge as much as possible (Burman and MacLure 2005), which will enable the researcher to expose the micro-discourses within the macro-discourse. Wylie (2006:3003) amplifies the above point by noting that 'deconstruction hauntingly demands questioning of normalised assumptions and procedures, and perhaps above all entails a rethink of how academics such as geographers write'. The present research aims to deconstruct the view that African immigrants in South Africa are threatening other. The research contends that this portrayal may be incomplete or incorrect. This is where the Derridean deconstructionist approach comes in, because 'deconstruction does not consist in passing from one conceptual order to another, but in overturning and displacing a conceptual order as well as the non-conceptual order with which the conceptual order is articulated' (Derrida in *Margins of Philosophy* 1982:329 cited in Stocker 2006:189).

The present research will not delve into the philosophical application of the term deconstruction but will accept its inherent analytical logic. That is because this is a geographical thesis, with a focus on the spatial human environmental interaction and in this analysis employs a philosophical tool to enhance the geographical study. Wylie (2006:299) observes that deconstruction can be deployed within research on any topic because it conveys a sense of analysis or scrutiny of the topic. This is because deconstruction aims to undermine and oppose any claims to 'truth, certainty, and authority'. Deconstruction dismantles (Cheng 2012) and 'destabilizes notions of truth, clarity and certainty through a spectral logic: it differentiates, disturbs, and unsettles' (Wylie 2006:299-300) and thus achieve a deeper understanding of social reality (Sanchez-Prada and Beyebach 2014) by reaching 'other layers of meaning, layers that are different from the supposedly present' (Frers 2013:433).

Through the deployment of the Derridean deconstructionist approach, the research questions the representation of African immigrants in such a negative light in contemporary South Africa. It is an approach that 'interprets interpretation and shatters the logic of main discourses through their interrogation, shaking up, dislocating and transforming the verbal, conceptual and other landscapes' (Royle 2003:25). By deploying the Derridean deconstructionist approach, this research should be able to show that 'knowledge is always insufficient or incomplete without the alternative representations' (Burman and MacLure 2005:287) and this suggests that the widespread view of African immigrants as the threatening other may be incomplete knowledge. If this is the case, this research should be able to illuminate the unrepresented part. The researcher is intensely aware that the concept of deconstruction is hotly contested in philosophical circles, with some authors such as Wolfreys (1998) denying its existence as an analytical framework. However, surveyed literature (Derrida 1981; Boje 2001; Royle 2003; Burman and MacLure 2005; Wylie 2006; Stocker 2006; Norris 2007; Biesta 2009, 2010; Cheng 2012; Gormley 2012; Frers 2013; Sanchez-Prada and Beyebach 2014) suggests that deconstruction is an accepted analytical strategy or approach to the extent that it stimulates new lines of thought about given discourses, an assumption that would apply to the issue of African immigrants in South Africa. In addition, given the fact that deconstruction is a debatable philosophical concept, the outline in Figure 2.1

illustrates how the concept of deconstruction is understood and applied in this research.

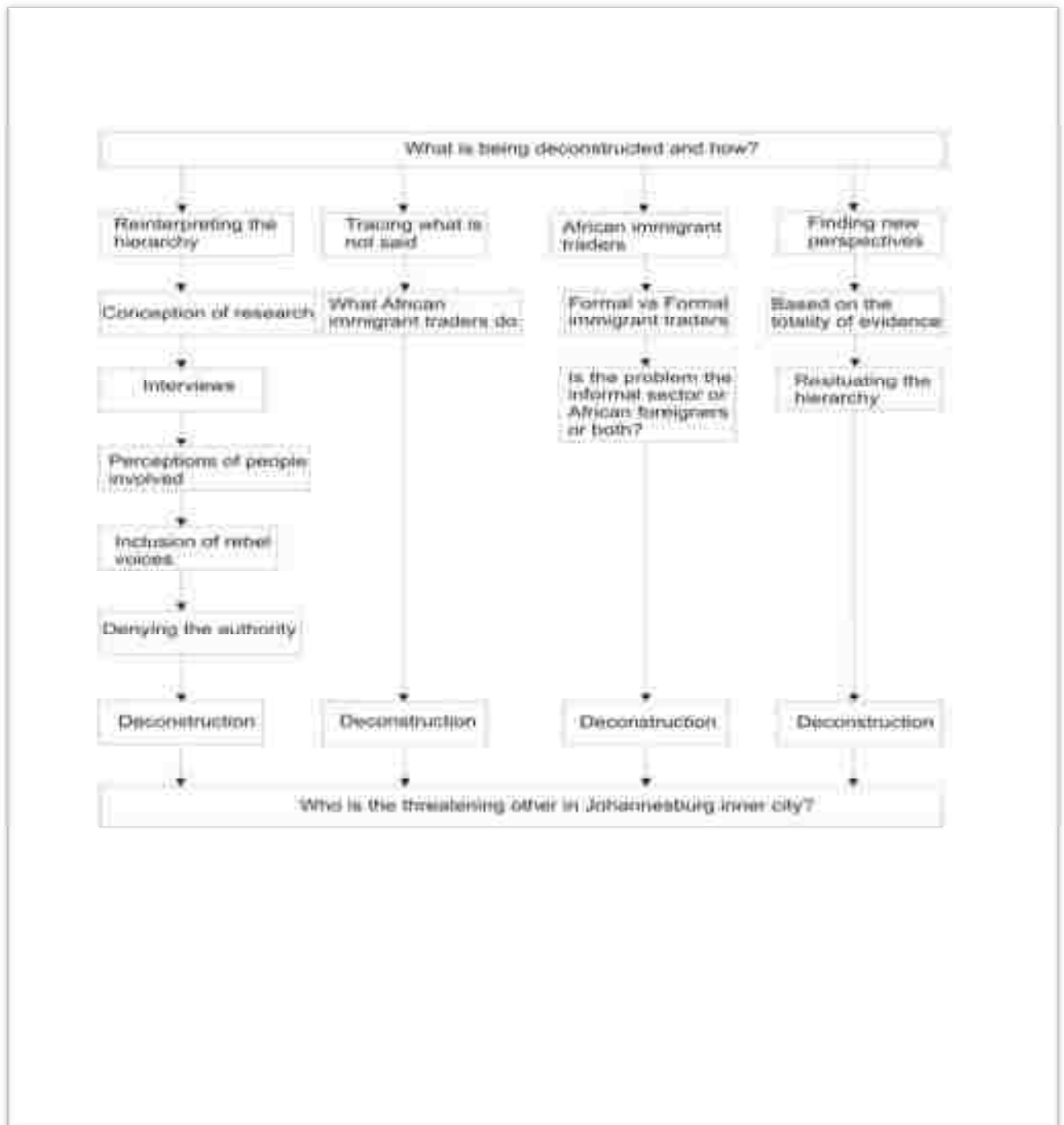


Figure 2.1: The nature and scope of deconstruction (Source: As conceptualised by the author 2012)

Thus, although the researcher is aware of the debates around and the variants of deconstruction, it is not the focus of this work to interrogate the merits of these contestations. Therefore, the deconstruction guidelines illustrated in Figure 2.1 show



the kind of deconstruction model that guides this research. This is a deconstruction model advanced by this research. It is important to state that this research is not a philosophical endeavour, but only borrows analytical frameworks to achieve the objectives of its study because deconstruction trusts 'no generality and no configuration that is solid and given. It is sort of a great earthquake, a general tremor' (Derrida in an interview in 1993 cited in Royle 2003:26) and, furthermore, deconstruction can be used to study any topic (Wylie 2006). This research will use evidence from interviews, rather than texts or the literature, to trigger 'a seismological attentiveness to the tiniest details' (Royle 2003:25). The evidence is the information from interviews on the role that African immigrant traders play in the Johannesburg inner city. Thus, a deconstruction approach becomes a critical stance against 'the kinds of partial or distorted dialogue which characterise the discourses of present day social, ethical, political and interpersonal exchange' (Norris 2007:67).

The deconstruction guidelines developed by Boje and Dennehy (1993 cited in Boje 2001:21) and applied in this study are: reinterpreting the hierarchy, recognising rebel voices, looking at the other side of the story, denying the plot, tracing what is not said and resituating the hierarchy. By reinterpreting the hierarchy, the research posits that the dominant discourse that African immigrants are the threatening other is not correct. There is the assumption that this discourse is 'the Real and the Good, while the oppressed or excluded becomes the Unreal and the Bad, something to be burned at the stake' (Boje 2001:24). In fact, questioning the hierarchy began when this study was conceived based on the portrayal of African immigrants as the doppelgänger anti-citizens in South Africa. Executing the research is still a process of reinterpreting the hierarchy. This is the first point of deconstruction in this study.

It is mostly the media, politicians and some South African citizens who negatively label the African immigrants. The present research probes this particular notion by advancing the argument that the media, politicians and indeed certain sections of the South African citizenry do not know much or are not in regular contact with these immigrants. These negative labels are contested by interviewing the African immigrant traders themselves and their South African counterparts, with whom they are in daily or otherwise regular contact. Statements from the newspapers and politicians may not be trusted absolutely, but the information from African immigrants

can be considered more valuable in understanding whether indeed they are the threatening other, as they participate actively in the scene.

A case study of African immigrant traders, together with their South African counterparts, represents examining social reality in its natural setting; this is regarded as more trustworthy than, for example, the print media. This is because the media does not portray the views of African immigrants themselves together with those of South Africans who interact with these immigrants. This is the second act of the actual deconstruction, being the nucleus of this study. By asking those involved what they think and do amounts to, 'denying the authority' (Boje 2001:21) of one dominant discourse and in the process producing a counter-discourse that includes a 'rebel voice' that would expose marginal perspectives (Boje and Dennehy 1993 cited in Boje 2001:27). In doing so, the present research would consider the African immigrants' contribution to the Johannesburg's inner city.

Based on the findings of interviews, the research can 'trace what is not said' and 'fill in the blanks' (Boje 2001:21). In addition to this, the present research can 'deny the plot' (Boje 2001:21). The plot at the moment is that South Africa is infested with an invading flood of needy (McGregor 2010; Muzondidya 2010) and criminal African immigrants (Laher 2010). The plot spells disaster for South Africa on account of the deluge of the immigrants. This is what is said in the media and public and political discourses (Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Crush 2008; Landau 2009; Landau and Freemantle 2010; Geschiere 2010).

The positives that the African immigrants bring to South Africa are not adequately described; in this regard the present research traces what is not said and fills in the gaps. Based on employment creation, revenue generation and other social and economic facets, this research challenges the discourse of African immigrants being the threatening other, people who are needy (Landau, 2008; Sowetan 14 November 2011:9), criminal (Sunday Times 18 May 2008:6; Daily Sun 9 May 2008: 11; Sowetan 2 June 2010:3; Muzondidya 2010) and prey on the South African economy (Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Sunday Times 2 January 2011:21). Therefore, the third point of deconstruction is based on what the African immigrants actually do that makes them be or not be the threatening other.

The fourth and final item for deconstruction is finding new perspectives, what Boje (2001:21) calls 'resituating'. The objective is to re-author the discourse so that 'the hierarchy is resituated and a new balance of views is attained' (Boje 2001:21). This is necessary to assist debate on how African immigrants are treated and portrayed in contemporary South Africa. Derrida (1981) notes that deconstruction is based on identifying opposition to the main discourse, and during the period of literature review for this thesis, it appeared to the researcher that the discourse that the African immigrants were considered to be the threatening other formed a dominant discourse within the field of migration studies. According to the Derridean deconstructionist approach, the questions raised in this research seek to establish whether there are opposing views to the one of African immigrants being the threatening other. This is important because, as Royle (2003), Stocker (2006), Norris (2007) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) contend, deconstruction necessarily involves reconstruction, which suggests that, from the investigation of the threatening other, the research should achieve a new and objective view.

## **2.5 RESEARCH PARADIGMS**

A research paradigm provides a lens through which to look at the world and offers a logical framework within which theory can be created and constructed (Babbie 2007). It is a set of concepts, relationships and methods that are generally 'accepted in the scientific community' (Harvey 2009:13). A research paradigm is also defined as a conceptual framework that provides a model out of which 'coherent traditions of research can be launched' (Crook and Garrat 2005:207).

There are many research paradigms and these differ because of varying opinions on the purpose of knowledge and how it can be constructed and shown (Kitchin and Tate 2000). A paradigm relates to epistemology or the assumptions about how and what can be known (Kitchin and Tate 2000), how we can better understand the contribution by African immigrant traders to the Johannesburg inner city and how such contributions can be regarded as important and worth highlighting. It also refers to ontology, in terms of what can be known (Kitchin and Tate 2000), such as the nature and dynamics of trading on the streets of the Johannesburg inner city by these African immigrant traders, what can be highlighted and why. The paradigm

also relates to the methodology, which refers to the rules and procedures that are employed in gathering data in the research (Kitchin and Tate 2000).

In the present case, this refers to the actual, reliable, valid and ethical extraction of information from the African immigrant traders to meet the epistemological and ontological premises of the study. It is in this context, therefore, that it is important for the researcher to locate, explore and justify the chosen research paradigms and indicate the extent to which they influenced how data was collected, interpreted and consolidated to draw credible and valid conclusions relating to the deconstruction of a discourse that African immigrants are the threatening other in contemporary South Africa.

In order to qualify and justify the paradigmatic pathway followed, it is necessary to refer to the aim and objectives of the study (Sections 1.6 and 1.6.1), as they demand to be dealt with objectively and rigorously with validity and reliability, ensuring they can be achieved within the chosen research paradigms. The present research aims to deconstruct the view that African immigrants in South Africa are threatening South Africa. In this context, this research explores the contribution that African immigrant traders make to the Johannesburg inner city. The research proceeds from humanistic geographic premises and employs critical realism at paradigm and methodology levels.

## **2.6 A HUMANISTIC GEOGRAPHIC AND CRITICAL REALIST APPROACH**

'Humanism can be seen as a practice, an interrogative orientation which is integral to modes of both co-existence and critical intellectual engagement' (Simonsen 2012: 24); it involves understanding and expressing human agency in social reality (Christensen 2014). Thus, a humanist approach in Geography emphasises the human subject (Entrekin and Tepple 2006; Simonsen 2012). This suggests that meaning is not found in objects, but from human subjects as 'places are not spatial categories but proceed from the on-going dynamic' of human beings attempting to make Earth their home and create their world (Tuan 1991 cited in Entrekin and Tepple 2006:32). In this regard, the geographical study of migration is more than a simplistic origin and destination exploration of push-pull factors, but includes an understanding of 'human experiences of attachment, dislocation, alienation and exile as they are constitutive of the experiential reality and integral parts of migration'

(Entrekin and Tepple 2006:32). This is how critical realism as a research paradigm finds relevance in this research in terms of understanding better and deeper the construction and portrayal of the African immigrants in contemporary South Africa.

'Critical realism is a philosophy of social science preoccupied with the domain of the real and aims to guide social science in order to establish the existing connection among the empirical/subjective, the actual and the deep (in most cases unobservable) dimensions of social reality' and this achieves ontological depth in research (Losifides 2011:54). Critical realism explains what makes things happen. It investigates the building blocks of reality, the policies and practices that make things happen in the first place (Kitchin and Tate 2000:20). It further asks questions such as: 'What is it about geographic phenomena? What is it about an object that enables it to do certain things? What is it about the processes of change?' (Sayer 2006:105). The major objective of critical realism is to explore people's understanding of their actions and situations by striving 'to know how things are caused, what they are capable of causing and the constitutive meaning of the phenomena' (Sayer 2006:102); it 'opposes "what is", is what can be known' (Losifides 2011:55). In this regard, critical realism guides the researcher to acquire 'knowledge of the relations between experience, discourse and materiality of structured, multi-layered social relations that exist and exert casual powers irrespective of agential identification and acknowledgement and the mechanisms that result in proliferation of dominant interpretation and discourses or misinterpretation of social reality' (Losifides, 2011:171).

The preliminary literature review suggested to the researcher that the origins of this discourse could have been the state and politicians, the South African citizenry in general and the media. The research argues that 'there is a world existing independently from our knowledge of it; independence of objects from knowledge immediately undermines any complacent assumptions about the relation between them' (Sayer 2000:2). This suggests that the knowledge about African immigrants that is prevalent in South Africa today is incomplete to the extent that it is independent of what the African immigrants actually do. This argument is forcefully advanced by Danermark et al. (1997:3) who assert that 'whether we believe God or the Big Bang created the world, this does not affect how it was in fact created'. The

research contends that there could be a world that does exist outside of the negative perception of African immigrants in South Africa. Therefore, this research explores this perception of African immigrants in relationship to what they contribute in reality. This will be achieved by holding interviews with the immigrants themselves and the South Africans with whom they are in daily contact, so as to get to know this world.

Hence, probing the portrayal of African immigrants as the threatening other is a deconstructionist approach because of its 'challenging, interrupting and interrogating aspects of reality that are so central or entrenched in our understanding of what is normal, that we can come to take them for granted' (Cheek, 2000 cited in Cheek and Gough 2005:305); 'it is a way of operating' (Eco, 1985: 66 cited in Clarke 2006:106), and it is a 'state of the mind' (Bauman 1992 cited in Clarke 2006:106). It also involves remaining open to other perspectives, not 'airbrushing the unrepresentable out of the picture' and remaining open 'is inherently geographical by being more sensitive to difference and differentiation to (s)pace than geography ever was' (Doel 1999; Soja and Hooper 1993 cited in Clarke 2006:114).

Consequently, a humanistic geography and critical realist approach 'deconstructs the orderly lineaments of Euclidean, non-Euclidean and n-dimensional spaces and totalisation and becomes dissimulatory – a conduit for difference, otherness, heterogeneity' (Doel 1999: 70-71 cited in Clarke 2006: 114); 'it effects a possible place of difference and alterity' (Easthope 2002:4 cited in Clarke 2006:114). This 'gives new eyes to see spaces and places in other ways' (Clarke 2006:114). Thus, deconstruction is situated at the centre of the humanistic, critical and realist stance which frames this research.

### **2.6.1 Application of critical realism**

The first objective of the research is to investigate the nature and types of African immigrant traders' businesses in the Johannesburg inner city. This falls within the province of critical realism in the sense that critical realism is concerned with the exploration of how events take place and how widespread a phenomenon is (Kitchin and Tate 2000:15). In this regard a critical realist approach assists the researcher to examine the businesses of African immigrant traders.

This approach does not use theories or preconceived ideas, because this curbs 'the explanatory power of social scientific inquiry' (Losifides 2011:49), which results in epistemic fallacy (Archer et al. 1998) but will get the information from the people involved in the migration process. This is because critical realism as a paradigm focuses on the constitution of social reality and the construction of the world we live in (Kitchin and Tate 2000) This is relevant because critical realism is *posteriori* in that it reconstructs phenomena on the basis of reflections and immanent critique (Yeung 1997).

The second objective of the research is to evaluate how and if African immigrant traders contribute to the Johannesburg inner city milieu. This essentially involves obtaining, through in-depth interviews, information on the payment of taxes, employment creation, and the positives and potential negatives that African immigrants have on the dynamism of Johannesburg's inner city. This evidence will be used to assess what, if anything at all, the African immigrants are doing to make any positive impact on Johannesburg's inner city. Doing this is a critical realist stance in the sense that conclusions will be drawn based on available evidence and not preconceived notions of what African immigrants do and do not do.

The third objective of the research is to assess the view that African immigrants are the threatening other. It is this discourse that will be deconstructed. It is important to underscore the fact that the qualitative interview is used to explore all the objectives of the study and it assists the research in its deconstruction of the threatening other to the extent that the interviews show how the African immigrants view themselves, what role they think they play, and most importantly, what South Africans think about the role of African immigrant traders. Are they positively or negatively impacting on the Johannesburg inner city specifically? It is the contention of this research that these and similar questions can best be tackled through the deployment of qualitative interviews. Again, the use of qualitative interviews in this study locates the relevance of critical realism as a research paradigm to the extent that research is not only about collecting data, but explaining it within frameworks which control people's actions (May 1993, cited in Kitchin and Tate 2000). Doing so is part of explaining the building blocks of reality, exploring the fundamental mechanisms and structures of social relations (Kitchin and Tate 2000).

Based on Sayer (1985; 1992 cited in Kitchen and Tate 2000) the present research applies the critical realist paradigm at three levels. The first level focuses on exploring the businesses of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, which is concrete practical research. The second level is the explanation of the regularity of events in terms of the link between African immigrant traders and their contribution or otherwise to the Johannesburg inner city. The third aspect concerns the empirical generalisations, which form a deconstruction of the threatening other and are based on the evidence from the research.

From the exposition given, it is evident that the research adopts a humanistic geographical approach. The research deploys a humanist geography, because of the realisation that the ultimate authenticity of geographic phenomena does not lie in abstract findings and theories, but in the in-depth responses of those persons studied (Rodaway 2006). Hence, it is not always 'the case of the particular being representative of the generalisation, but rather of the generalisation not applying to the particular' (Pocock 1988:6 cited in Rodaway, 2006:270). This is how critical realism is located in the present research in terms of getting a fuller understanding of African immigrants and their impact on Johannesburg's inner city within the stated aims and objectives of the study.

The researcher is aware that some geographers – for example, Fotheringham (2006:246) – argue that qualitative approaches like in-depth interviews and the evidence they yield cannot 'stand up to a good cross-examination', because there is no logical framework on which to reject false claims, and this makes anything acceptable. The researcher posits that sometimes the human experience cannot be expressed and verified by theories, because in geographical studies of migration, the human subject is the creator and interpreter of meaning (Entrekin and Tepple 2006); this meaning cannot be found in and verified by theories. For this reason, an understanding of the experiential reality (Titchen and Hobson 2005; Entrekin and Tepple 2006) and 'on-going dynamic' of people attempting to create a home on Earth and out of the Earth (Tuan 1991 cited in Entrekin and Tepple 2006:32) can best be understood through qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews.

In addition, human experiences do not necessarily need to be verified, particularly if they are unique, and to this extent the argument by geographers such as



Fotheringham (2006) becomes false, as it is based on wrong assumptions – assumptions that human experiences cannot be verified. They cannot be verified because they do not need to be; they are unique and particular.

### **2.6.2 Justification for a critical realist paradigm**

The greatest strength of critical realism for this research is that reality is socially constructed and as a consequence 'the social constructions themselves can constitute what we know as the reality of our social worlds' (Oliver 2012:372). This suggests that in investigating the phenomenon of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, we obtain the information from the people involved.

The choice of critical realism as a lens for this research is refreshing to the extent that it is *posteriori*. The present research takes this further from a critical realist perspective that asserts that there is a world which independently exists outside our understanding of it (Sayer 2000:2) by arguing that there is a world which exists outside of the negative perception of African immigrants. This world cannot and will not be changed by any amount of negative portrayal. It needs to be understood by, and be accessed through, those who are involved, namely the African immigrants themselves and the South African citizens with whom they are in daily contact and not from stories in newspapers and politicians who may not know much about the dynamics on the ground. The lens of critical realism will assist the researcher to see the problem this far.

## **2.7. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH ADOPTED**

This thesis deploys a humanist geographic analysis by placing the human subject at the centre of analysis. The research paradigm which is deployed emphasises a qualitative approach.

### **2.7.1 Definition of qualitative methods**

The qualitative method is the naturalistic approach (Lincoln and Guba 2000), the interpretative approach (Smith 1983 cited in Creswell 1994:4) or the post-positivist or post-modern perspective (Quantz 1992 cited in Creswell 1994). The qualitative approach questions the ultimacy and substantiality of social reality as measured through the quantitative process (Cresswell 1994, 2009; Teddlie and Tashakkori

2009; Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, 2011) and it is closer to social reality (Iosifides 2011). This means that in the present research, the interviews with the African immigrant traders and their South African counterparts are used in order to understand who or what the threatening other is in light of the objectives of the study.

### **2.7.2 Rationale for using the qualitative approach**

The rationale for using the qualitative approach is that it uses inductive logic – how people understand and interpret their lives and experiences (Creswell 1994; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). It focuses on the subjective experiences of individuals and the meanings and perceptions that are attached to events that are directly experienced; for this reason a qualitative approach can assist in reaching deeper levels of meaning and perception (Burns 2000; Iosifides 2011).

Furthermore, qualitative methods interrogate what people say and do as a result of how they interpret and understand phenomena. As such, social reality is understood from the perspective of those being studied (Burns 2000). In addition, the conceptualisations of those studied are not regarded 'as an exhaustive reality, but rather as "tools" to uncover or identify deeper realities' (Iosifides 2011:167). The present research is a deconstructionist project and therefore concerned with the perceptions of the subjects under study. This point is advanced by Burns (2000:388), who argues that 'social reality is the product of meaningful social interaction as perceived from the perspectives of those involved and not from the perspective of the observer. Qualitative methods attempt to capture and understand individual definitions, descriptions and meanings of events'.

Therefore, in order to deconstruct the African immigrants as the threatening other, the research will get the perceptions of the African immigrant traders and their South African counterparts. This is important because the dominant discourse about the African immigrants as the threatening other is widespread in the media, both from politicians and from public discourse. This is possible by the deployment of a qualitative approach in order to access deeper meaning from the people involved. The research asks the questions: In labelling the African immigrants as the threatening other, have their voices been heard? Have their contributions been fully considered? The literature review suggests that the answers to these questions are negative, and this is the space that this research occupies by investigating what

African immigrant traders do, say, perceive and think and this should generate rich insights.

### **2.7.3 The in-depth interviews**

The rationale for using in-depth interviews is that they are 'a means of gathering critical information about the social world' because they facilitate accessing 'possible underlying, casual mechanisms' (Losifides 2011:179). In addition, through in-depth interviews 'the interaction among structural, cultural and agential emergent powers can be grasped' (Losifides 2011:179). In-depth interviews 'can be powerful means for interpretative understanding of participants' points of view, lived experiences, preferences and perceptions' (Losifides 2011:178). This is because:

'Interview data may be appropriate not only for understanding agential perspectives but also for explaining them, assessing their adequacy, relating them to wider social contexts and using them to identify casual mechanisms operating at different levels of social reality, depth interviewing always tell us something about social reality and its real casual powers' (Losifides 2011:179)

Furthermore, in-depth interviews can easily capture the more subjective and value-laden aspects of the research. The subjective and value-laden aspects relate to how African immigrant traders locate themselves in South Africa and the actual and potential contribution that they make to Johannesburg's inner city, and also how their South African counterparts regard them. The way that both African immigrant and South African traders understand and interpret the perception of the threatening other, should yield useful information. The fact that knowledge or evidence is subjective does not make it insignificant or untrue, because it can be used to shed light on the world of the people being interviewed. That the views of the people are subjective does not make such information less valuable, hence:

When we try to elicit someone's subjective beliefs, we could say that we are trying to objectively represent their subjectivity. That something is my subjective belief does not entail that it cannot be true. Subjectivity also refers to the subjective quality of all knowledge – that it can be of and for subjects, and is situated and embodied, even though it is mostly about objects (Sayer 2000:60).

It follows that the value of in-depth interviews is that they can assist the research to 'access intense and intimate emotions and experiences that go far beyond words'

(DeLyser and Sui 2014:295). In addition, Iosifides (2011:79) states that in-depth interviews are also 'capable of producing data about agential interpretations, meanings, perspectives, social situations, relations, practices and actions that can be adequately understood and explained'.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has positioned South African immigration – especially that of African immigrants – within a global context. This contextualisation suggested to the researcher that discrimination against immigrants is an international problem, but that based on the preliminary literature review, including the popular press, the South African case is significant in its negative targeting of African immigrants. This becomes the basis of focusing this research on African immigrants in South Africa generally and African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city specifically. The chapter also discussed the concepts that drive this research, such as deconstruction, humanistic geographic approach, critical realism and the threatening other. Since this chapter introduces the issue of African immigrants being targets of anti-immigration rhetoric and perception as the threatening other, it is thus necessary to explore the phenomenon of South African immigrations and African immigrants in particular in greater depth by paying attention to the dynamics, temporalities and trajectories of the migration and immigration debate – the subject of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3: MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION TRAJECTORIES**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

A detailed background to this study, which examines the history, trends and trajectories of the migration and immigration debate in South Africa, will achieve two goals. The first is to further provide a frame for this work and link with the concepts and contexts raised in the previous chapter. The second is to set a foundation on which the case of African immigrants and the deconstruction of the threatening other can be based. In this regard, this chapter discusses the pre- and post-1994 migration and immigration dynamics in order to locate the case of African immigrants generally and that of traders in the Johannesburg inner city specifically.

### **3.2 PRE-1994 IMMIGRATION TRAJECTORIES**

#### **3.2.1 Immigration trends: 1910-1948**

Foreign migration into South Africa has a long history, especially that of labour migration. The South African migrant labour system started at the turn of the nineteenth century (Richmond 1994; Sinclair 1998, 1999; Campell 2010). By 1910, 24 years after the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand and diamonds in Kimberley, there was a huge need for labour (Jeeves 1985; Parnwell 1993; Manghezi 1998; Crush and McDonald 2001). This created the demand for migrant labour whose source was within South Africa, beyond its borders (more specifically southern Africa) and even China between 1904 and 1906 (Jeeves 1985).

Peberdy (1998) observes that at the beginning of the last century, there were various Immigration Acts or regulatory instruments which were designed to manage and control immigration into South Africa. This move was based on increasing numbers of people who desired to immigrate into South Africa. These Acts included the 1913 Immigrants Regulation Act, the 1930 Immigration Quota Act and the 1937 Aliens Control Act, which provided a base to subsequent immigration laws (Peberdy 1998). Despite the fact that during the apartheid years there were changes to these laws, the legislation 'reflected the centralisation of state power, eroded further the already minimum rights of immigrants; continued to entrench the contract labour system and

was increasingly directed at the control of non-white regional immigrants' (Peberdy 1998:192).

Peberdy and Crush (1998) note that the first national immigration law was the Immigration Regulation Act of 1913, because each province had its own laws before the Union of South Africa in 1910. The Act of 1913 gave the Immigration Board and Immigration Officers substantial power on immigration matters (Peberdy and Crush 1998). On the strength of the Act of 1913, European immigrants were welcome but the number of Indians was controlled, because, after the indentured labourers from India came to South Africa from about 1850, there was the feeling that more Indians were not good for South Africa (Peberdy and Crush 1998). Furthermore, the Act of 1913 also limited the internal migration of black people, as they were not viewed as South African citizens, a situation, which, from the point of view of the state, necessitated monitoring and regulation (Peberdy and Crush 1998). Although there were amendments to the Act of 1913, these did not detract from the primary purpose; if anything, the subsequent amendments strengthened the Act of 1913 (Peberdy and Crush 1998).

Furthermore, the increased numbers of Eastern European immigrants to South Africa after World War One and the fact that more Indians and poor whites managed to enter South Africa in spite of the 1913 Immigrants Regulation Act, provided the foundation for the 1930 Immigration Quota Act (Peberdy 1998; Peberdy and Crush 1998). This Act was intended to exclude the immigration of Jews into South Africa because they were regarded as a menace to the South African state since they were not the appropriate white immigrants (Peberdy 1998; Peberdy and Crush 1998). This Act also prescribed the number of immigrants who were eligible to enter South Africa from certain countries (Peberdy and Crush 1998).

Subsequently, there was the Immigration Amendment Act of 1937 which amended the 1913 Immigrations Regulation Act by strengthening the powers of immigration officers regarding who could and could not be admitted into South Africa (Peberdy and Crush 1998). This Immigration Act also allowed for the recruitment of migrant workers from outside South Africa (Peberdy and Crush 1998; Peberdy 1998).

The Aliens Act of 1937 followed the Immigration Amendment Act of 1937 to promote the exclusion of Jewish immigrants into South Africa. This was 'the first time the word alien was entrenched in legislation and public discourse to describe unwanted immigrants. The act defined an alien as a person who was not a 'natural born British or not a Union subject' (Peberdy and Crush 1998:26). This Act allowed for the establishment of an Immigration Selection Board that had authority to offer or deny permanent residence (Peberdy and Crush 1998).

The 1937 Aliens Act was followed by the Aliens Registration Act of 1939, which was designed to select immigrants (Peberdy 1998). The Aliens Registration Amendment Act of 1949 emphasised the 1939 Act by strengthening the monitoring of immigrants (Peberdy and Crush 1998). The immigration trend in South Africa up to the 1940s suggests that it was racist and selective. Immigration officers and the police were given excessive powers and 'immigration was a "white issue"... immigrants were by definition white... the government distinguished between desirable and undesirable whites in formulating its policies'. Blacks from outside South Africa were not included in the immigration policy because they were temporary sojourners who would go back to their homes (Peberdy and Crush 1998:29).

### **3.2.2 Immigration trends: 1948-1994**

When the National Party came into power in 1948, immigration policies were amended to conform to the new dispensation. Brownell (1985) argues that after 1948, immigration policy in South Africa reflected the conflict between Afrikaans and English speaking whites. This was evidenced by the National Party government of the day making every effort to reverse the previous immigration policy that had actively encouraged the British to immigrate to South Africa and focused instead on encouraging more German and Dutch immigrants. The previous immigration Acts of 1913, 1930 and 1937 were amended to be in line with this political reality (Peberdy and Crush 1998:29; Wa Kabwe-Segatti 2006).

It must be noted that during the apartheid years, the Immigration Board and officials had complete power over immigration issues, including monitoring immigrants and determining permanent residences for them (Peberdy and Crush 1998). Those who were admitted into South Africa were strictly followed (Peberdy and Crush 1998),

which resulted in the requirement for people to carry identity documents wherever they went, and for black South Africans passbooks laws were enforced (Peberdy and Crush 1998). Over the years, many amendments were made to the 1913, 1930 and 1937 Acts to consolidate government control of immigration. These included the 1972 Admission of Persons to the Republic Regulations Act, the Aliens Amendment Act of 1978 and the Aliens and Immigration Laws Amendment Act of 1984, which, like other amendments, enabled the state to carefully follow who entered South Africa and the nature of their employment (Peberdy and Crush 1998; Wa Kabwe-Segatti 2006).

Another important amendment was the Temporary Removal of Restrictions on Economic Activity (Act 87 of 1986). On the strength of this Act, non-whites were now eligible for temporary and permanent residence permits. The 1986 Act was followed in 1991 by the Aliens Control Act 96 (Act 96 of 1991). The Aliens Control Act provided further relaxation of the control of migrant labour into South Africa, but racist provisions were still in force (Peberdy 1998), such that the rights of immigrants, especially the black foreign nationals, were not protected (Peberdy 1998; Peberdy and Crush 1998; Crush and McDonald 2001).

What is clear is that the rights of immigrants, especially those considered undesirable by the current political regime were not respected. However, it must be emphasised that all black immigrants were treated in the same way before 1994. Black South Africans were treated as migrants and expected to go back to their homes in the then 'black' homelands once they had outlived the labour service needs in 'white' South Africa. Black workers from the rest of Africa were not treated any differently (Peberdy and Crush 1998). The following section will explore the immigration realities after 1994. This will assist in locating the origins and genesis of hostility to the black African immigrants by South African citizenry because, as Peberdy and Crush (1998) argue, South Africa's immigration regulation is anchored in its history.

### **3.2.3 Immigration trajectories after 1994**

Post-apartheid South Africa's immigration regime reflected apartheid immigration controls until the Immigration Act of 2002 (Act 13 of 2002) (Crush et al. 2006) was passed. There was a belief that a deliberate policy to encourage immigration and the



import of labour would threaten the interests of the new dispensation (Crush and McDonald 2001; Crush et al. 2006). Immigration policy changes appear to suggest this thinking (Peberdy and Crush 1998).

A clear example is the Aliens Control Amendment Act of 1995 (Act 76 of 1995), which generally retained restrictionist apartheid policies – for example substitution of Section 44 of Act 96 of 1991, as amended by Section 9 of Act 3 of 1993 (Act 76 of 1995). The same argument can be made about the amendment of Section 10 of Act 96 of 1991, as amended by Section 9 of Act 3 of 1993 (Act 76 of 1995), which seem to have been stringent. This is not very different to the apartheid years when, as noted by Peberdy (1998), the Immigration Boards and officials had power to allow or deny potential immigrants entry into South Africa. Consequently, this generally implies that in the 1990s, the Aliens Control Act of 1991 (Act 96 of 1991) guided immigration policy (Peberdy and Crush 1998), suggesting that the fundamental problems of discrimination against foreign nationals remained (Schulze 2002) as a result of various impediments to the legal recognition and encouragement for the presence of immigrants in South Africa.

The major Immigration Act which replaced the Aliens Control Act of 1991 (Act 96 of 1991) was the Immigration Act of 2002 (Act 13 of 2002). This Immigration Act reads differently from Act 96 of 1991 and its amendment (Act 76 of 1995) by its use of the word ‘foreigner’ in place of ‘alien’, as categorically stated in its preamble; ‘In providing for the regulation of admission of foreigners to, their residence in, and their departure from the Republic and for matters connected therewith, the Immigration Act aims at setting in place a new system of immigration control which ensures that...’ (Act 13 of 2002:3). This seems to repeal the provisions of the Aliens Control Act of 1991.

The Immigration Act of 2002 (Act 13 of 2002, Sections 26 and 27) also claims to facilitate and simplify the granting of permits, as well as encouraging skilled foreign people to immigrate to South Africa. In addition the Immigration Act of 2002 – as amended by Immigration Act of 2004 (Act 19 of 2004), which came into operation in July 2005 – states that ‘xenophobia is prevented and countered both within Government and civil society, a human rights based culture of enforcement is

promoted, civil society is educated on the rights of foreigners and refugees' (Act 19 of 2004:4). Thus, it is necessary to comment on the Immigration policy directions after 2005.

A review of Immigration Acts and Amendment Bills between 2007 and 2014 generally suggest that the South African state, while making the commitment to the efficient processing of permits to foreigners, seems at the same time to be tightening conditions on the same. It is relevant at this stage to focus on these Immigration Acts and Amendment Bills. The Immigration Amendment Act of 2007 (Act 3 of 2007) was enacted to amend the Immigration Act of 2002 (Act 13 of 2002) as amended by Immigration Amendment Act, 2004 (Act 19 of 2004), 'so as to define certain words and to substitute a definition, to provide for the clarification and revision of procedures and permits with regard to admission to, residence in and departure from the Republic, to effect certain technical correctness' (Act 3 of 2007:2). Generally, this Immigration Act (Act 3, of 2007), outlines several amendments, but what seems to emerge is the desire to tighten the admission of foreigners into South Africa. For example, amendment of Section 27 of Act 13 of 2002, as substituted by Section 28 of Act 19 of 2004, states that the application for permits must fall 'within yearly limits of available permits prescribed for each sector of industry' (Act 3 of 2007:6). What is implied here is the desire of the South African government through the immigration procedure to limit the entry of foreigners into South Africa.

There have been several Immigration Amendment Bills, but this thesis will comment on the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010 (Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010), which was approved in March 2011, as it contains several amendments raised in the Immigration Act of 2007 (Act 3 of 2007). The Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010 (Amendment Bill of 2010) clearly states the introduction of and differences between different types of temporary visas and permanent residence permits. The preamble of the Amendment Bill of 2010 states the commitment to expeditiously process permits. It should be mentioned that the provisions of the Amendment Bill of 2010 generally encourage legal immigration to South Africa. However, it also tends to make the standards for qualification for foreigners' entry into South Africa more stringent and there also seems to be an attempt to clamp down on illegal immigrants and to protect South Africa from immigration influxes (The Star, 3 May 2011:10).

Thus, one can detect a desire from the Immigration Act of 2007 (Act 3 of 2007) and in the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010 to tighten control of entry into South Africa.

In fact, the Immigration Amendment Act of 2011 (Act 13 of 2011), like its 2007 predecessor, actually contains the provisions of the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010. The Immigration Amendment Act of 2011 (Act 13 of 2011) describes in detail the requirements and provisions under which different types of temporary residence visas may be issued. For example, amendments of Section 19 of Act 13 of 2002 as amended by Section 21 of Act 19 of 2004 and Section 6 of Act 3 of 2007 (Act 3 of 2011:16) details the conditions of a general work visa and that of a critical skills work visa. It appears as though the conditions for these visas are stringent; for example, the prescribed requirement for a critical skills visa may be 'determined to be critical for the Republic from time to time by the Minister by notice in the Gazette'(Act 3 of 2011:16). This implies that it is not a given that foreigners will be granted this visa, because the ultimate arbiter is the Minister. It is arguable that this gives room to actually 'deny' a foreigner's entry into South Africa. The same argument can be made about the conditions for a corporate visa, as detailed in Act 3 of 2011:16-17. It is tempting to make a comparison of this discussion with the apartheid immigration regime, which as Peberdy (1998), Peberdy and Crush (1998) and Peberdy (2009) note, gave so much power to the Ministers of Home Affairs, the Immigration Board and Immigration officials to grant or deny potential immigrants entry into South Africa.

Furthermore, Immigration Regulations (2014) came into effect on the 26 of May 2014. These were built on the foundations of the Immigration Act of 2007 (Act 3 of 2007), the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010 (Amendment Bill of 2010), which was a precursor to the Immigration Amendment Act of 2011 (Act 13 of 2011). The argument was made in this section that these have generally promoted high standards for the admission of foreigners to South Africa. Thus, it is possible to further argue that the Immigration Regulations 2014 could not be any better than the foundations on which they rest. In fact, the proclamations on pages three and five of the Immigration Regulations 2014 declare that the commencement of Act 3 of 2007 and Act 13 of 2011 respectively, are in effect those regulations.

For example, the requirements for a work visa include 'a written undertaking by the employer, accepting responsibility for the costs related to the deportation of the applicant and his or her dependent family members, should it become necessary'. In addition and among other things, 'a certificate from the Department of Labour' is required confirming the relevance of the skills and that there is no South African citizen or permanent resident to fill the job (Immigration Regulations 2014:26). Such a requirement may be onerous on the part of the employer and some employers may be unwilling to enter into such an undertaking. The result is that the foreigner will find it difficult to apply for such a visa. It appears as though, far from making immigration easy, it may be difficult. On this basis, it is possible to argue that the South African state is making admission of foreigners into the country difficult and for some, relatively impossible.

In addition, the requirements for a business visa are equally stringent, and documents such as 'a certificate issued by a chartered accountant registered with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants or a professional accountant registered with the South African Institute of Professional Accountants' (Immigration Regulations 2014:23) are needed. Such a certificate should state the certain 'amount of money in cash to be invested in the Republic' and 'at least an amount in cash and a capital contribution as determined from time to time by the Minister, after consultation with the Minister of Trade and Industry by notice in the Gazette'.

It appears as though the Immigration Regulations (Immigration Regulations 2014) have set the standards of visas too high. For instance, small businesses could be excluded by the requirements of certain amounts of money in cash – amounts of which are not specified, leaving room for manipulation; an instrument of inclusion or exclusion – as well as a certificate from a registered accountant. For those who are in the country already and also those intending to immigrate, how easily would they access the services of South African registered accountants? Although on paper it appears well organised to process a business visa, in practice many foreign small business owners and potential ones may face hurdles relating to cash requirements and certification from South African registered accountants.

This overview of South Africa's immigration trajectory after 1994 shows that soon after 1994, there was reluctance to accept immigrants into South Africa, based on

the provisions of the Aliens Control Amendment Act, 1995 (Act 76 of 1995). However, the government soon realised the actual and potential roles that immigrants could play in South Africa. To this end, the government then generally encouraged the immigration of foreign nationals into South Africa through successive Immigration Acts and Amendments, Bills and Regulations, such as the Immigration Act 13 of 2002, (Act 13 of 2002) as amended by Immigration Act of 2004, (Act 19 of 2004), Immigration Act of 2007 (Act 3 of 2007), the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010 (Amendment Bill of 2010), Immigration Amendment Act of 2011 (Act 13 of 2011) and Immigration Regulations 2014. It is the opinion of the researcher that the unwritten preoccupation in all these statutes is the desire to limit the entry of foreigners into South Africa. Even though the preambles to all these documents declare the good intentions of managing immigration and processing visas expeditiously, from the arguments made in this section, it seems as though it would be very difficult for foreigners to be admitted to South Africa.

This discussion suggests that between 1994 and 2002, the South African government was reluctant to encourage immigration into the Republic, but the pressure of emigration somehow 'forced' the government to welcome immigrants who could replace those who emigrated (Crush et al. 2006). This could have motivated the Immigration Act of 2002 (Act 13 of 2002, Sections 26 and 27) as amended by Immigration Act of 2004, (Act 19 of 2004), so that between 2002 and 2007, there was a generally 'friendly' immigration regime.

However, as Peberdy (2009) observes and argues, the immigration policy changes benefitted the highly skilled at the expense of those without the skills. From 2007, as evidenced by the successive Immigration Acts, the Amendment Bill of 2010 and culminating in the Immigration Regulations of 2014, the South African government has gone back to tightening the requirements for entry into the country and this makes the immigration regime selective; only those deemed beneficial to the country may be admitted. One is reminded of the forceful arguments by Peberdy (1998), Peberdy and Crush (1998) and Peberdy (2009) that during the apartheid years immigrants were selected on the basis of racism, but the argument made in this section seems to suggest that from about 2007, the new 'racism' is how useful immigrants are to the South African state. If they are not, they will find the visa

requirements nearly impossible to meet, which will make them become officially undocumented, illegal and undesirable because South Africa continues to be an attractive destination of choice – there seems to be no better alternative on the African continent.

A final remark on Sections 3.2 to 3.2.3 is that before 1994 there was the de-ethnification (Baumann 2010) of citizenship for African immigrants among black communities during the liberation struggle and the selective racist ethnification (Baumann 2010) of white immigrants, which led to black South Africans becoming foreign natives and whites becoming native foreigners (Neocosmos 2006). After 1994, the condition of citizenship was indigeneity in South Africa (Neocosmos 2006, 2008). Perhaps this anxiety to limit the entry of foreigners into South Africa is a microcosm of a larger dynamic of discrimination, exclusion and perhaps xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa.

Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 in Chapter 2 suggest that this negativity against foreigners is more directed against the African immigrants. The following section takes up that discussion by grappling with the question of how discrimination and xenophobia as a state construct materialise against African immigrants. In Section 1.3, Chapter 1, among others, two promises were made. The first was that this work would advocate for Immigration policy changes towards the granting of business permits to small traders and the second was the promotion of inclusivity of all people in this age of globalisation. Thus, the review of immigration policy trends and debates was intended to provide a point of discussion after the data had been collected and analysed regarding the experiences of African immigrant traders relating to business permits and restrictionist immigration laws. Thus, this review provides that background, and it will be integrated with the results of this study.

### **3.3 POST-1994 IMMIGRANT INFLUX AND THE XENOPHOBIA DISCOURSE**

Sections 1.2 of Chapter 1 and 2.2.2 of Chapter 2 suggest that, despite the relatively stringent immigration laws, as discussed in Section 3.2.3 of Chapter 3, people have continued to migrate to and immigrate into South Africa. Over and above immigrants from the African countries, there were significant numbers of immigrants from other regions of the world; for example, 228314 from Europe, 40886 from Asia, 9152 from North America, 12798 from Central and South America and 4429 from Australia and

New Zealand (Statistics South Africa 2003). On the basis of this, 2% of the population (Statistics South Africa 2003) were immigrants.

Furthermore, the number of immigrants in South Africa had significantly increased, based on the 2011 census; for example, 3.2% of the population (5650462) of the Western Cape, 0.9% of the population (6437587) of the Eastern Cape, 0.9% of the population (1125306) of the Northern Cape, 1,9 % of the population (2663080) of the Free State, 1.1% of the population (10113978) of KwaZulu Natal, 3.5% of the population (3439700) of the North West, 7.1% of the population (11952392) of Gauteng, 2.6% of the population (3983570) of Mpumalanga and 2.6% of the population (5322134) of Limpopo were not South African citizens (Statistics South Africa 2012). Given that there are many foreigners including those from outside Africa, how is discrimination and xenophobia against African immigrants a construct of the state? Answering this question links with and takes up the discussion in Sections 1.7 of Chapter 1 and Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 of Chapter 2 that African immigrants seem to be the targets of anti-immigrant rhetoric.

### **3.3.1 Discrimination and xenophobia: a construct of the state**

Neocosmos (2006:83) expresses the view that in post-apartheid South Africa, the state has explained 'citizenship and belonging in terms of indigeneity, whereas the history of immigration and migrant labour has not been acknowledged and, most importantly, it is the state institutions and personnel that fuel xenophobic tendencies.' Mamdani (1996) posits that the state has catalysed a discourse of exceptionalism based on the reasoning that South Africa is an exception on the African continent due to its industrial development, which makes the rest of the continent appear backward, rural and economically unstable, among other negatives applicable to some other African countries. There is the perception that 'Africa is in chaos and South Africa represents a haven of freedom, peace and prosperity for the continent's destitute masses' (Crush and Williams 2001:1). Peberdy (2009) argues that:

'New official discourse around immigration has developed and been translated into active attempts to control and discourage documented and undocumented migration. In doing so, the state has taken a draconian approach to border and heartland policing that has involved abuse of the rights of migrants and

immigrants. Africans appear to have borne the brunt of restrictive measures' (Peberdy 2009:139).

Based on the opening arguments to this section by Mamdani (1996), Crush and Williams (2001); Neocosmos (2006) and Peberdy (2009), a contention can be made that it appears as though the immigration problem in contemporary South Africa is the African immigrants. The portrayal and positioning of first the African countries, as argued by Mamdani (1998), makes these countries look negative. Secondly, and arising from the first point, African immigrants who are produced by these poor countries already carry a negative label; this could explain attempts to restrict their immigration to South Africa as posited by Peberdy (2009). Furthermore, the denial of the history of migration and immigration (Neocosmos 2006) by the South African state could have led to, firstly, 'the creation of an imagined community of all South Africans based on memory and citizenship... the state indicate a belief in bounded identity: one where South Africans, however diverse, are identified by their citizenship, history, relationship to the state and entitlements' (Peberdy 2009:167). Secondly, the imagined community suggests that African immigrants are not only undesirables, but that the South African state should disassociate itself from them as much as possible, perhaps due to the fact that:

'black Africans from outside South African borders have become threatening because also for the first time, they can become part of the nation (legally or otherwise) and therefore can be seen to have the potential to deprive entitled citizens of their hard won rights and access to state resources that they are entitled to as members of the nation. Now that South Africa's national vision encompasses all South Africans, it seems that Africans from the rest of the continent can threaten the nation and its resources. As the South African state has moved to construct a diverse, but inclusive nation, its immigration anxieties have become similarly inclusive. South Africa's new national identity as constructed by the state while supposedly African, is actually firmly South African' (Peberdy 2009:168).

Similarly, Gordon (2011:51) argues that 'immigration legislation effectively portrays immigrants, especially immigrants from African countries, as a threat to the economic and social goals of the post-apartheid state', a view shared by Joseph (2011). It is arguable that this has provided grounds for xenophobia, based on the



view that the state sees African immigrants as 'contaminators of the nation' (Peberdy 2009:158) and 'both competitors and consumers for scarce resources and opportunities' (Gordon 2011:47). Hence, 'black foreign nationals from Africa are not subject to the normal protections of constitutional democracy and human rights obligations. Instead, migrants are treated as an exception and as such relegated to a space outside the workings of the law' (Gordon 2011:45).

The result of this is that, 'by envisioning South Africa as being threatened by parasitical foreigners, the authorities are able to invoke notions of a state of siege' (Gordon 2011:55) which necessitates a state of exception (Agamben 1998). The researcher could argue that this could be the reason why African immigrants must not be part of the imagined community. This has resulted in what Appadurai (1996) refers to as the construction of second classness and third classness and the need to murder or expel those who do not belong. Consequently, 'immigration, the foreign migrant labour system and support for it have been viewed by the state as being undemocratic due to the discourse which elevated true democracy to the exclusion of foreigners from belonging to South Africa and reducing citizenship rights to their indigenous status' (Neocosmos 2006:83). It could be argued that xenophobia can become a construct of the state when the state defines 'South Africans as who they are, the state has clearly defined who South Africans are not and so who does not belong to the nation' (Peberdy 2009:181). In fact, 'seemingly contradictory, the state's commitment to building its relationship with the rest of Africa, African migrants and immigrants, both documented and undocumented, seems to be the target of those new immigration anxieties' (Perberdy 2009:178).

In addition, Neocosmos (2006) has shown that debates around issues of immigration have taken place within state institutions and among politicians blaming immigrants for social problems afflicting South Africa. An example in support of this statement is provided by researchers Landau (2005, 2007) and Landau and Freemantle (2010): who implied that the former Minister of Home Affairs, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, spread xenophobic discourse to the Department of Home Affairs during his term of office. Landau and Freemantle (2010) continue this line of argument by suggesting that politicians in the African National Congress (ANC) and opposition political parties alike also spread a xenophobic discourse.

In this regard, Neocosmos (2006) argues that state institutions have provided conditions for a hegemonic discourse on xenophobia because the state conceived the idea of *Fortress South Africa* – that South Africa was to be defended against a flood of immigrants and barbarians entering the country. Fortress South Africa is the symbolic tightening of all ports of entry into the country and at the same time protecting the South African population from the invading army of immigrants. Indeed Pain, (2009 cited in Staeheli 2010:394) notes that the intensification of borders and boundaries is a larger dynamic of exclusion and othering, which is reinforced through the discourses of fear.

Thus, the South African state could have directly or indirectly assisted in encouraging xenophobia by promoting an exclusively South African identity. This has materialised in many ways; for example, the explanation by Landau (2005:338) that statements made by civil servants and politicians, such as the former Minister of Home affairs, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, 'represent official endorsement or tacit acceptance' of any means including 'parallel-extra-legal systems for policing foreigners' and efforts that can be taken to rid South Africa of immigrants. This may even include hostility and xenophobic attacks.

In addition, Comaroff and Comaroff (2001:645) contend that the state has 'intentionally and/or unintentionally contributed to the mood of xenophobia' by allowing security agents to attack foreign nationals, normally in the form of police raids on areas where immigrants stay or on their businesses, even though the 'state's tacit approval and support of xenophobia coexists with its support for the principles of democracy, human rights, African humanity' and the credo of neo-liberalism. Therefore, by the state's acceptance and support of the estrangement of foreign nationals through state agencies, the state has contributed to and nurtured xenophobia and is guilty of the same *ipso facto*. Hence, Neocosmos (2008) forcefully argues that:

'Government departments, parliamentarians, the police, the Lindela detention centre and the law itself have all been reinforcing a one-way message since the 1990s. We are being invaded by illegal immigrants, who are a threat to national stability, the RDP, development, our social services and the very fabric of our society. African immigrants are fair game for those with power (police, state bureaucrats, and employees at Lindela)... The police are particularly notorious,

using their powers to avoid intervening to help foreign migrants when attacked by criminals, by raiding and beating up migrants in their sanctuaries by tearing up official documents. Although state institutions have never condoned violence against migrants and have regularly condemned it, they have provided an environment wherein such xenophobic violence has effectively been legitimized by the state' (Neocosmos (2008:588).

This quotation shows that in many ways the South African state might have directly or indirectly constructed a xenophobic discourse. Based on the literature, the researcher could argue that perhaps South Africans who beat up and sometimes kill immigrants may be doing so under the assumption that they are protecting South Africa from foreign invaders. Indeed the argument that the South African state has constructed a discourse of xenophobia is adamantly advanced by Neocosmos (2006), who notes that during liberation there was a discourse of inclusivity; citizenship was not based on indigeneity, but on popular democratic activity. This is why there was no hostility and xenophobia against black African foreign nationals. After 1994 the state conceived citizenship and rights in terms of descent and indigeneity, the result of which is that black African foreign nationals have become non-indigenous. The effect of this is that the state has 'denied the history of immigration and migrant labour and where it is evident it has been seen as a feature of apartheid which deserves interpellation' (Neocosmos 2006:83).

In this vein, the South African government is directing its immigration policy towards thwarting 'threats to national security and stability' (Landau 2012:14) as evidenced by the ANC's Peace and Stability policy discussion document. In fact:

'there is no evidence in the ANC's policy document – or really anywhere else for that matter – that immigration presents much of a hazard, but that has done little to stop the government from following the US, Australia and the EU's much derided populist example. Wasting no time for public debate or legislative approval of its proposed policy, the government has already begun closing refugee reception offices; tightening entry requirements for refugees and others; placing limitations on foreign owned businesses; and expensively deporting those without documents. While the ANC has spuriously deduced that immigration presents a major security threat, it all but ignores the xenophobia that killed more than 60 people in May 2008 and almost a hundred people a year since then. Nowhere does the Peace and Stability document make mention of xenophobia or

the need to address the deep-seated hostility that festers in the body politic and within many politicians. Instead the ANC is proposing provisions that will limit foreign ownership of spaza shops and effectively detain immigrants in purpose-built camps near the border' (Landau 2012:14).

Thus, even though Neocosmos (2006) argues that the South African state has constructed xenophobia by reducing citizenship rights to indigeneity, Peberdy (2009) has taken the debate up and suggested that the South African state has engendered xenophobia by promoting an exclusively South African identity through immigration rhetoric and policy. For Comaroff and Comaroff (2001), Landau (2005, 2006, 2007) and Gordon (2011), the anxieties expressed through immigration policing within South Africa have portrayed a state under attack. It appears that there has been a promotion of indigeneity or the reconfiguration of the South African identity and the intensification of immigration policing, the state has promoted xenophobia by defining those who are not South African – especially African immigrants – and classifying them as a threat.

Based on this discussion, it may be logical to link the attacks on African immigrants to the xenophobia discourse. For example, as recently as May/June 2011 through to September 2013, South Africans attacked foreigners. Foreign business owners in Reiger Park (Ekurhuleni) and other townships around Johannesburg were attacked by South Africans telling them that they must go back to their own countries (Ivier 2013a; *The Star*, 19 May 2011:16). In some cases Somali business owners were attacked by South Africans in a xenophobic rage in the Ramaphosa informal settlement in Gauteng province (*The Star*, 2 June 2011:6). Another example is that of a Congolese man who 'was attacked by a black South African thief' while other South Africans looked on and did not rescue the man. After the attack, the South Africans told him that they did not help because he was 'crying in English. If you were crying in Zulu, we would have helped you'. The police told the man that 'you are not our brother, we can't help you' (Harris 2002 cited in Kalule-Sabiti et al. 2012:145).

In another event, four Somali shops were burnt down. The South Africans told them to go back to Somalia, and the victims said they could not go back to their war-torn country, at least not for now (Pillai 2011). Also, in Johannesburg, Somalis suffer daily harassment, especially from the police (*The Star*, 27 March 2012). The police also

generally harass black African immigrants (*The Zimbabwean*, 1 May 2011:5). Immigrant shop owners continue to be harassed (*The Star*, 24 May 2012:14) and in March 2013, shops owned by Somalis and others were looted in Delmas, Mpumalanga (Brook 2013) and in other parts of the country during September 2013 (Ivier 2013c).

A Rwandan refugee had to pay a 'protection fee' for three years to South Africans. This began when four South African men first robbed him of his three hundred rand, because they accused him of having too much money because he was a *kwerekwere*. When he reported this attack to the police, 'they didn't ask me questions. They just took my refugee papers and tore them up. They arrested me saying that I'm illegal in the country, that I don't have a paper. They put me in jail for the weekend. They told my friends to bring money so that I can be freed'. Every month for up to three years, the four men who had robbed him demanded money from this Rwandan refugee (Harris 2002 cited in Kalule-Sabiti et al. 2012:146).

There are also reports that a 'cauldron of xenophobia is again boiling', although it is not in the same proportions as the May 2008 attacks (*The Star*, 22 May 2013:4), manifesting in xenophobic attacks against immigrants, especially those who own businesses, and also against other African immigrants (Ivier 2013b, Ivier 2013c). From a geographer's point of view, this discussion suggests that the targeting of African immigrants is spatial, economic and Africanised. It is spatial because the areas targeted are those where there are of African immigrants; it is economic because the people who are suspected of making more money ahead of South African nationals are attacked, as evidenced by the attacks on African-owned trading shops as well as the most recent and frequent attacks on Somali-owned shops. These attacks are Africanised because it is predominantly immigrants from African countries who are victims and who suffer the accusation that they are a problem in South Africa. This is illustrated by the latest example in which, in 2012 and 2013, the Limpopo government together with the provincial Department of Home Affairs only closed down informal businesses belonging to Ethiopian and Somali asylum seekers in a crackdown called Operation Hardstick (*The New Age*, 30 September 2014:10). However, the lawyers for Human Rights challenged the unlawful closure of these African immigrant traders' businesses in Limpopo. The Supreme Court of Appeal

ruled in favour of the Lawyers for Human Rights and 'made it clear that the attitude of the police and provincial Department of Home Affairs was unacceptable and contrary to the constitutional values' (*The New Age*, 30 September 2014:10). This example shows the targeting of African immigrants by government departments and it may not be a flawed argument to suggest that this is an example of how the state has constructed and implemented the discourse of xenophobia against African immigrants.

African immigrants are actually or symbolically coded as the unwanted immigrants. As shown in this example, if the Supreme Court of Appeal had not intervened, the Ethiopian and Somali traders were actually going to become destitute due to the actions of government departments. This coding and assignation (Staehele 2010) of African immigrants as the unwanted people provides a site for discrimination. Therefore, when South Africans attack foreigners, it can be argued that they think they are doing so in the active service of their country which tacitly supports their actions. Supposing that the Supreme Court of Appeal had not intervened in favour of the Ethiopian and Somali traders in Limpopo, they would have been vulnerable and open to attack by ordinary people. This is because the government departments had given a hint by closing down their businesses, suggesting they were not wanted in South Africa. The general population could not have been wrong in attacking them, as they would be complementing the provincial government of Limpopo and Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

A related and recent example is that of the arrest and ill-treatment of African immigrants by the DHA and the South African Police Service (SAPS). African immigrants suspected of being illegal were arrested and detained for months at the Benoni police station. This was against the law, which states that immigrants cannot be detained for more than 48 hours without being charged or deported (Ivier 2014). An HIV-positive Zimbabwean immigrant was among those African immigrants who have been detained at the Benoni police station for months, and whose relatives have been turned away each time they brought his medication (*The New Age* 16 October 2014:2). In this incident, the SAPS stated that they had been given the green light by the DHA to arrest and detain the suspected illegal immigrants because the Lindela deportation centre was full to capacity, but the DHA denied such an

allegation (Ivier 2014). In this case, what is clear is that African immigrants were the target of harassment, as the law was suspended just to deal with their alleged illegality in the country. This can be interpreted as xenophobic, especially if it is carried out by government departments.

From a critical realist perspective, the construction of xenophobia by the state is out of touch with reality in terms of failing to consider, or indeed neglecting the contributions that African immigrants make. A reconfigured claim to citizenship and rights is the *sine quo non* for full membership in the South African state, which has tacitly or otherwise supported this position. The relevance of this section to this thesis is that, firstly, it carries forward the discussion of the case of African immigrants (Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 of Chapter 2) and secondly, it illustrates the conceptualisation of African immigrants as the threatening other. When they do migrate or immigrate to South Africa, whether they are legal or not, are not conceived and portrayed as part of the South African state. This research thus seeks to unpack whether the declaration of the African immigrant as the threatening other is correct. The question of the role of the media in the portrayal of African immigrants as the threatening other is important and is considered next.

### **3.3.2 The media construction of the African immigrants in South Africa.**

Erjavec (2003) has shown how the media has been used to construct negative images of immigrants or create immigrants out of people who in the past had been neighbours in Slovenia. In the same context, Kibreab (1999) comments that the former victims of apartheid have become victimisers of the vulnerable immigrants who come to South Africa, fleeing economic and political afflictions in their own countries. Comaroff and Comaroff (2001:646) amplify this point by observing that the hostility against immigrants is occurring among South Africans who are familiar with exile and in the past lived in relative peace with the immigrants. Focusing on Slovenia, Erjavec (2003) explored how the media constructed a discourse of xenophobia through the use of cyclical moral panics. The media promoted fear and distrust and mobilised Slovenia to reach a stage where fear took over and the feeling of 'we cannot live with them anymore' took hold (Vasic 1993:8 cited by Erjavec 2003:83). Based on the founding work on moral panics by Cohen (1972), the analysis by Erjavec (2003:83-87) shows that there are four ways in which the media

constructs a negative image of immigrants. The first involves exaggerating the seriousness of immigration; the second is using melodramatic words to describe immigration; the third is the prediction that there will be even more consequences; and the fourth is stripping immigrants of their favourable characteristics through symbolisation of immigrants as folk devils.

Therefore, when such a setting is created by the media, xenophobia and hostility become legitimate public discourses, which the media propagates in the name of the nation 'carrying the will of the nation' (Erjavec 2003:85), to which the police and all arms of government respond with some responsibility of interpellating those who do not belong. The above analysis by Erjavec (2003) is relevant in this study, because it will be used to show the role of the media in the construction of the African immigrants leading to xenophobia against them in South Africa. Perhaps, intentionally or unintentionally, the media in South Africa has created moral panics about African immigrants. This is what the literature review now focuses on by analysing media construction of hostility and xenophobia against African immigrants, according to Erjavec's (2003) conceptual framework.

The first aspect of the media and the construction of xenophobia is the exaggeration of the seriousness of the threat of immigrants. Many scholars have shown that the South African media has only estimated the figure of immigrants, whether legal or illegal, but the emphasis is on the number of people illegally in South Africa to be over five million. Although, in reality the figure is lower than five million, Sinclair (1998) notes that estimate do vary between five and eight million. Crush and Tevera (2010:4) state that 'the media makes up numbers', which 'often highly exaggerated for alarmist effect, acquire a life of their own once they enter the public realm'. These numbers give the impression that there are more foreign nationals in South Africa, and for this reason there is justification for taking extreme measures to get rid of them before they overwhelm the South African population. It can therefore be argued that when the media, particularly the printed word, sustains the view that there are too many immigrants in South Africa, feelings of hostility and xenophobia are generated, because, if the numbers are excessive, it suggests that immigration should be stopped or at least limited. The fact that areas with large African immigrant populations are targeted with so called anti-crime operations (Peberdy 2002a) could explain this anxiety.



The second aspect of media influence is the use of melodramatic and sensational words. The South African media uses words and the language of war and natural disasters (Crush 2000; McDonald 2000; Mawadza and Crush 2010). This gives the impression that South Africa is under attack or invasion (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Landau 2005). Employing the language of war or natural disaster such as flooding, invasion, influx (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Landau 2005; Mawadza and Crush 2010) creates a moral panic which solicits response from the South African population, because the African immigrant presents a problem – the threatening other which must be confronted. Hence, a comment still relevant today but made over a decade ago by Crush (2000:12) that 'unfortunately, South Africa's long history of cross-border migrations seems to have faded from public view and myopia is everywhere evident, particularly in the more popular media with historical attention deficit', is telling of how the media has sensationalised and overdramatised the invasion of South Africa by immigrants, especially from African countries.

Linked to this aspect is the third aspect of media, which highlights the perception that, if the immigration of foreign nationals into South Africa is not restricted, the consequences will be even worse than at the present, (*Sunday Times* article on 2 January 2011). The fourth role of media is symbolisation of immigrants (Cohen 1972; Erjavec 2003). In South Africa, African immigrants are a personification of all bad things. The following examples are based on studies of the media in South Africa by the respective scholars. Muzondidya, (2010) notes that the *Daily Sun* publication in 2000 claimed that Zimbabweans committed 70% of the housebreaking offences in Gauteng. Landau (2005, 2009, 2010) observes that African foreign nationals are accused of a host of social ills that affect South Africa, such as crime, drugs, promiscuity and many more other social pathologies. In the discussion of the media construction of African immigrants, two issues related to xenophobia arise: the first is how the media fails to be objective and the second is how the media exonerates the South African population from xenophobia. Regarding the first point, it needs to be pointed out that:

'The media is distinctly uncomfortable with the reality that xenophobia is pervasive and deep rooted phenomenon in South Africa. The reason is not hard to see. It is impossible to answer the question "Why are South Africans xenophobic" without addressing the issue of the culpability of the media. That the

media are not simply responding to events but actively South African popular opinion on migration is incontrovertible' (Mawadza and Crush 2010:372).

This suggests that the media only report on how bad immigration is, especially that of African immigrants as suggested in this section. As a result, the role of the media in nurturing xenophobia remains strong, manages to construct African immigrants in a bad light and avoids grappling with the issue of xenophobia. This introduces the second point, namely, that the media tends to blame xenophobia on criminals and thus absolves the South African population. For example, the editions of *Sowetan* (14, July 2010) and *Sowetan* (25 May 2011) suggest that there is no xenophobia in South Africa, but acts of criminals. The media is in a state of denial of the existence of xenophobia. This study considers this to be problematic as the issue of xenophobia is reduced to random cases of attacks on African immigrants and not a socially embedded angst amongst the South African citizenry, if not a construct of the state as argued in Section 3.2.1 or indeed a direct result of media reporting.

If the media implies that there is no xenophobia, the issue and problem then becomes that of African immigrants coming to South Africa. Unfortunately, they become victims of indiscriminate criminals; otherwise there is no problem, except that South Africa must deal with a flood of African immigrants who complain after they have been attacked by criminal elements. In the final analysis, it can be argued that the media seems to suggest that African immigrants are in the wrong place and that they should not be in South Africa in the first place. Not only is their presence a problem (as suggested by the manner in which they are portrayed as discussed in this section), but also that they are victims of criminal activities should not be an issue, as the rest of the South African population are also at risk because of the numbers of African immigrants. Thus, it is arguable that from the point of view of the media, dealing with the invasion by African immigrants is the issue and not xenophobia. Overall, the media construction of African immigrants suggests a research gap. It appears as though the media largely projects a negative view and there seems to be no propagation of some positives that African immigrants contribute, and this confirmation appears to sustain the discussion raised in Section 2.3 of Chapter 2. The research occupies this space by investigating whether African immigrants are absolutely negative – the threatening other. Thus, a deconstructionist and critical realist stance requires an examination of what is not said by the people

involved, namely, the African immigrants themselves. Hence, there is a need to introduce in detail the issue of African immigrant traders within the framework of urban informality.

### **3.4 URBAN INFORMALITY AND AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS**

As an introduction to a discussion of the phenomenon of African immigrant traders, it is important to provide a brief background to the issue of urban informality and how it is perceived in African cities in general; the South African ones specifically. This is considered vital because the context in Section 2.2.3 of Chapter 2 suggests that African immigrant traders may be informal. Thus, a brief overview of urban informality is intended to highlight the view that the occurrence of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city is part of urban informality. In addition, the way that urban informality is perceived and the role it plays in social and economic development should assist the analysis of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. Thus, questions of whether the informal sector in South Africa is negatively regarded in general, or whether it is the informal economic activities by foreigners, or indeed those of African immigrants that is noteworthy, as this will provide insights into the deconstruction of African immigrants as the threatening other.

There are a number of perspectives that have been advanced to explain urban informality and these include the dualistic, structuralist and legalistic perspectives. The dualistic perspective views informality as backward and separate from the formal economy and because it is separate from the formal economy, this informality would soon be phased out (Geertz 1963). This perspective acknowledges the importance of the economic and developmental role played by the urban informality (Williams 2010). The structuralist perspective regards urban informality as a product of economic crisis or the informalisation of the formal economy (Portes et al. 1989). The legalistic perspective regards urban informality as a product of the activities of people who choose to escape the stringent formal regulation of the formal economy (Gumbo and Gyser 2011). These perspectives are relevant because they help this thesis to briefly debate how urban informality is regarded in African and South African cities. This is important in order to locate the South African case of African immigrant traders, since they are an integral part of urban informality.

Kamete (2013:17) argues that many regulatory regimes in African cities regard urban informality as a problem, a 'spatial disorder' or 'spatialised deviance', which explains the obsession by governments to annihilate urban informality in order to preserve urban modernity. In Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, urban informality is not regarded as an integral part of the urbanisation process, but rather something ugly that must be destroyed or at least made to conform to the modern Western type of city (Kamete 2013), an approach and assumption which makes formality superior than informality. This forces urban informality to operate outside the law (Lindell 2010). It appears that regulatory regimes in African cities is guided and influenced by the dualist framework of looking at urban informality as a phenomenon that must be eliminated, rather than an integral part of urban economic systems.

In fact, in South Africa, urban informality is regarded as the second economy (Aliber et al. 2006). Since this is the case, this research asks of the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city: Are they the only traders harassed or are all immigrants harassed? Is the informality by South Africans tolerated? More answers to these questions should emerge from the in-depth interviews and an analysis of these questions should assist the research in the deconstruction of the African immigrants as the threatening other. However, it is worth mentioning at this stage that following the trends of violence against immigrants, especially traders as reported in the electronic and print media from about 2011 to 2013 (Section 3.3.1 in this chapter), has shown that other immigrants like Pakistanis were also attacked (Ivier 2013a; *The Star*, 19 May 2011:16). However, the same discussion firmly suggests that it is predominantly African immigrant traders who were harassed and suffered the most in the xenophobic violence. Although there is no attempt in this discussion to equate xenophobic violence to the regulatory authority of the Johannesburg City Council, it must be remembered that an argument was made in Section 3.3.1 that xenophobia is a state construct. If this is the case, it may be difficult to separate purely xenophobic violence from other violence which may be tacitly or otherwise supported by the state in order to clean up the informality brought by African immigrants. Beyond the question of the perception and treatment of urban informality in general, and that of African immigrant traders specifically, the interface between urban formality and formality and its development role deserves

consideration. Research has shown that urban informality is inextricably linked to formality (Cohen 2010) and should not be regarded as a second economy. Studies of street traders in Durban (Mapadimeng 2011) and in Johannesburg inner city (Cohen 2010) suggest that there is an active interface with wholesalers from whom the street traders order their goods for resale to the general public and that this has a development impact. This thesis will further explore this aspect in the in-depth interviews.

The discussion on urban informality was intended to frame African immigrant traders in general – and those in Johannesburg inner city specifically – by highlighting the fact that they are part of urban informality and showing how this links with the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise economy (SMMEs). Having introduced SMMEs, it is relevant to establish the connection and/or relationship between urban informality and the SSME sector. The starting point should be a definition of the SMMEs. This thesis will accept the definition by Bischoff and Wood (2013:566) that SMMEs encompasses economic activities 'from the completely non-regulated to the entirely regulated. It involves many subsets or branches of the economy; from street traders to small capital intensive manufacturing firms'. From this definition, it appears as though the African immigrant traders can be regarded as part of the economy of the SMMEs; if this is the case, this thesis is concerned with the developmental role of the African immigrant traders within the framework of the SMME economy. As such, a discussion of this is necessary and follows next. A study by Le Roux and Bengesi (2014:623) suggests that a 'more open market economy' encourages SMME growth by stimulating 'risk taking and competitive aggressiveness'. In Section 2.2.3 of Chapter 2, the issue of African immigrant and South African traders was raised. This discussion integrates with that section by highlighting the questions which will be addressed by the in-depth interviews such as the link between the African immigrant and South African traders on the one hand, and the link between African immigrant traders and the formal economy on the other, and how the development impacts of this. Questions such as: What is the nature of the operations, and business relationships in terms of buying and selling, demand and supply for instance? This will address the second objective of this research. Abor and Quartey (2010) argue that:

'from an economic perspective, however, enterprises are not just suppliers, but also consumers; this plays an important role if they are able to position themselves in a market with purchasing power: their demand for industrial and/ or goods will stimulate the activity of their suppliers, just as their own activity is stimulated by the demands of their clients. Demand in the form of investment play a dual role, both from a demand side (with regard to the supplies of industrial goods) and on the supply side (through the potential for new production arising from upgraded equipment)' (Abor and Quartey 2010:223).

Thus, realising that urban informality is an integral part of the SMME economy, as suggested by the analysis of Potts (2008), Kamete (2013) and Le Roux et al. (2013), this thesis explores the activities of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city with a view to showing their interface with their South African counterparts and how this affects the formal economy and possibilities for development in the Johannesburg inner city. Even though African immigrant traders may be operating outside the radar of the Johannesburg City Council regulations – or what Landau and Monson (2010) call subterranean existence – their developmental effects should be able to be highlighted by the in-depth interviews. It can be posited that, just like urban informality of which they are part, which as Kamete (2013) argues is regarded as an irritation by the regulatory regimes of many African and South African cities, this thesis argues that the development impact of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city should not be denied and needs to be highlighted. To continue the discussion on the development impact of urban informality, it is necessary to focus on the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city.

### **3.5 AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN THE JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY**

The geographical study of African immigrant traders is relevant because after the 1994 democratic elections and the subsequent deregulation of racial laws, there has been an increase in African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city (Ihenduru 1998; Peberdy and Rogerson 2000). However, there is limited research on African immigrant traders and their role in social and economic development (Rogerson 1997; Peberdy and Rogerson 2000; Peberdy 2000). Therefore, the present research is significant in the sense that it contributes to the literature on immigrant traders and their contributions to the development of the Johannesburg inner city, such as the import and export of goods, revitalising the Johannesburg inner city and provision of choice for consumers.

This is all the more relevant because African immigrants are castigated as the threatening other. Thus, the question of what and how they have contributed to the Johannesburg inner city is pertinent. It is instructive to note that the Strategy for Development and Promotion of Small Businesses in South Africa, which was published in 1995, encourages the growth of small and black-owned businesses (Republic of South Africa, National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business in South Africa 1995). Hence, the value of African immigrant traders as examples of small businesses which are privately funded by owners needs careful consideration in terms of how they can work towards the growth of small businesses within the framework of urban informality and the SMME economy discussed in Section 3.4. Therefore, in an attempt to investigate the contribution of African immigrant traders to the Johannesburg inner city, this research explores the following themes (Figure 3.1): employment creation, revenue generation and support for the formal economy, the transnational character of African immigrant traders, the provision of choice for consumers, revitalising the decaying city economy, contribution to the achievement of South Africa's development goals and unproductive and destructive traders (those African immigrant traders who practice illegal and anti social activities such as as selling drugs).

### **3.5.1 Employment creation, revenue generation and support for the formal economy**

A study by Rogerson (1997) shows that foreign immigrant traders created employment for South Africans. In his study of 70 immigrant traders in the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD), Rogerson (1997) discovered that immigrant traders had created 227 jobs. Another study by Kalitanyi and Visser (2010) in Cape Town also reveals that immigrant traders created employment for South Africans. In addition, research on street traders in Durban established that they created sustainable livelihoods (Mapadimeng 2011). Hence, there is evidence that immigrant traders contribute to the creation of employment. Even though the salaries may be low and the working conditions and benefits below standard when compared to the big companies, this criticism must not be overdone (Parker 2009), because these jobs support families and can improve household incomes and the quality of life (Spring and MacDade 1998). However, there are other aspects of development that have not been adequately explored to date. For example, the

extent to which the African immigrant traders support and sustain the formal economy is lacking in the literature reviewed. Peberdy and Rogerson (2000) have highlighted this but have not adequately and extensively examined it. In a study of street traders in Durban, Mapadimeng (2011) has shown that there is an interface between the formal and informal economy.

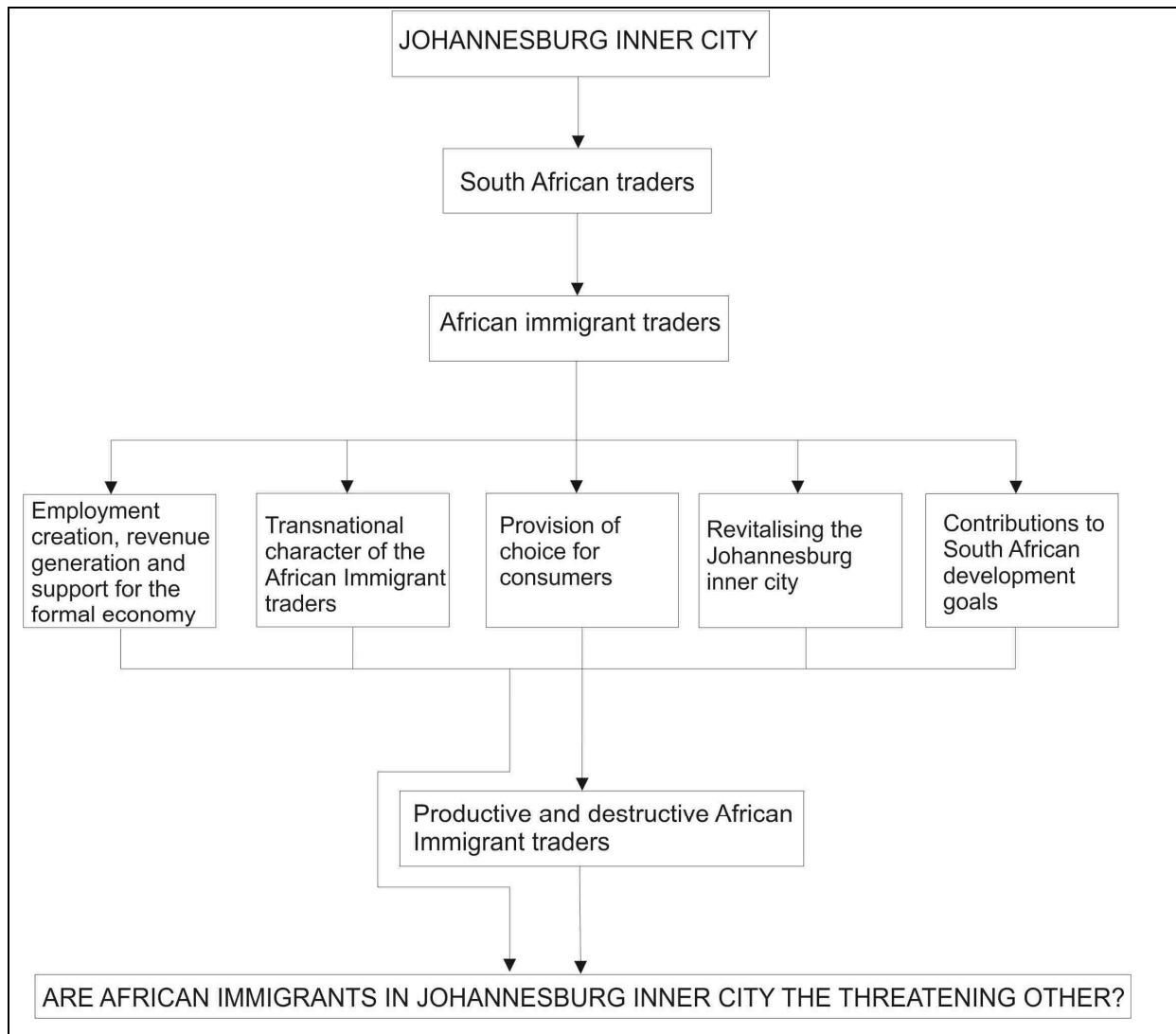


Figure 3.1: Analytical framework for African immigrant traders in Johannesburg inner city (Source: As conceptualised by the researcher 2012).

In the present research, the nature of this interface will be further explored. Thus, even though African immigrant traders operate under the radar of mainstream economic activities, they play an important role (Dwyer 2010), the nature of which is the subject of the present research. If this research ultimately establishes that African immigrant traders do indeed sustain the formal economy, it will provide the answer to the question whether the African immigrants in South Africa are the



threatening other or not. Another almost absent aspect of immigrant traders in South Africa is how they generate revenue. However, based on the fact that these may be mostly unregistered, this may not be at all surprising, but there are the formal small- or medium-sized traders, which are registered and for this reason they must pay tax.

### **3.5.2 Transnational character of African immigrant traders and the provision of choice for consumers**

Regarding the transnational African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, this thesis attempts to explore the nature and extent of transnational flows between South Africa, other African countries and the countries of origin. For example, are the activities a form of 'circulatory transnationalism represented by activities which physically connect two sides' or 'connective transnationalism represented by activities that link the places of origin and destination through the sending of money or communicative flow' or 'commercial transnationalism', which 'includes businesses that offer various ethnic products, furniture, clothing?' (Ambrosin 2014:622).

Whatever the nature of the transnational characteristics of African immigrant traders, it is relevant to this thesis to the extent of illuminating their impact on the Johannesburg inner city. For example, how are the activities of the African immigrant traders integrated into the local economy of the Johannesburg inner city and with what actual or potential benefits? Research (Rogerson 1997; Peberdy and Rogerson 2000; and Peberdy 2000) shows that African immigrant traders bring goods to sell into South Africa from their home countries, and they can also take South African goods into their own countries. The research further explores the nature and types of choices provided by African immigrant traders.

Furthermore, as Peberdy and Rogerson (2000) have argued, the transnational character of some immigrant traders means that South African goods are exported to other countries, hence 'these networks not only provide capital, but also involve the import and export of wholesale goods and inputs for business in South Africa and elsewhere. For non-SADC entrepreneurs, these networks extend beyond continental boundaries to Europe, North America and the Far East' (Peberdy and Rogerson 2000:36).

On the basis of this, there is an indication that the activities of the African immigrant traders could integrate the local economy of the Johannesburg inner city with the regional and international markets. This suggests the case of African immigrant traders as significant actors in regional or even continental integration. A comment on this issue is necessary. The African Union (AU) through the 1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) (also called the Abuja Treaty, which was enforced in 1994) targets increasing economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies (African Union 1991, Paragraph 1(a) Article 4). The strategy for attaining an economic community is through regional economic communities, which will be the building blocks of the continental economic community.

Such regional economic communities include: The East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC), The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Union du Maghreb Arabe (UMA) (The Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community 1991). These regional economic communities should promote a holistic integration for the African continent. Assuming that African immigrant traders' activities traverse the whole continent, does this not constitute an economic activity which can be regarded as continental integration from below? The above argument can be made at the level of SADC, of which South Africa is part. This is because SADC aims to, for example, 'strengthen and consolidate the long-standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the people of the region' (Declaration and Treaty of SADC, 1992:3). Accepting that African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city are transnational, what role do they play towards the SADC integration project? Is there a case for African immigrant traders integrating the SADC from below? If the SADC can be integrated from below through the activities of African immigrant traders, then the whole continent can be integrated, based on the Abuja Treaty aim of achieving AU integration based on regional economic communities? Investigating these possibilities through in-depth interviews can shed more light on the perception of African immigrant traders as the threatening other.

### **3.5.3 Revitalising the decaying Johannesburg inner city economy**

In order to provide a background to how African immigrant traders could contribute or have contributed to the gentrification and revitalisation – or indeed have added to the dilapidation of the Johannesburg inner city – it is necessary to discuss the environmental and spatial dimensions of the area under study. Johannesburg inner city had been a prominent commercial centre (Mapetla 2006) since the establishment of the city as a mining town in the 1880s, but by the late 1990s, the area began to decline (Olitzki and Luiz 2013).

As a result of ‘capital and white flight’, the Johannesburg inner city experienced a growth in informal economic activities which were accompanied by the unemployed. Hence the ‘majority of existing inner city residents are poor; many rely on the informal sector to survive and many reside in physically dilapidated apartment blocks or bad buildings, as classified by the city council, while being exploited by slumlords’ (Winkler 2009:26). The sad picture described by Winkler (2009) seems to be incomplete as Olitzki and Luiz (2013) show that there is a significant proportion of formal businesses in the Johannesburg inner city, especially established retail shops.

This description generally gives an idea of the environmental conditions which prevail in the Johannesburg inner city. However, although not the thrust of this thesis, it will be relevant to comment on whether the majority of residents in the Johannesburg inner city are poor; if so, by what standards? They may be surviving on informal economic activities, but does that make them poor? Are they at the mercy of slumlords? These are issues which the in-depth interviews should be able to illuminate to fully grasp the environmental conditions which prevail in the Johannesburg inner city beyond the ones reported in the literature. The Johannesburg inner city is spatially broad (Figure 3.2). It includes, Newtown, Braamfontein, Hillbrow and Joubert Park, Bertrams, Fairview, Jeppestown, Jeppestown Berea, Yeoville, Pageview, Vrededorp, Bellevue, Bellevue East, Observatory; Troyeville, Highlands, Lorentzville, Judith’s Paarl, Bezuidenhout Valley; Doornfontein and New Doornfontein, Fairview; Bertrams, Kensington; Marshalltown, City and Suburban, Ferreirasdorp and Droste Park, Fordsburg, Burgersdorp, City

West, Westgate, Selby Extension and Crown North Extension, Village Main and Wemmer (City of Joburg Guide to Inner City Urban Development Zone. 2006:2).

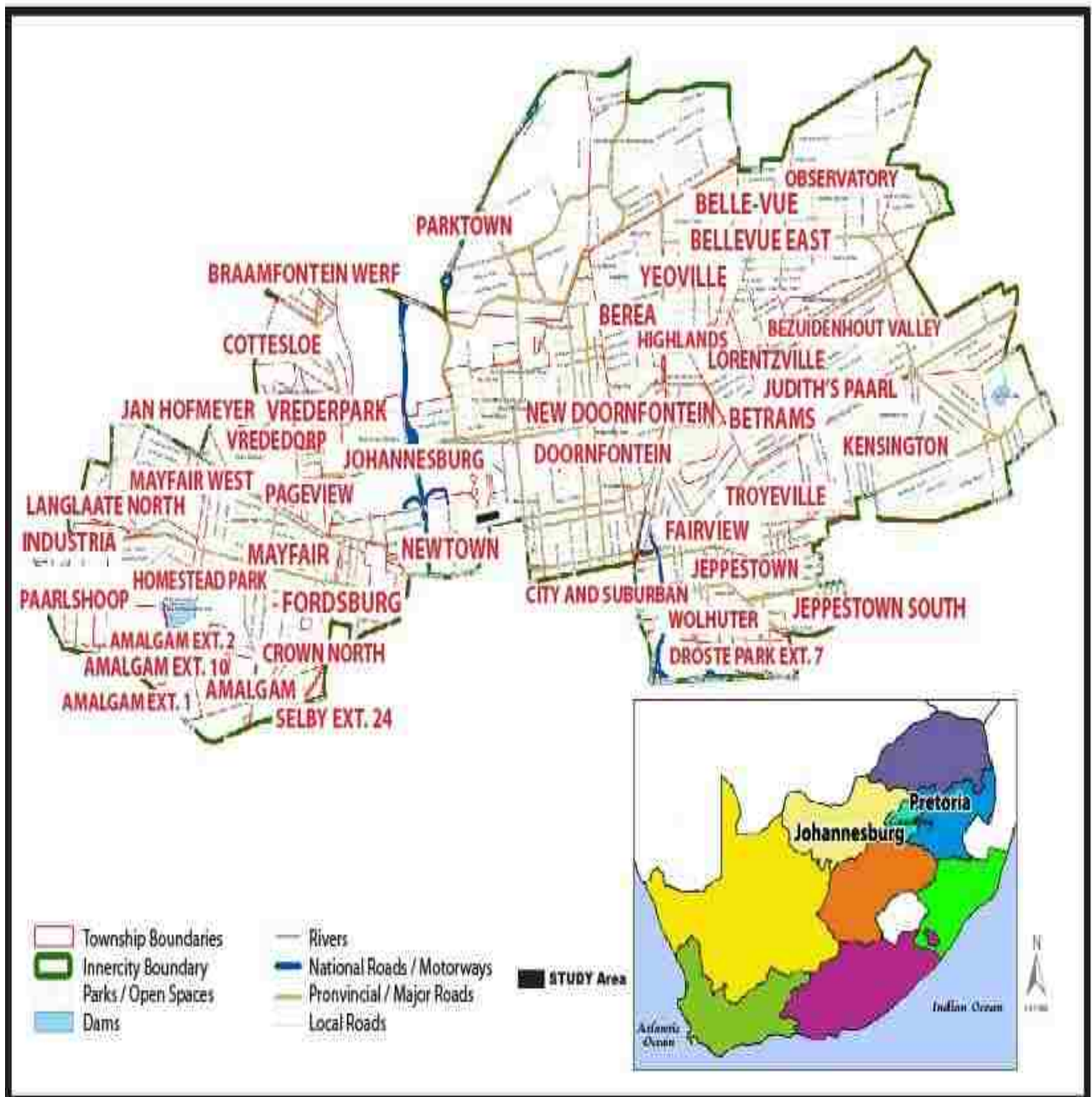


Figure 3.2: Johannesburg inner city (Source: Adapted from a map (not true to scale) obtained from Johannesburg Municipality in May 2012).

Within the Johannesburg inner city, the concentration of African immigrant traders is not uniform; the highest concentration of African immigrant traders were identified in City and Suburban, Kensington, Jeppestown, Fairview, Troyeville, Highlands, Lorentzville, Judith's Paarl, Bezuidenhout Valley, Yeoville, Bellevue/Observatory,

Berea, Hillbrow, Doornfontein, Betrams and Newtown. Based on this, the whole Johannesburg inner city was not investigated, but a study area was chosen based on criteria explained in Chapter 4. This section has highlighted the fact that the Johannesburg inner city has declined since the 1990s (Mapetla 2006; Winkler 2009; Olitzki and Luiz 2013), a development which has necessitated the need for gentrification and revitalisation since the year 2000 (Winkler 2009; Olitzki and Luiz 2013).

For Winkler (2009), the composition of the Johannesburg inner city dwellers has prompted the City of Johannesburg to clean up the city of undesirable elements in line with imagined city standards of the North. To this end, the Johannesburg inner city was declared 'an Urban Development Zone through public and private sector collaboration', which has involved, among other strategies, the identification of 'bad buildings' and incentivising the private sector to revamp these, a move called the Better Buildings Programme (BBP) (Winkler 2009:26). Furthermore, City Improvement Districts were established so as to achieve the regeneration of the inner city (Winkler 2009; Olitzki and Luiz 2013).

In addition, the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) was formed in 2001 'to stimulate and support area-based economic development initiatives throughout the Johannesburg metropolitan area in support of Joburg 2030' (Luiz 2003:4). The Joburg 2030 Vision is a plan which integrates all activities which will cumulatively make Johannesburg become a world class city by 2030 by attracting private sector investment and increasing the price of properties. Thus, the Johannesburg inner city gentrification and rehabilitation strategies are part of Joburg 2030 Vision and its successor, the refined Joburg 2040 GDS, 'that sets its sights on a desired Johannesburg of the future – a Johannesburg in which all will aspire to live and work'. (Joburg 2040: Growth and Development Strategy 2011).

Notwithstanding the fact the City of Johannesburg is certain that the Joburg Vision 2030 project will yield positive results in line with transforming the city into a world class African city, some scholars believe that 'the 2030 Vision and the subsequent 2003 Inner City Regeneration Strategy undoubtedly demonstrate a preference for capital accumulation with negligible attention paid to the formulation of social policies' (Winkler 2009:28).

Granted that in 2007 the City of Johannesburg came up with the Inner City Regeneration Charter to include the needs of poor people, Winkler (2009) argues that this has not been achieved, as the ideas of creating a world class African city seem to take precedence as demonstrated by the following quotation:

'Through our regeneration, we are going to make millionaires out of a lot of people. What is happening is that a higher calibre of people is now moving in. They are taking up the penthouses and they are creating the world class city that we are taking about' (Interview, with Inner city Director 2004 cited in Winkler 2009:27).

The discussion in this section suggests that the issue of regenerating the Johannesburg inner city is on the agenda of the City of Johannesburg. This is where the contribution of this thesis to the debate of revitalising the Johannesburg inner city comes in. In line with the observation by Bates (2006) that immigrant traders can promote economic development in poor neighbourhoods, this thesis investigates the efforts by African immigrant traders that constitute gentrification. Do their efforts constitute bottom-up strategies of gentrification which benefit the poor? Is it possible for the City of Johannesburg to incorporate the effort of the African immigrant traders so that its gentrification activities are broad-based and do not favour rich investors at the expense of the poor urban residents? This study does not entirely agree with Bates (2006) that immigrant traders only develop poor neighbourhoods, by advancing the view that these traders may also contribute towards the dilapidation or ghettoisation of poor neighbourhoods. Therefore, over and above focusing on what positives African immigrants could have brought, a critical realist and deconstructionist approach requires that the possibility of negative impacts is also examined.

Winkler (2009:28) has argued that the top-down approaches adopted by the City of Johannesburg fail to consider the poor people on the ground because 'Johannesburg's policy makers and politicians continue to be inspired by international renaissance precedents where market led redevelopments, tax incentives... flagship projects', do not consider the urban poor. To comment on this, it is pertinent to state that this thesis is aware that the process of gentrification and its controversial impacts; for instance, the issue of 'whether it is necessary to destroy a

community in order to save it' (Dennis 2008:496) always arises. In addition, gentrification also assumes a class conflict between the rich and the poor where the former are regarded as taking over the space for the latter on the basis of financial strength (Dennis 2008). It is not the intention of this thesis to engage this discussion but to locate the role of African immigrant traders in the regeneration or dilapidation of the Johannesburg inner city.

This thesis asks of the African immigrant traders: What is environmentally developmental about their activities? Are the environmental conditions worse off as a result of African immigrants traders or have there been improvements? If so, what is the nature of these improvements? From a geographical point of view, it will be interesting to identify those areas or zones which have been revitalised or destroyed by the African immigrant traders. What are the spatial and environmental manifestations of gentrification and regeneration or dilapidation? These are issues which the in-depth interviews and observations should highlight so as to address the objectives of the research, especially the third objective.

#### **3.5.4 Contribution to the achievement of South African development goals**

In an attempt to contextualise the contribution of African immigrant traders to the Johannesburg inner city to South Africa's development goals, it is worthwhile to briefly discuss the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) together with the National Development Plan: Vision 2030. The Millennium Development Goals 'form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and the entire world's leading development institutions' (United Nations Millennium Development Goals). The achievement of these goals is based on 'international and national target setting and monitoring' (Unterhalter 2012:253). Hence, the comment on the Millennium Development Goals in this thesis attempts to position the contribution of African immigrant traders to South Africa's promise made in 2000, together with other nations of the world, to achieve the MDGs. That being so, this should not be regarded as a critique of South Africa's progress towards the MDGs, but an analysis of how African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city can contribute, or have contributed, towards the attainment of the MDGs.

There are eight MDGs expressed in the Republic of South Africa Millennium Development Goals Country Report (2013). These are: eradication of extreme

poverty and hunger, achievement of universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, reduction of child mortality, improvement in maternal health, combat of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environmental sustainability and development of a global partnership for development. These MDGs also tie in with the objectives of the National Development Plan: Vision for 2030. This is because:

It aims to attack the blight of poverty and exclusion, and nurture economic growth at the same time; creating a virtuous cycle of expanding opportunities, building capabilities, reducing poverty, involving communities in their own development, all leading to rising living standards. Such a virtuous cycle requires agreement across society about the contribution and sacrifices of all sectors and interests' (National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 2011:2).

For the present purpose, a brief discussion informed by the results of the in-depth interviews will be based on MDGs 1 and 8; No. 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty and No. 8 aims to develop a global partnership for development, all of which blend with the National Development Plan: Vision 2030's aim to create jobs and livelihoods (National Development Plan: Vision 2030 2011).

Therefore, this study asks of the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city: What have they done or what are they doing which can be considered relevant to the achievement of the MGDs 1 and 8? Are the activities of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city congruent with or discrepant to the Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Businesses in South Africa, published in 1995, which commits the South African government to uplifting small-, medium- and micro-enterprises?

In addition, do the activities of African immigrant traders respond to the call to promote small businesses which reduce unemployment (The Star, 16 May 2012:5). Answers to these questions should illuminate the developmental or retrogressive impact of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city and assist the thesis in its aim to deconstruct African immigrants as the threatening other in South Africa.



### **3.5.5 Destructive and productive immigrant traders**

Today it is accepted that 'any business venture is part of the general community and that it is jointly responsible for solving the social problems of that community. This is because land, labour, consumers and some of the input for the business comes from the community it operates in' (Van Aardt et al. 2008:267). Therefore, having posited the positives that African immigrant traders can actually or potentially contribute to the Johannesburg inner city, the study is also sensitive to the fact that some immigrant traders can be destructive. Baumol (1990; 1993) has shown that some businesses can be unproductive and destructive through the manipulation of the economic system. Some may generate tension (Min 1984; Yoon 1991).

This tension, if it exists in the Johannesburg inner city African immigrant traders' operations, will assist the research in its attempt to deconstruct the threatening other in line with the questions raised in Section 1.3 of Chapter 1. The concept of deconstruction employed in this research is based on the Derridean analysis which posits that deconstruction is largely based on identifying difference in discourse (Derrida 1981). Thus, in the deconstruction of African immigrants as the threatening other, it may help this thesis to further engage with both the positives and negatives which these actors bring to the communities where they operate; this is why perspectives on destructive and productive businesses are considered here. If the research proceeds from these premises, it will then be possible to achieve a balanced deconstruction of African immigrants being the threatening other in South Africa.

In the context of African immigrant traders, it is important to note that there may be serious questions about how they operate and achieve their goals, even if these are generally considered positive. Hence, 'morals for us are the personal values and behaviours of individuals ... the values and behaviours associated with being enterprising. Ethics are the more systematic categorisation of morals, the socialised moral norms that reflect the social systems in which morals are embedded' (Anderson and Smith 2007:480). What Anderson and Smith (2007) suggest is that businesses, and this may include African immigrant traders, must not be unscrupulous in pursuit of their goals.

Similar arguments and counter-arguments have been made in similar contexts. For example, Manchan (2002:1), when commenting on entrepreneurship, contends that 'in business and the culture hospitable to it, not much is more important than the moral state of entrepreneurship'. For Anderson and Smith (2007:486), 'individualism, overcoming obstacles and endeavour might characterise entrepreneurship, but the manner of doing, the means and ends do not fit with an ideology of value creation. Criminality, perhaps entrepreneurial in scope is not entrepreneurial in spirit, it lacks social legitimacy'.

Hence, there are destructive as opposed to productive entrepreneurs, because, the 'moral space for entrepreneurship lies between the entrepreneur and the public' (Anderson and Smith 2007). Some authors have differing views, such as Brenkert (1999), cited in Anderson and Smith (2007), who argues that an entrepreneurial society and a good society are not necessarily the same. A counter-argument to this is that 'entrepreneurs may act in good and bad, moral and immoral ways and if an entrepreneurial society refers to a society in which entrepreneurship is promoted, we need to know the relationship between this and promoting a good society' (Anderson and Smith 2007:480); even though entrepreneurs are not symbols of virtue (Baumol 1993) and the private virtues of entrepreneurs are not always public virtues (Zafirovski 1999).

Therefore, this research is cognisant of the controversies surrounding the judgements that may be passed on businesses in terms of whether they are destructive or productive; resolving these controversies is not the focus of the present study. That being so, this study places the issue of whether African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city are productive or not within these debates so as to unpack their operations in communities and their impact on the same. Consequently, the in-depth interviews of both African immigrants and South African traders will dwell on issues that are considered destructive or productive.

From a geographical spatial perspective in the study area, the in-depth interviews will attempt to identify: Which African immigrant businesses are considered productive or destructive. Who considers them as being good or bad? Do African immigrant traders consider their businesses good or there are some who consider businesses by fellow African immigrant traders as bad? Do South African traders

believe that all or some of the African immigrant traders are good or bad and which ones and in which area? Even though different societies have different views about what and how businesses should operate, there is a general agreement that these should operate within socially accepted limits (Dreyfus et al. 1997 cited in Anderson and Smith 2007). In the study area, are the socially accepted limits the same? In the case of the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, is it possible to say there are entirely and absolutely productive and destructive African immigrant traders? Does the situation dismantle the dualism, such that we have middle of the range African immigrant businesses that mix both positive and negative practices? If this is this case, how does it reflect on the object of this research? It appears as though the stance adopted in this thesis points to a lot of unanswered questions within the framework of this study.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter explores the phenomenon and history of migration and immigration to South Africa by focusing on the debates that have accompanied this historical and contemporary fact. In doing so, the objective is to situate African immigrants generally in South Africa and traders specifically in the Johannesburg inner city.

Based on the objectives of this research and the attempts of this chapter to show the research gap that this thesis occupies, it appears as though before 1994, migration and immigration to South Africa was selective and was based on racist foundations. In this regard, and since the focus of the research is on African immigrants, it is relevant to refer to the fitting observation by Crush (2000) that:

'unsurprisingly, the apartheid government's hostile attitude to potential black immigrants contrasts sharply with the attitude taken towards whites from the region, while settlers had always crossed freely backwards and forward between South Africa and the neighbouring states, most of whom had settler populations. The racist underpinnings of South African immigration policy became particularly transparent in the 1970s and 1980s when whites threatened by political independence in neighbouring states were welcomed with open arms in South Africa' (Crush 2000:20).

After 1994, the South African nation state was reconfigured and this reconfiguration seems to exclude African immigrants. The clear definition of who is not South

African in post-apartheid South Africa has provided a site for a xenophobic discourse, especially against African immigrants. For this reason, the South African state can be held responsible for constructing a xenophobic discourse, which has been complemented by the negative framing of African immigrants by the media. Therefore, from a geographical time-space perspective, it appears as though African immigrants have not been desirable immigrants to the South African state either before or after the 1994 democratic elections. During the apartheid years, this was based on racism and in post-apartheid years, the reconfigured South African state has elevated indigeneity as a condition of South Africanness and further defines those who are not South Africa, which yet again positions African immigrants as undesirables.

These definitions are reinforced through immigration policies which on paper appear to be immigrant-friendly but in practice are not. Based on a geographical time perspective, it appears as though right from 1994, immigrants into South Africa were not desired as evidenced by the keeping of the Aliens Control Act (Act 96 of 1991), until 1995 when it was amended by Aliens Control Amendment Act, 1995 (Act 76 of 1995). This amendment did not radically change the Aliens Control Act (Act 96 of 1991) until it was replaced by the Immigration Act 13 of 2002 (Act 13 of 2002), on the basis of which immigration was generally encouraged in an effort to offset the skills gap due to emigration.

However, between 2005 and 2014, the Immigration Amendment Act of 2007 (Act 3 of 2007), the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010 (Immigration Amendment Bill of 2010, Immigration Amendment Act of 2011 (Act 13 of 2011) and finally, the Immigration Regulations (2014) have been enforced; all of which seem to suggest a tightening of immigration controls in South Africa. Although it must be emphasised that these immigration policies are designed for all immigrants, what appears to be the case is that in reality African immigrants are targeted more than the other immigrants because they are viewed as the wrong candidates for immigration to the South African state. The fact that they are undesirables has led to their construction as the threatening other, a perception which appears to require further investigation. On that account, investigating, questioning and contesting the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other appears to provide opportunities for

research and this is where this thesis is situated. This chapter further shows that, in order to investigate the discourse that African immigrants are the threatening other in contemporary South Africa, the focus will be on African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. In addition, this chapter also highlights the fact that, while African immigrant traders occur within the broader phenomenon of urban informality which is regarded as a spatial problem that needs to be eradicated in the context of South African cities, including Johannesburg, it is curious that African immigrants appear to be the ones who are targeted the most. This seems to validate their construction as the threatening other.

Two issues seem to emerge regarding African immigrants: In immigration law, African immigrants are most welcome, but in practice not only are the conditions stringent, but media reports indicate that immigrants are often subjected to victimisation and harassment. In terms of urban informality, this phenomenon is viewed negatively in South African cities, but informal economic activities by African immigrants seem to be more negatively regarded – as evidenced by attacks of their businesses discussed in Section 3.3.1 of Chapter 3 – than those of other sections of the population, whether they are citizens or immigrants. This not only appears to strengthen the investigation of African immigrants as the threatening other, but also promises, within a spatio-temporal perspective in the discipline of Geography, to broaden the study of African migration and immigration in contemporary South Africa.

Most importantly, what is suggested in this chapter is that the trading activities by African immigrants seem to play an important developmental role based on the themes discussed in Section 3.5 of Chapter 3. It appears as though not much research has been devoted to these themes within the framework of unravelling the developmental role of African immigrant traders. Therefore, this thesis is an endeavour which will allow an examination of this within the framework of deconstructing the view that African immigrants are the threatening other. Consequently, investigating these themes from a deconstructionist stance requires that data on which the analysis is based is properly collected. Therefore, it is relevant to explain how the information used to examine these themes was obtained and analysed. This is the focus of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4: THE RESEARCH PROCESS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Based on the methodological conceptualisation discussed in Sections 2.2 to 2.7.3 of Chapter 2, this chapter considers the research process, the guidelines to and the actual collection and analysis of the data. In particular, the chapter motivates the choice of the study area and clarifies the use of the media. In addition, an explanation of how the interviewees were chosen, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of these considerations, is also provided. The chapter also discusses the ethical considerations in this study as well the limitations and the researcher's role.

### **4.2 STUDY AREA**

Johannesburg inner city is the area on which this research focuses. Johannesburg inner city is located in the City of Johannesburg, the largest city in South Africa and has a population of about 4434827 (City of Johannesburg-Statistics South Africa 2011). It is the capital city of Gauteng which, according to Wray (2014), is the richest province in South Africa. In addition, 7.1% of the population in the province is made up of immigrants (Statistics South Africa, 2011), of whom 82% are from the SADC (Transport trends in the GCR - GCRO Gauteng City-Region, 2013).

As Johannesburg is the biggest city in South Africa, this could explain why it is a major attraction for immigrants, and hence described as a city of in-migration (OECD, 2011) or 'a quintessentially migrant city', but also 'one of the least-immigrant-friendly cities in the world' (Crush 2008b:280). Murray (2010:145) estimates that a quarter of the population of Johannesburg inner city is made up of immigrants 'from virtually everywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia'. It is estimated that there are about '7000 to 10000 traders' in the Johannesburg inner city (Regional Spatial Development Framework for Region F., 2010-2011:17).

From this background information, it appears as if Johannesburg inner city is a perfect laboratory in which to explore issues of immigration, especially with regard to African immigrants. Thus, numerous field observations in the whole of the Johannesburg inner city (Figure 3.2 of Chapter 3) were undertaken and African

immigrant traders were identified. However, it was not feasible to do interviews in all these areas.

Therefore, based on a field observation of the inner city of Johannesburg over a six-month period – including month-ends, weekends and ordinary days – and culminating in a four-hour drive with the supervisors on 1 June 2012 (which was a Friday and coincided with a general month-end period), it was decided – based on the density of African immigrant traders activities – that the area that best represented Johannesburg inner city is the area bound by Bree Street to the East, Plein Street to the West, Wanderers street to the North and Ntemi Piliso Street to the South. To establish evidence of this area as representative of the Johannesburg inner city, a transect walk was undertaken, focusing on the density and extent of African immigrant and South African traders. Hence, the area in which the interviews were undertaken is the zone bound by the transect walk.

### **4.3 UNITS OF ANALYSIS**

Units of analysis refer to what or who is being studied and explored (Babbie 2007). In this research the units of analysis were the individual African immigrants trading in the Johannesburg inner city and also South African traders based in the area. These were identified during several field observations before interviews were undertaken. The research focused on the conditions, orientations and actions of the units of analysis. Condition refers to the state of the units of analysis; orientation is concerned with the attitudes and beliefs; and action refers to what the units of analysis do (Bless and Higson-Smith 1995).

Regarding the conditions of the African immigrant traders, the present research focused on whether their trading activities had yielded positive results or not. On the orientation, the research explored what these African immigrant traders believed they were contributing to the Johannesburg inner city and how they located themselves in the inner city. The actions focused on what the African traders actually did – for example, employment creation, revenue generation and contribution to the formal economy – and also included negative or bad things done by these traders. The present research therefore analysed many units of analysis according to the sampling method (Section 4.4.2, Chapter 4).

This was done to avoid ecological fallacy and reductionism. Ecological fallacy refers to erroneous conclusions about individuals based on the mere observation of groups, and reductionism refers to attempts to explain geographic phenomena in terms of limited units of analysis (Babbie 2007). The sampling procedures employed in this research yielded the appropriate numbers upon which valid conclusions could be made. Regarding the South African traders, the research explored what they thought and felt about the African immigrant traders. Did they feel they were playing a positive or negative role? Did the African immigrant traders destroy the economic, social, cultural and other fabric? Were the immigrants destructive and tearing down the South African economic and social fabric?

#### **4.4 SAMPLE POPULATION**

An equal number of African immigrant traders and South African traders were surveyed in this research. The reason for considering the African immigrant traders is based on the fact that African immigrants are the ones who are constructed as the threatening other. The present research obtained biographical information about the sample population:

- their age, sex, nationality and employment;
- their reasons for immigrating to South Africa and for venturing into trading;
- their experiences of discrimination, harassment and xenophobia;
- the nature of trading ventures and their operation;
- income and tax payment if applicable;
- the number of employees they have; and
- what they contributed and/or thought they contributed to the Johannesburg inner city.

The South African traders were included to establish what they feel, think and understand about African immigrant traders specifically and immigrants in general. Those South Africans in daily contact with the African immigrants are the best people to share whether they are threatened or not. Their views make the deconstruction project of this research fully representative and complete. Finally, officials from the JMPD and officials from the City of Johannesburg were also interviewed in an attempt to obtain further insight into the regulation of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city.



#### **4.4.1 Regarding the sample population**

In Section 2.3 of Chapter 2, African immigrants were theorised as the threatening other based on the widespread media reporting. The literature review also seems to imply that the general South African citizenry (Section 3.3.1 of Chapter 3) regard African immigrants negatively as suggested by several scholars (Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Nyamjoh 2006, 2007, 2010; Landau 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; Crush 2008a, 2011; Deagan 2011; Rugunanan and Smith 2011; Attius-Donfut 2012; Crush and Tawodzera 2014). Furthermore, it is the opinion of the researcher that the media may indeed frame public opinion. It was suggested in Section 3.3.2 of Chapter 3 that the media may incite negative public perception – and ultimately xenophobia – by circulating negative images of African immigrants. For example, Crush and Tevera (2010:4) suggest that the media ‘makes up the numbers’ of immigration to South Africa ‘for alarmist effect’. This alarmist effect may be targeted at reaching the general South African populace and it may not be a flawed argument to suggest that the media frames popular perceptions. That being the case, Mawadza and Crush (2010:372) have further argued that the role of the media in ‘actively shaping South African popular opinion on migration is incontrovertible’.

That being so, the reference to the media in Section, 2.3 of Chapter 2 was intended to illuminate and emphasise the topicality of the issue of African immigrants being the threatening other. Given the fact that different newspapers provided different aspects of how African immigrants may be considered as threatening, there may be no more value in interviewing them further than what has been reported. Thus, interviewing South African traders is aimed at obtaining detailed information from the people with whom the African immigrant traders deal with on a daily basis. Taking these discussions further, South African traders could represent South African citizens in the study area, rather than interviewing ordinary South African citizens who may not know any better than popular opinion or indeed what they had read in the newspapers. The media consulted for this thesis seems to have propagated a negative perception of African immigrants; therefore deconstruction involves obtaining alternative views from the people in this case study, namely, African immigrant traders, South African traders and officials from the JMPD and the City of Johannesburg. This is where the heart of deconstruction in this thesis lies and this is

how deconstruction is conceptualised in this study as discussed in Section 2.4 of Chapter 2.

#### **4.4.2 Sampling procedure**

This research followed a non-probability sampling procedure in the administration of guided in-depth interviews. Non-probability sampling is a technique in which samples are selected in ways not suggested by probability theory and relies on many techniques, such as quota, snowball and purposive sampling (Babbie, 2007) which was the research strategy followed.

#### **4.4.3 Background to sampling procedure for in-depth interviews**

Patton (2002 cited in Creswell and Plano Clark 2011) states that there are no rules for determining sample size in qualitative research. For this reason, samples in qualitative research are based on well-defined and carefully selected informal sampling frames (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). Given this background, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggest that even though there is no set rules for qualitative samples, the general guidelines are the researcher's experience and sample sizes reported in journal and other reports. For example, in a phenomenological research project, an adequate sample size would be 6–10 participants.

#### **4.4.4 Actual sampling procedure**

After the study area was established, based on the transect walk mentioned in Section 4.2 of Chapter 4, the researcher physically counted over 300 African immigrant and South African traders. In the first round of interviews, from June to September 2012, 40 African immigrant and 40 South African traders were interviewed. African immigrant and South African traders chosen were those who were operating from stalls and shops and were chosen by their willingness to do the interviews. The study area was divided into blocks; for example along Bree and Plein Streets and all intersections along and between Sauer, Simmonds, Harrison, Loveday, Rissik, Joubert, Eloff, Joubert and Wanderers Streets. Traders were approached in these zones. The researcher approached all the African immigrant and South African traders at, for example, Linear Market in Wanderers Street, Metro Mall on Sauer Street, and on Joubert Street. Some refused and those who agreed to the interviews became the respondents. This approach was applied in all the blocks

into which the study area was divided, as previously explained in this section. Based on this methodology:

- Five African immigrant and ten South Africa traders were interviewed at Metro Mall (Sauer Street);
- Six African immigrants and two South African traders were interviewed on Simmonds Street (Trading not allowed in this zone);
- Two African immigrant traders were interviewed at the corner Rissik Street, near the intersection with Bree Street (Trading not allowed in this zone);
- Four African immigrant and six South African traders were interviewed along Joubert Street;
- Four South African traders were interviewed at the corner of Plein and Joubert Streets;
- One African immigrant trader was interviewed at the corner of Bree and Joubert Streets;
- Two African immigrant traders were interviewed at the corner of Eloff and Plein Streets;
- Two South African traders were interviewed at the corner Eloff and Bree Streets;
- Three African immigrants and three South African traders were interviewed along Eloff Street;
- Two African immigrants and one South African trader were interviewed along Bree Street, between Eloff and Von Brandis Streets;
- Two African immigrants and one South African trader were interviewed along Plein Street, between Eloff and Von Brandis Streets;
- Two African immigrant traders were interviewed along Von Brandis Street;
- Two African immigrants and three South African traders were interviewed along Bree Street, between Von Brandis and Wanderers Streets;
- One African immigrant and one South African trader were interviewed along Plein Street, between Von Brandis and Wanderers Streets;
- Two South African traders were interviewed at the corner of Plein and Wanderers Streets;
- Eight African immigrants and five South African traders were interviewed at Linear Market (Wanderers street) (Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1: Representation of the detailed spatial distribution of respondents in the study area (Source: GIS location of interviewees by the researcher in July 2014).

As suggested in Figure 4.1, the spatial spread and density of interviewees, for both African immigrants and South African traders, reflect those who were willing to answer the researcher's questions. As observed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), in qualitative research there are no defined ways of establishing a sampling frame. Thus, the carefully defined frame in this research was African immigrants and

South African traders within the transect walk, who operated from shops and stalls and were willing to be interviewed. The disadvantage of this approach could be that the sample could be biased in favour of those who were willing to answer the questions, which answers might not have been the best. Those who declined to do the interviews could have withheld vital information. However, the fact that the respondents were willing to answer questions may have provided the relevant information; the information provided was voluntary. What becomes important for this research is that the chosen respondents provided cases that were carefully examined to illuminate the research questions. Therefore, in this research, the issue becomes the extent to which the chosen respondents represented cases, which, through an 'orientation towards the in-depth multi-aspect and holistic investigation of one or a small number of instances' (Losifides 2011:202) and 'a holistic description through an iterative process' (Easton 2010:119), addressed the research questions. In the second round of interviews from October to December 2012, 40% of those originally interviewed were targeted. However, the researcher only interviewed six male and four female African immigrant traders, and also six male and four female South African traders. This was based on the principle of saturation as suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), which means that if the addition of more participants does not yield new information, the researcher would regard those interviewed as sufficient if they highlighted the objectives of the research.

The principle of saturation is 'linked to analytic induction in which a search for falsifying evidence is made which leads to modification of the theory until no further disconfirming evidence is found. There is a resemblance between analytic induction and Popper's emphasis on the importance of setting up null hypotheses' (Burns 2000:389). The question of who were chosen and how they were chosen for the second round of interviewees was based on the same principle as in the first selection round. An additional factor was the nature of issues that needed more clarification based on the first round of interviewees. For example, if an African immigrant trader raised a significant point which was not common to the other interviewees they were chosen in the second round; this also applied to South African immigrant traders. For instance, a South African trader introduced a new dimension to the debate that African immigrant traders imported diseases, by

actually arguing that South Africans were responsible for spreading HIV/AIDS. In addition to the willingness of the interviewee, this guided the researcher on whom to interview. Also, during the second round of interviews, the JMPD and City of Johannesburg officials were interviewed as a follow-up on issues that arose in the first round of interviews where validation was required. With regard to the JMPD, the researcher was directed to an Inspector who answered all questions. Officials from the City of Johannesburg were relatively reluctant to respond to the questions, but one man eventually agreed to the interview. Therefore, in the first round of interviews a total of 80 people were interviewed, and in the second round of interviews a total of 20 people were interviewed. The second round of interviews was a follow-up on the first; these were more intense and deeper interviews, where on average one person was interviewed in a day.

Finally, a third round of in-depth interviews, which assumed the status of 'conversations' more than interviews, was undertaken from January to February 2013 and focused on both African immigrant and South African traders. They were chosen using the same criteria as in the first and second stages. In total, six interviewees were selected: three African immigrant traders – of whom one was female and two were male – and three South African traders following the same gender distribution as the African immigrant traders. Females in both groups were selected to achieve a gender representation. In addition, as chosen by African immigrant interviewees, geographical representativeness was attempted by interviewing two men, a Nigerian and a Congolese, and a Zimbabwean woman, so that West Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) were represented. Within the study area, African immigrant traders interviewed in the first and second phases operated from all zones in the study area, as discussed in this section. Respondents in the third phase of the interviewing process operated in different places in the study area, for example, a Nigerian man who operated a shop at Metro Mall, the Congolese gentleman who had a shop along Eloff Street, and the Zimbabwean who operated from a stall at Linear Market. South African interviewees were also chosen from Metro Mall, Linear Market and from the corner Bree and Eloff Streets. These interviews were deeper due to the fact that they concentrated on the profound perception issues about whom or what the threatening other really is in

relation to African immigrants generally and traders specifically. The rationale for holding the third round of interviews over a period of two months, interviewing the same person over an average of three times and writing down relevant observations, was so that their responses were verified and confirmed regarding how they consistently viewed the issue of African immigrants in Johannesburg's inner city. For instance, on many occasions, the researcher would spend a whole day at a stall with a single interviewee. This was done to gain a further insight into the authenticity of their responses and consequently establish if what the African immigrant and South African traders said was true and not just ephemeral feelings and perceptions that swung positively and negatively, according to how nicely and badly the respondents had been treated by African immigrants or South Africans a few hours, days, weeks or months before.

Repeated interviews can be regarded as a 'quasi-experimental design' (Kazi 2003:59) and can serve the purpose of generating new and deeper insights, on the basis of which theoretical abstractions can be made (Iosifides 2011). The nature of the responses over the three rounds of interviews and over the many sessions within the third round has implications for the accuracy of the findings of the research. It can be stated that if the responses were found to validate the findings in the previous rounds, it is safe to say that the conclusions drawn from them are likely to be a true reflection, and therefore the basis upon which the threatening other of the African immigrants can be deconstructed. Table 4.1, summarises the three-tier sampling approach of interviewees.

Table 4.1: Three phase in-depth interviewing approach for data collection

Phase	African immigrant traders (interviewees)	South African traders (interviewees)
First phase: June-September 2012	40	40
Second phase: October–December 2012. Also interviewed officials from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Trading Company and Metro Police	10	10
Third phase: January–February 2013	3 (minimum of three longer duration sessions spread over eight weeks)	3 (minimum of three longer duration sessions spread over eight weeks)

The interviewees in the second and third phases were selected from the original sample of 80 applicants: 40 African immigrants (Table 4.2) and 40 South African traders (Table 4.3). The rationale was to follow up on issues raised in the previous sessions and thus constantly map the emerging trends in the data.

Table 4.2 Demographic profiles of African immigrant traders

Nationality	Age	Sex
DRC	32	Female
DRC	40	Female
DRC	37	Male
Ghana	46	Male
Ghana	32	Male
Ghana	38	Male
Ghana	24	Male
Malawi	25	Male
Malawi	36	Male
Malawi	31	Male
Malawi	30	Male
Malawi	23	Male
Malawi	26	Male
Mali	35	Male
Mozambique	27	Male
Mozambique	25	Male
Mozambique	37	Male
Nigeria	47	Male
Nigeria	28	Male
Nigeria	30	Male
Nigeria	34	Male
Nigeria	25	Male
Somalia	26	Male
Somalia	28	Male
Tanzania	32	Male
Tanzania	40	Male
Tanzania	44	Male
Tanzania	39	Male
Tanzania	39	Male
Tanzania	26	Male
Tanzania	42	Male
Tanzania	27	Male
Zimbabwe	38	Female
Zimbabwe	28	Female
Zimbabwe	37	Female
Zimbabwe	42	Female
Zimbabwe	30	Male
Zimbabwe	36	Male
Zimbabwe	23	Male
Zimbabwe	30	Male
Total		40



Table 4.3 Demographic profiles of South African traders

Province of origin	Age	Sex
Eastern Cape	33	Female
Eastern Cape	25	Female
Eastern Cape	30	Female
Eastern Cape	42	Female
Eastern Cape	36	Male
Eastern Cape	30	Male
Free State	26	Female
Free State	34	Female
Free State	29	Male
Gauteng	43	Female
Gauteng	37	Female
Gauteng	30	Female
Gauteng	40	Female
Gauteng	37	Male
Gauteng	39	Female
Gauteng	35	Female
Gauteng	30	Female
Gauteng	36	Female
Gauteng	45	Male
Kwa Zulu Natal	30	Male
Kwa Zulu Natal	31	Male
Kwa Zulu Natal	31	Male
Kwa Zulu Natal	39	Male
Kwa Zulu Natal	29	Male
Kwa Zulu Natal	32	Female
Limpopo	29	Female
Limpopo	26	Female
Limpopo	35	Female
Limpopo	30	Female
Limpopo	31	Female
Limpopo	37	Female
Limpopo	29	Male
Limpopo	32	Female
Limpopo	27	Female
Mpumalanga	31	Female
Mpumalanga	33	Female
Mpumalanga	37	Female
North West	24	Female
North West	26	Female
North West	30	Male
North West	38	Male
Total		40

#### 4.4.5 Data collection procedures

In carrying out the in-depth interviews, a face-to-face approach was used. The interview sessions were recorded and where possible notes made. As explained in

Section 4.4.4, the in-depth interviews were conducted over a period of nine months and were centred on events and the process; the events referring to what the units of analysis did and the process referring to the nature of activities undertaken by the units of analysis, a procedure suggested by Huberman (1994 cited in Creswell 2009). In focusing on these, the present research sought to understand the phenomenon represented by African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city in terms of what they contributed, in order to assess whether they were in fact the threatening other. These interviews gathered what these immigrants thought and what meanings they derived from their being in the Johannesburg inner city. The researcher also purposefully sampled South African traders for in-depth interviews regarding their views on and the meanings of African immigrant traders in Johannesburg. The in-depth qualitative interviews were face-to-face and the researcher recorded the interviews, but also wrote notes as the interview progressed, so that, should the recording equipment fail, the information would still be captured. The importance of this method is endorsed by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995). The writing of the notes was also for purposes of comparison during the process of transcribing the recorded details.

In addition, interview protocols (Appendices B to E) were employed as recommended by Creswell (2009). The interview protocol refers to the how the interview proceeded. After an introduction by the researcher, the purpose and objective of the interview was outlined and the questioning started. Answers to these were recorded and notes written. Further interviews with the JMPD and the JMTC were conducted (Appendices G and H). Regarding the interview protocols, it is important to mention that these were just guides. Some of the issues regarding who or what the threatening other is actually arose during the interviews, and the respondents told the researcher what they understood and experienced as the threatening other.

Thus, it is not an oversight on the part of the researcher that in the analyses (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) there may be a discussion of issues that do not appear on the interview protocols. These were raised by the respondents. This suggests that the researcher obtained information without preconceived ideas regarding African immigrants as the threatening other.

The fact that the respondents came up with their own additional ideas and interpretations of the threatening other actually expanded and increased the depth of the focus of the research, making the data collection tool appropriate to the extent of recording the experiences, feelings and perceptions of the interviewees. In line with the critical realist paradigm, the in-depth interview allowed the interviewees to express themselves without the limitation of guided questions. In this way, the researcher departed from the 'what is', to the 'what can be known' (Iosifides 2011:55) approach. The interview guide was useful to the extent that it gave direction to the interviews, but did not limit what the respondents could say.

Hence, the observation by McEvoy and Richards (2006:75) that in-depth interviews 'can be adapted more easily to pursue alternative lines of enquiry in search of explanations ... it is obviously easier to change a line of inquiry as potential explanations emerge during the course of a series of conversational interviews, as the interview is not committed to the measurement of predetermined variables' reveals how the in-depth interviews were conducted in this research in pursuit of the objectives of the study. This is an accepted and recommended approach by scholars like Kazi (2003), McEvoy and Richards (2006) and Iosifides (2011).

It is important to add that during the interview process and wherever possible, observations were made on the issues that were being discussed (Appendix F). This is important because the researcher is intensely aware that 'interview accounts are perspectival and not privileged data which needs to be checked via the method of triangulation with other methods' (Silverman 2006:381). This type of triangulation is 'the within-method' (Yeung 1997:64) and involved in-depth interviews together with observations.

The reason why observations were done during the interview was because of sensitivity to the fact that what the respondents said should not always be taken as explanation, as doing so would be tantamount to equating common sense with social science. As Silverman (2006:381) puts it, there is need to move beyond the common gaze of a tourist. Wittgenstein (1968 cited in Silverman 2006:381) also suggests that the accounts and responses from interviews should not be regarded as representing 'their unmediated inner experiences'. It is for this reason that during the interview sessions, observations were made and notes written on any or all issues relevant to

this study. The present research went beyond just an interview account, in order to obtain interpretations and perspectives which informed the research findings.

Finally, as Wengrat (2001:6 cited in Losifides 2011:179) states, 'going into something in-depth is to get a sense of how the apparently straightforward is actually more complicated, of how the "surface appearances" may be quite misleading about "depth realities"'; in this case study, what made the interviews in-depth was the 'communicative interaction between the researcher and the research participants' (Losifides, 2011:178) regarding the issues around African immigrants as the threatening other. This was targeted at 'obtaining interviewees' interpretations of their experiences and their understanding of the world in which they live and work' (Rubin and Rubin 2005:36 cited in Losifides 2011: 178) relating to African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. Spending time with the interviewees in the field, asking questions and discussing their 'perspectives from the inside' (Losifides 2011:179), was targeted at gaining further insights relating to the objectives of this research.

#### **4.5 ETHICAL ISSUES**

Ethics in research refer to the proper and or moral actions that need to be followed when carrying out a research project. It is an attempt to balance the right of the researcher to get knowledge, the rights of the units of analysis to be free from any harm and the right of the society to benefit from research in a harmless way (Montello and Sutton 2006). In addition, the present researcher is sensitive to the fact that research involves responsibilities as well as rights (Montello and Sutton 2006). The rights relate to the entitlement of the researcher to obtain and gain knowledge – this right places a responsibility on society to allow the research to proceed – and the right of society to avoid harm, which places a responsibility on the researcher to ensure that the research does no harm to society (Montello and Sutton 2006). Ethical issues therefore give direction as to what can and cannot be done, and also the use of the correct and best practices when carrying out research (Montello and Sutton 2006; Silverman 2006).

In this spirit, the proposal for the research was submitted to the University of South Africa Ethics Committee, which accepted it as complying with the ethical requirements of the University, because the research sought and established

consent from the units of analysis before the research processes began. In this regard, consent ensured that the people involved understood that their participation was voluntary (Silverman 2006; Babbie 2007). The three aspects of consent which were established, as specified by Montello and Sutton (2006), are: information, comprehension and voluntary agreement.

With respect to information, units of analysis were informed beforehand about the procedures, purpose, risk, fear, invasion of privacy and potential benefits (Montello and Sutton 2006:286). With regard to comprehension, the units of analysis were told the scope of the research, so that when they agreed to take part, they fully understood the implications – a condition endorsed by Piper and Simons (2005:56) and Montello and Sutton (2006).

Finally, the units of analysis freely agreed and were not coerced and were aware that they were free to withdraw from the research procedure at any time. Also, if they wanted their data to be removed from the research, they knew they had a right to have this done. This ethical requirement is recommended by Montello and Sutton (2006: 286) and Babbie (2007).

It must be mentioned that to achieve the above three aspects of consent, a consent form (Appendix A) was used. This consent form stated the purpose, procedure and objective of the research. The information on the consent form, regarding the participants' rights, the purpose and procedure of the research, was read to the units of analysis. If they agreed to participate after this reading and explanation, they were requested to sign the consent form. The consent form was also explained to the participants in terms of how anonymity and confidentiality were to be honoured. The consent form explained that in respect of confidentiality, the information collected would not be associated with particular individuals or given away. In addition, during the in-depth interviews, fictitious names of respondents were used so as to guarantee anonymity

It is important to mention that anonymity could not be absolutely guaranteed. Harm could occur as a result of unforeseen ways through which readers would react to the results of the research (Piper and Simons 2005), due the fact that the context of the research may provide clues about the identity of units of analysis even when names

have been changed. One way of mitigating this issue is to show the results of the research to the units of analysis before its publication (Piper and Simons 2005). In the context of this research, it will not possible to show the results to all the African immigrant traders.

It would appear that, African immigrants are perceived in a negative light and might suffer from this perception on a daily basis. As such the research does not intend worsening this situation, but rather seeks to achieve the opposite by deconstructing this widespread discourse of negativity about African immigrants. If the results point to positive impacts that they have, this may help reduce the harm. In addition, the places where these African immigrants operate are known, which makes them vulnerable anyway. The research faithfully stuck to the conditions of anonymity and confidentiality, fully cognisant of these limitations and how they may compromise anonymity and confidentiality.

#### **4.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

There are different ways of interpreting in-depth interview data (Kitchin and Tate 2000:229). Consequently, the analysis of qualitative data becomes an open-ended process which cannot be manipulated by mechanical and assembly line steps (Loftland and Loftland 1995 cited in Kitchin and Tate 2000). The researcher is aware that in any analysis of qualitative data, an inductive analysis is desirable, because it enables the analysis to 'build patterns, categories and themes from the bottom up, by organising the data into increasingly more abstract units of information' (Creswell 2009:176).

Therefore, in pursuit of this logic, the present research follows the analytical framework proposed by Dey (1995 cited in Kitchin and Tate 2000) which advances a three-tier approach that can be used in the analysis of qualitative data. These are description, classification and connection. This approach was used in tandem with a framework advanced by Creswell (2009), that suggests the following bottom-up approach: raw data, organising and preparing data for analysis, reading through all the data, coding the data, themes and descriptions, interrelating themes and descriptions, and interpreting the meaning of themes and descriptions (Figure 4.2).

This approach enables a deeper and deeper movement into the understanding of the qualitative data, just like peeling off the layers of an onion (Creswell, 2009).

After the raw data in the form of recorded interviews and notes was obtained, it was organised and prepared for analysis. This preparation involved the transcriptions, making further notes and reading through the data. This was done so as to have an idea of what the results showed (Creswell 2009), which was followed by the description of the information. Description entails the portrayal of data (Kitchin and Tate 2000) and in this research it involved an account of what the interview results showed within the context of the objectives of the study.

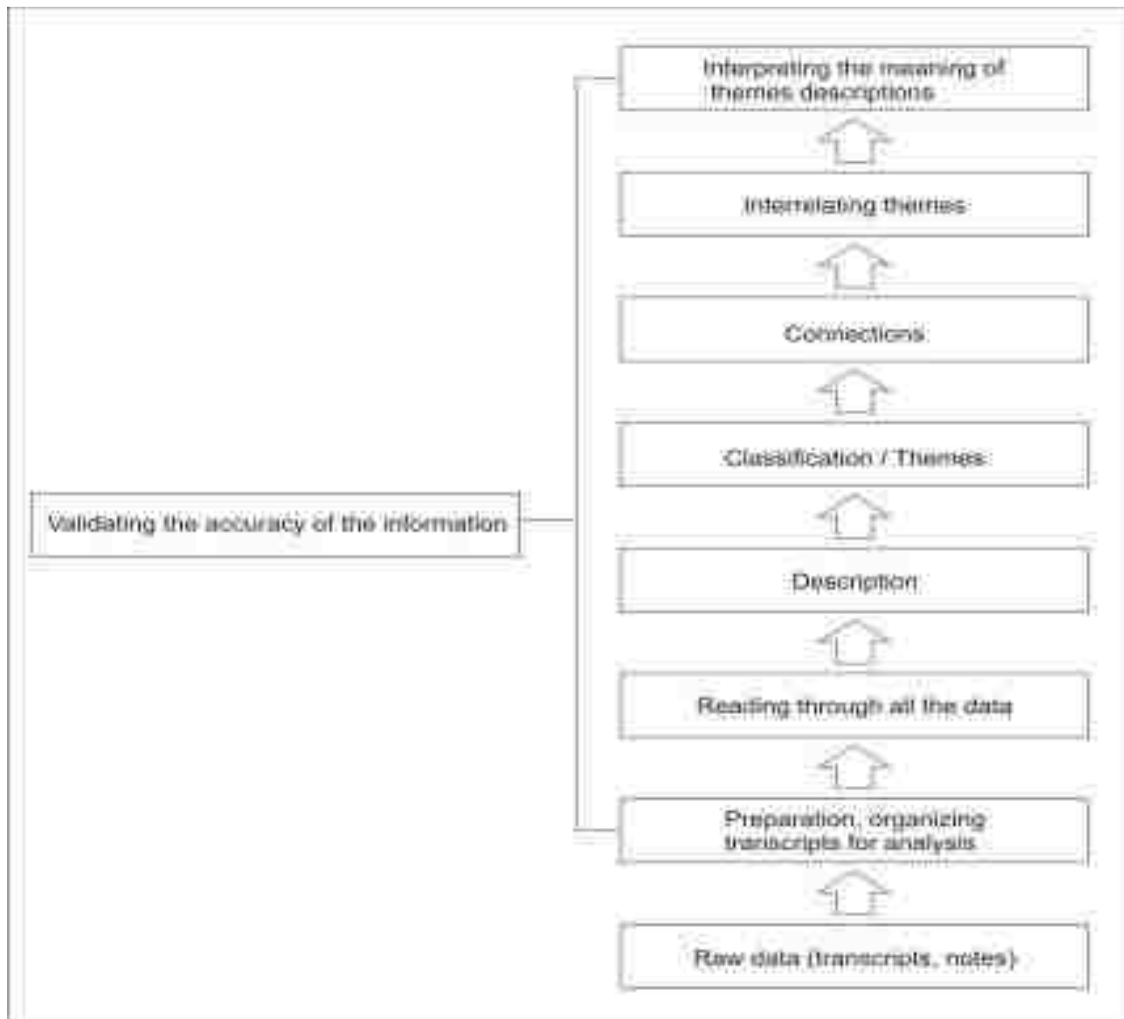


Figure 4.2: Framework for qualitative data analysis (Source: Adapted from Creswell 2009:185).

The next step was the classification, and breaking down the data, making comparisons, and identifying important factors (Kitchin and Tate 2000) and establishing themes. In the present study, this meant identifying the developmental or detrimental aspects of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. The final part of the analysis was establishing connections, such as an identification

and understanding of the relationships and associations between the data (Kitchin and Tate 2000) or the interrelating of themes (Creswell 2009). This also involved the interpretation of the meaning of themes (Creswell 2009). In this research, establishing connections entailed an interrogation of the objectives of the study.

For example, based on the results on African immigrant traders and their role in employment creation, contributions to the formal economy, together with other positives and negatives, are the African immigrants the threatening other? This essentially involved the interpretation and development of themes, which is itself a fulfilment of a good qualitative research project, because 'the value of qualitative research lies in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site' (Creswell 2009:193).

The qualitative data analysis framework described above is shown in Figure 4.2. It is also important to add that in the analysis of interview data, the notes and observations that were made during the interview sessions (Section 4.4.5) were used at the same time as the analysis of interview data.

#### **4.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF QUALITATIVE DATA**

Reliability refers to the repeatability of measured variables and validity refers to the true value of research results (Silverman 2006; Babbie 2007). 'Qualitative validity means the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent' (Gibbs 2007 cited in Creswell 2009:190). In order to ensure that the findings of this research are valid, the following strategies were employed.

As recommended by Creswell (2009), the researcher spent enough time (nine months) in the field carrying out the interviews in order to gain a greater and more detailed understanding of the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. The researcher also triangulated the information from the field notes and the recorded data. Where the findings converged (Burns 2000; Creswell 2009), it was suggested that the information was valid. Triangulation in this example prevents the researcher 'from accepting too readily the validity of initial impressions and contributes to verification and validation of qualitative data analysis' (Burns 2000:419).



In order to ensure the reliability of the qualitative data, the researcher employed a reliability measure in the form of checking transcribed information to make sure that it was correctly done (Gibbs 2007 cited in Creswell 2009). The recordings were played and the researcher went over the transcribed notes. Where mistakes and omissions were noted, these were corrected. This worked towards the reliability of qualitative interviews. The researcher also interviewed the JMPD and the JMTC to validate some of the claims and findings from the interviews.

In addition, the researcher discusses any discrepant information that runs counter to the themes, because discussing contrary information adds to the credibility of an account (Creswell 2009). Generally, most evidence in research helps to build a case for research questions, aims and objectives and hypotheses (Creswell 2009). In pursuit of objectivity and validity, this research reported any discrepant evidence in this study, such as the fact that African immigrants are indeed the threatening other in the Johannesburg inner city.

#### **4.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

While every reasonable effort has been made in this research to ensure that the data collection is thorough in order to achieve valid and reliable results, the researcher is at the same time sensitive to factors that may affect the same. The first limitation relates to the sampling frame and procedure. The research was based on African immigrants and South African traders in the Johannesburg inner city and these results are not transferable to the whole of South Africa. This is a case study, which does not claim to represent the whole of South Africa.

In addition, this case study comprised 80 interviewees; this may be considered to be a low sample. However, in qualitative research, there are no rules for determining sample size, but Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) advise that guidelines can be based on the experience of the researcher as well as sample sizes reported in journals and other research such as phenomenology where an adequate sample size includes between 6 and 10 respondents. Based on this and the manner of the sampling procedure (Section 4.4.4), the sample was considered to be adequate.

Most foreign nationals, especially African immigrants, have reason to be sceptical about any form of research which they may feel or interpret as 'blowing their cover'. For this reason, it is suspected that their answers were not always truthful. They may

have given the researcher those answers that they thought the researcher was looking for.

For example, it is highly unlikely that they would mention any negative aspects about their trading activities and the details of how they conduct business, survive and make a living in South Africa. To limit the impact of this, the researcher carefully explained the scope, purpose and nature of the research in the consent form (Appendix A) and impressed upon the respondents to be honest.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with both South African and immigrant African traders, the JMPD and the JMTC in order to explore the aspect of destructive and non-productive entrepreneurs; those who engage in illegal and anti-social activities. In addition, the triangulation explained above mitigated the limitation of dishonest response relating to illegal activities. This triangulation included the three-tier interview approach and the researcher spent a full day interviewing each respondent and making observations.

Some limitations of the research may relate to interactional factors in terms of language. This is because some African immigrant traders came from countries where English is not the official language of communication; for example, Somalis and DRC nationals. It is possible that meaning may have been lost in the process of interaction during in-depth interview procedures. To counter this limitation the researcher found interpreters to minimise the loss of meaning, yet the researcher is still aware that there may have been some loss of meaning and information.

The issue of deception in research can cause limitations. Deception involves the manipulation of the research through misrepresentation of the purpose and identity of the research, and this is done so as to reduce the biasing effects of interactional factors (Montello and Sutton 2006; Babbie 2007). For example, research investigating the conditions of African immigrants with the aim of improving their conditions may yield answers that emphasise how badly they are treated, and by the same token, it is reasonable to suggest that if the subjects were told that the research was for academic purposes, they may have given answers that they thought best suited such a purpose. To limit this, the researcher stated right from the

outset that honesty and truthfulness were important for the successful conduct of the research.

#### **4.9 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE**

Miller (1992 cited in Creswell 2009) observes that in qualitative research, the role of the researcher in the collection of qualitative data should be considered critically because researchers bring certain values, assumptions and biases into the study. In this regard, Weber (1946), cited in Silverman (2006), notes that to a certain extent research may be affected by the values of the researcher in terms of determining research problems and the ways they are studied, as well as in making inferences, perceiving implications and drawing conclusions.

Consequently, researchers bring certain biases to the study; the present researcher is a black African immigrant who has been in South Africa for over five years. However, the researcher carried out the research and analysed the data objectively as far as possible and also upheld ethical conduct. The researcher worked in terms of these principles not only to neutralise any inferences, implications and values that could subjectively colour the research, but also to produce quality research. Cognisant of these limitations and the suggested attempts to minimise them, the research proceeded in the path of openness, fully convinced that this is the best way to seek knowledge (Babbie 2007:69). The use of evidence from the in-depth interviews as the basis of deconstruction must achieve an objective handling of the research.

#### **4.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter suggests that the Johannesburg inner city appears to be a suitable area in which to conduct research on African immigrant traders, based on that it is generally a popular destination for international migrants. Given that the Johannesburg inner city is a large area, a sample of African immigrant and South African traders was determined based on non-probability theory. In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with the sample population following the guidelines of interview protocols. African immigrant and South African traders were considered as suitable respondents as they actively interact with each other on a daily basis and should have privileged information about the impact of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. This chapter further explained how the data was

collected and analysed in order to achieve reliability and validity. The researcher's role and limitations in the study were explained to highlight the fact that this research was objectively carried out, so that the evidence it yielded could be used to address the aim of the research – to deconstruct the view that African immigrants are the threatening other. The next chapter considers the evidence from the interviews to start the deconstruction process.

## **CHAPTER 5: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN THE JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The question regarding the reasons African immigrant traders moved to South Africa is important. How and if they have encountered discrimination, hostility and xenophobia are also relevant. Investigating such questions will provide an insight into why African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city have chosen to trade and what exactly they do in their trading enterprises. Along these lines, this chapter begins by providing a background to why African immigrant traders migrated to South Africa, and whether they have encountered discrimination, hostility and xenophobia. This background is intended to introduce the reasons why they chose to engage in the businesses that they do, followed by an exploration of the nature and types of African immigrant businesses.

### **5.2 Reasons for migration to South Africa**

Although the reasons why people from other African countries migrate to South Africa are common knowledge, their brief discussion is intended to provide an analytical context in this thesis. That being so, results in this study suggest that the African immigrant traders from the DRC are all refugees and came to South Africa as a result of political problems and persecution in their countries. The Zimbabweans and Somalis interviewed for this study stated that they came to South Africa mainly due to economic problems and, to a limited degree, political instability and persecution. The respondents from Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria and Tanzania came to South Africa for purely economic reasons, mainly to make more money in order to uplift themselves and also to remit some of their income and/or goods to their families back in their countries of origin. Table 5.1 summarises the main reasons for these Africans immigrating to South Africa.

In this case study, based on 40 African immigrant traders, the main economic factors that led to their immigration to South Africa are the search for better economic opportunities in life and better prospects for economic and personal advancement. This entailed making more money and being able to support themselves in the Johannesburg inner city and also taking care of the immediate and extended family

in their countries of origin. Political instability, civil war and persecution were main political factors that led the Congolese, Somalis and Zimbabweans migrating to South Africa.

Table 5.1: Summary of reasons for migrating to South Africa

Nationality	Reason for migration to South Africa
DRC	Political instability and persecution
Ghana	Economic reasons; to make more money
Malawi	Economic reasons; to make more money
Mali	Economic reasons; to make more money
Mozambique	Economic reasons; to make more money
Nigeria	Economic reasons; to make more money
Somalia	Economic reasons and political instability
Tanzania	Economic reasons; to make more money
Zimbabwe	Economic reasons and political instability

*N = 40*

Due to these negative economic and political circumstances in their home countries, South Africa became a better option; hence the migration decision. What is striking is that the majority of the African immigrant traders interviewed who fled their countries of origin for political reasons, 13 out of 40 (32.5%) interviewees came to South Africa with members of their immediate family. Whereas a clear majority of those who came to South Africa for economic reasons – 27 out of 40 (67.5%) interviewees – left their families in their countries of origin. Both those who immigrated for economic reasons and political reasons send monetary remittances and where possible some material goods, but the former group demonstrates higher remittance behaviour than the latter.

An analysis of the setting of increased immigration into South Africa by African immigrant traders in this case study suggests that economic reasons played the most important role in the migration decision-making. Immigrants based in urban areas in their countries of origin stated that they were supplementing the incomes of their immediate and extended families, whereas those based in rural areas asserted that they were assisting in increasing agricultural production by buying input, as well as supplementing their livelihood bases by sending money and 'urban commodities'.

This migration context of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city invokes the sustainable livelihood and transnational approaches to migration. A sustainable livelihood strategy is defined by De Haas (2008:35) as 'a strategic or deliberate choice of a combination of activities by households and their individual members to maintain, secure and improve livelihoods'. In this approach, migration is seen as a possible option of having a sustainable livelihood through 'improving or avoiding deterioration of household poverty, wellbeing, capabilities and a natural resource base' (De Haas et al. 2002 cited in Hagen-Zanker 2008:15). Migration is therefore a means to have many assets, which can act as 'an insurance against future shocks and stresses', and to maintain contact with and even develop their areas of origin (De Haas et al. 2002 cited in De Haas 2008:37). Sander and Maimbo (2005:60) observe that in this regard, remittances contribute to 'a family welfare system'. This is a form of 'co-insurance and diversification of income' (Hagen-Zanker 2008:15).

The transnational approach to migration posits international migration which is based on the recognition that immigrants can and do maintain ties with their families in their countries of origin as well as with their host countries (Guarnizo et al. 2003 cited in De Haas 2008). This has been made possible by developments in transport, communication and technology and immigrants find it easy to foster double loyalties (De Haas 2005; Guarnizo et al. 2003 cited in De Haas 2008) and also have a 'penchant for keeping a foot' in both their areas of origin and destination (Crush 2002:149).

The case study in the Johannesburg inner city suggests that – for as long as the problems persist in countries where the immigrants originate – South Africa will continue to be a destination of choice because it is regarded as economically developed and presents many opportunities. This confirms other studies on why South Africa is an attractive destination for many African immigrants (World Migration Report 2000; Adepaju 2003; Crush et al. 2006; Campell 2010) and also integrates with the background to this research discussed in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1.

### **5.3 GENDER PROFILES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS**

The gender distribution of the African immigrant traders in this case study reflects more males (34) than females (6). Since this is a case study in which the respondents were purposely sampled, the gender distribution should not be taken to represent the migration patterns to South Africa. As a result, further research is needed to explore the gender profiles of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city so as to make informed conclusions about migration patterns and the economic involvement of females in the trading business. In terms of social networks, the results of this case study suggests that 29 of the 40 (72.5%) African immigrant traders interviewed came to South Africa on their own with no family or friends to help them settle and start earning a living in the Johannesburg inner city. They started the businesses that they have on their own. Therefore, this migration of the African immigrant traders to the Johannesburg inner city demonstrates geographical relevance in terms of the spatiality of the movement. This spatiality illustrates the attractiveness of Johannesburg inner city as a place to live, work and, most importantly, to start a business.

### **5.4 EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION, HOSTILITY AND XENOPHOBIA**

After arriving in South Africa, the African immigrant traders chose the Johannesburg inner city because they believed that it would expedite their settling and at the same time they would quickly grow and improve economically. Again, this demonstrates space and place interaction; issues of geographical relevance.

#### **▪ Xenophobia**

In the first round of interviews with the African immigrant traders, 32 out of 40 interviewees (80%), in the second round, 7 out of 10 and in the third round, 2 out of 3 interviewees claimed that they had encountered what they believed were less violent xenophobic tendencies. Examples of these included the JMPD impounding of goods belonging to the traders – even when they had trading licences and operated from stalls – and arresting those who allegedly operated from licensed trading zones, accusing them of crowding and making the inner city dirty. It is relevant to comment on the fact that the alleged acts of xenophobia could be valid, especially if goods were impounded from designated trading zones (Section 5.5 of Chapter 5).

What is also valid is that there were African immigrant traders who operated in undesignated trading zones, such as areas along Simmonds Street (Section 5.5 of



Chapter 5) and thus deserved to be arrested and have their goods impounded. In this case, it seems as though the alleged acts of xenophobia by the JMPD are not completely accurate, as some of the African immigrant traders are simply operating illegally; when the JMPD impound their goods, they are only enforcing the law. In this regard, there is nothing xenophobic. Another example of xenophobia was the harassment of African immigrant traders by ordinary South African citizens. African immigrant traders stated that some ordinary citizens and customers took away goods without paying for them and hurled insults at them telling them to go back to their countries.

This case study suggests that not all African immigrant traders had experienced xenophobia. As discussed, the actions of the police and some ordinary South African citizens seem to suggest that African immigrant traders do experience xenophobia, despite the fact that it may not always be fatal. This finding appears to link with the discussion in the literature review (Section 2.3 of Chapter 2 and Sections 3.3 to 3.3.1 of Chapter 3), which suggests that a xenophobic discourse exists in South Africa based on the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other and must go back to their own countries rather than flooding South Africa. It is arguable that when some ordinary citizens take goods from African traders without paying for them, they are sending a message – these traders should not be in South Africa in the first place. This is significant, given that, as reported by African immigrant traders during the interviews, such South African citizens do not do the same to shops operated by their compatriots. This dynamic removes a criminal intent and emphasises a xenophobic objective. From a geographical, temporal perspective, a xenophobic discourse seems to prevail and African immigrant traders continue to be perceived as undesirable economic competition.

Similarly, when the JMPD, who are charged with maintaining law and order, actually impound goods from people who are lawfully registered and operate from stalls, this can be interpreted as xenophobic. One is reminded of the experience of a Rwandan refugee who went to the police to report a criminal attack, but was instead detained because he was not South African and therefore not a brother (Section 3.3.1 of Chapter 3).

It is possible to make the connection that when the JMPD impound goods belonging to African immigrant traders and not those from South African traders, they are saying the former are not brothers like the latter. This looks similar to the xenophobic attacks of businesses owned by African immigrants, especially the Somalis discussed in Section 3.3.1 of Chapter 3.

▪ **Discrimination in the job market and the decision to trade**

Sixty per cent of the respondents (24 out of 40) asserted that their qualifications were not recognised and as a result they had to do what they called low-class jobs. For example, a nurse from the DRC claimed that she found it difficult to be registered with the South African Nursing Council (SANC). The researcher checked the requirements for the registration of nurses from foreign countries and South African nurses who trained in foreign countries, and noted that there were fifteen. Under Section 4, Sub-section 4.1.1 (c) and (d) of the requirements of the registration of nurses (South African Nursing Council 2012), the researcher noted that the DRC nurse could have been correct in her claim that she failed to get an endorsement from the National Department of Health as stipulated under Section 4, Sub-section 4.1.1 (c) (South African Nursing Council 2012:4). South African nationals who trained as nurses in foreign countries were exempt from this requirement. It is understandable if this is done to first consider nationals ahead of foreigners.

However, such a requirement becomes open to many interpretations; for example, when two people – one a South African and the other a foreign national who undertook the same training in a similar institution in a foreign country – are not treated equally when they possess the same skills. This was the argument of the DRC nurse and, from her point of view, was discrimination. A similar claim was made by a psychology graduate from the same country. Although it was not possible to verify these claims, the researcher checked the website for the Health Professionals Council for South Africa (HPCSA), under the requirements for medical and dental professions board and found the following:

‘Applicants who are non-South Africans are required to first obtain a letter of endorsement issued by the National Department of Health in Pretoria prior to applying to the HPCSA for registration. The National Department of Health does not encourage the recruitment of individual foreign health professionals who are citizens of developing countries’ (HPCSA).

Although this requirement was not specifically about psychologists and since they must register with the HPCSA, it appears as though the Congolese immigrant could have faced hurdles in practising his profession because of stringent requirements, which according to him, amounted to the lack of recognition of their qualifications because they were from the DRC. Nevertheless, it seems as though the issue of strict monitoring and registration of foreign professionals is not something unique to South Africa. For example, lawyers who qualified in countries other than England and Wales are required to sit for examinations before they can be admitted as law practitioners in these countries (QLTS Assessments). Could this requirement in South Africa relating to health professionals be regarded as hostile and xenophobic? This may not be the case; it may be about standards.

Nonetheless, since South Africa is a developing or middle income country and does not encourage health professionals from developing countries, the message is open to the interpretation that it either despises African immigrants, or that educational standards in other African countries are poor. One is reminded of the Afro-pessimistic comments by the President of the Republic of South Africa about how Johannesburg roads were different from and needed to be paid for unlike some national roads in Malawi (Section 2.3 of Chapter 2). This seems to tie in with the debate raised in Chapters 2 and 3 on the matter of the negative perception of African immigrants and what they bring or do not bring to South Africa. In this case, their medical degrees/qualifications are not desirable and thus they should not be encouraged to register for medical practice.

In the absence of an explanation of what it means not to encourage qualifications from developing countries, this is open to interpretation by African immigrants that their qualifications were not always recognised in South Africa; this demonstrates that what was important and recognised in their country of origin was not accorded the same respect in the host country. In order to earn a living in the Johannesburg inner city, these African immigrants had to resort to trading. The Congolese psychologist and the nurse show that they were initially looking for formal jobs in line with their qualifications and expertise, but due to what they considered discrimination on the basis of their being from developing African countries, they were not be given the opportunity to practice their skills. What is particularly

important in the case of the HPCSA is that immigrants from other parts of the world are encouraged. Therefore, it seems to be the perception by the African immigrant trader (psychologist) in this case study that they were discriminated against. Another example is that of a 29-year-old Zimbabwean woman with a degree in Media from Midlands State University. She claimed that she failed to break into media practice and as a result she started buying and selling goods. A man from Ghana with a Political Science degree also stated that he failed to get a job in line with his qualifications.

This scenario in this study seems to fit in well with Bourdieu's theory of social practice (Bourdieu 1977, 1990 cited in Thieme 2011). This theory posits that social practices by groups of people or individuals are predicated on habitus, capital and social fields. Bourdieu (1986 cited in Thieme 2011:333) defines capital as 'accumulated labour and includes all material and symbolic goods that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation'. Different kinds of capital can be identified based on Bourdieu's theory, and examples of these are: economic capital which refers to commodities of monetary value; cultural capital which refers to educational qualifications; and social capital which is a network of durable social relations (Thieme 2011). Hence, 'the form capital takes only receives a value if one enters a social field where it is valued' (Thieme 2011:334). In the Johannesburg inner city, the African immigrant traders, whose educational qualifications (cultural capital) were not recognised initially, accepted low-class jobs, from which they raised capital to start businesses. For example, trained primary school teachers from Zimbabwe stated that they first worked as maids and waitresses and that some of their male counterparts worked as 'garden boys' and some as bar tenders or waiters. In addition, the information from this case study revealed that some worked as construction workers. They considered these jobs as either menial or manual because in their countries of origin they had what they considered 'respectable' jobs, such as school teachers, insurance sales representatives and accounts clerks. The argument can be made that these immigrants could have been over-ambitious. If they were migrating to a foreign country with its own population and problems, they could not expect to find jobs waiting for them just because they left respectable jobs in their countries of origin, but needed to adapt to the new environment – a classic example of the

human-space environment interface, an issue of geographic relevance. In this regard, Thieme (2011) argues that:

'The position of an actor in a society and in a social field is never absolute, but always relative. Inequality of and access to resources are the basis upon which each field operates. Power relations are contested and conflicts and compromises are negotiated. In a receiving country, migrants have to act in different social fields to gain access to employment, shelter... Their different forms of capital are valued differently when they enter into a new social field and power relations change' (Thieme 2011:334).

Beyond this argument, and from the point of view of African immigrant traders, migrating to South Africa reduced them to serving food and beer in restaurants as waiters, or watering flowers and tending to grass as gardeners and cleaning houses as maids. Thus, 29 out of 40 respondents (72.5%) found themselves in this or similar situations. They stated that they had decided that the only way to economically uplift themselves was to form businesses, where at least they could earn according to their efforts rather than be undervalued, discriminated against and reduced to low-class jobs, and therefore become underclass human beings. This choice can be regarded as a strategy to earn a living in Johannesburg's inner city; a foreign place for the immigrants. Hence: 'Strategies are products of habitus and of practices adopted to a social field. They can be seen as constraints, but at the same time, they make action possible. The availability of multiple forms of capital conditions the position of an actor in relation to other social actors within a social field' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:91-114 cited in Thieme 2011:334).

It is relevant to comment further on financial challenges of the group of African immigrant traders who decided to form trading businesses after arriving in the Johannesburg inner city. The African immigrant traders in this case study claimed that they had financial challenges, as they did not receive any form of funding and, coupled with the need to pay rent and rates and provide for their families, it was a challenge starting the trading businesses. This could explain why some of the trading businesses were simply survivalist vending operations, whereas some were established trading businesses.

It is important to highlight the fact that 11 out of 40 interviewees (27.5%) came to South Africa and the Johannesburg inner city specifically to set up businesses and not to look for employment. The basis of this migration decision was that a business was a quicker way of making money in South Africa than looking for a job commensurate with qualifications and experience. Nigeria topped the list with three African immigrants who highlighted that they came to South Africa to set up businesses, followed by Somalia with two. Of the respondents, DRC, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania and Zimbabwe each had one immigrant trader who came to South Africa to set up a business. Although it was not possible to verify the start-up capital injections for these African immigrant traders who came to the Johannesburg inner city to specifically set up businesses, the lowest was a Zimbabwean woman who claimed that she had R4 000, and the highest was a Somali who asserted that she had a start-up capital of R20 000. The latter operates a relatively large shop along Eloff Street, just before the intersection with Plein Street, where she sells blankets, curtains and clothes (Figure 4.1 of Chapter 4).

It appears as though those African immigrant traders who came in to start businesses had more capital injection than those who were forced into businesses by circumstances discussed in this section. In addition, it appears that both categories of African immigrant traders have injected relatively large amounts of capital, some of which the immigrant traders earned and saved in South Africa before starting the businesses and some of which they brought into South Africa. For example, a Congolese shop owner asserted that she brought about R10 000 with her to South Africa in 1999, and a Somali shop owner asserted that he brought R20 000 to South Africa. The migration journey of the African immigrant traders from the point they decided to settle in the Johannesburg inner city – either to set up businesses or look for jobs, failing to do so, they settled for low-class jobs and ended up deciding to set up businesses as well – shows how they have become part of the Johannesburg inner city milieu. Thus, the next step is to explore in greater detail the nature and types of these businesses, as this addresses the first objective of this research.

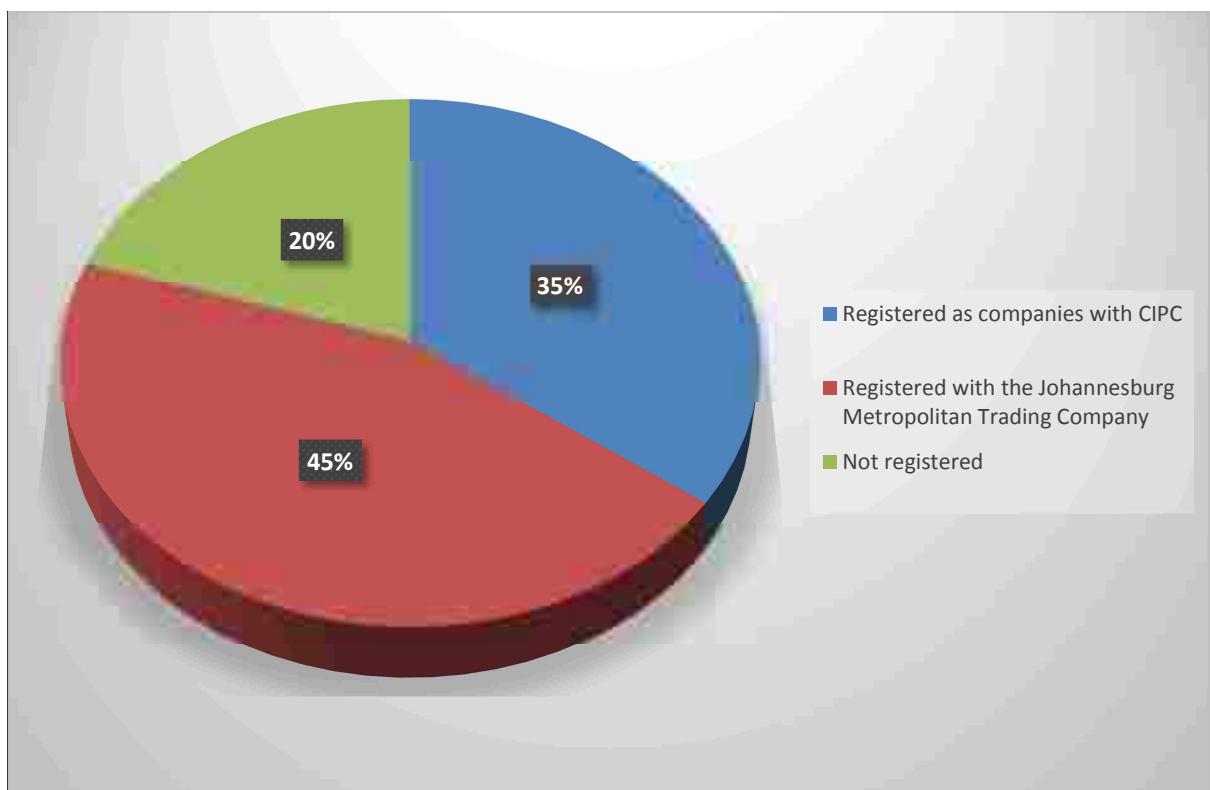
## **5.5 AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN THE JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY**

In order to grasp exactly what African immigrant traders undertake in their businesses in this case study, it is necessary to examine their registration statuses,

their spatial distribution and the issues of formality, informality and illegality. In addition, a comparative analysis of enterprises operated by both African immigrants and South African traders is intended to bring to the fore the activities which were uncovered in this research.

▪ **Registration status**

From the 40 African immigrant traders who were interviewed in the first phase, the following pattern in relation to the registration of these businesses emerged (Figure 5.1). What comes to light is that there were formal and informal African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. The businesses which were registered as companies with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC)<sup>1</sup> would be the formal traders, of which there were 14 out of 40 (35%). Those registered with the Johannesburg Metropolitan Trading Company (JMTC) through the Street Traders Association (STA) would be the informal traders, and amounted to 18 out of 40 (45%).



N=40

Figure 5.1: Nature of business registration by African immigrant traders  
(Source: *In-depth interviews of 40 African immigrant traders, July–September 2012*).

<sup>1</sup> CIPC came into operation on 8 February 2011 as a result of the merging of the Office of Companies and Intellectual Property Enforcement (OCIPE) and Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office (CIPRO) ([https://www.cipc.co.za/Publications\\_files/Media Releases. Commission.pdf](https://www.cipc.co.za/Publications_files/Media%20Releases.%20Commission.pdf). Accessed on 12 August 2014).

Finally, those that were not registered with at least the STA or not operating in designated trading zones totalled 8 out of 40 (20%). This last group of African immigrant traders were operating illegally in the Johannesburg inner city. An interview with officials at JMTC and the JMPD represented by an Inspector on 12 October 2012 revealed that according to the regulations guiding the street traders, small businesses, however entrepreneurial needed to be recognised by the municipality and allocated at least a stall within designated trading zones.

Thus, those African immigrant and South African traders whose shops were not registered with the municipality were operating illegally. As a result and based on the interview with the officials at the JMTC, it became clear that even the informal street traders, although not registered with CIPC, needed to observe designated trading zones and not randomly start trading. Considering the interview with the JMPD and the JMTC, it became clear that some streets (Figure 5.2) were not designated as trading zones, due to many factors which include, among others, the presence of other structures and the requirement not to sell within five metres of a traffic intersection. Those who violated these regulations had their goods impounded whenever the JMPD caught them in non-trading zones. Figure 5.2 shows the formal, informal (operating on streets where trading is allowed) and unregistered (operating on streets where trading is not allowed) distribution of African immigrant and South African national traders in the area of study.

From a sample of 40 African immigrant and 40 South African traders, there were 32 recognised businesses belonging to African immigrants, of which 14 were registered as companies and 18 were informal businesses registered with the JMTC through the STA. Eight fell in neither of the categories (Figure 5.2), and from the interviews with the JMTC and JMPD, these were operating illegally. Figure 5.2 also shows the distribution of South African traders, of which 38 were registered and 2 unregistered. Thus, only two South African traders operate outside of the municipal laws, as opposed to eight African immigrants. In Section 3.4 of Chapter 3, the issue of urban informality was raised and the many dimensions in which it applies to this research was discussed. At this point, this thesis will comment on whether informality by South African traders in the Johannesburg inner city is tolerated more than that of the African immigrant traders. Those African immigrant and South African traders



who were registered as companies were generally not harassed by the JMPD. All four South African traders who were registered as companies stated that they did not have any problems of harassment by the JMPD whenever they did checks on the registration status on the businesses and the legitimacy of the brands of goods which they sold.

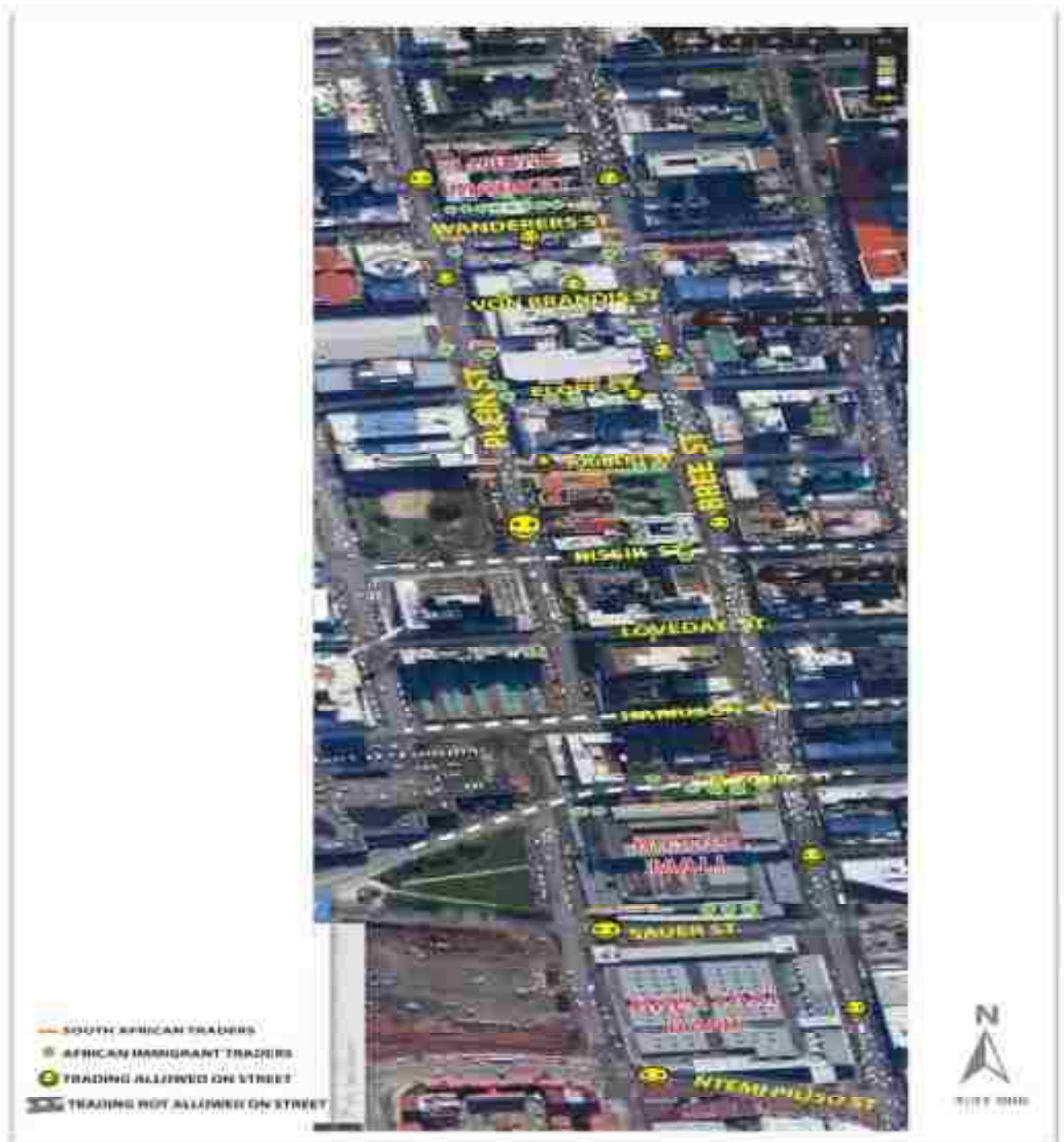


Figure 5.2: Operating status of African immigrant and South African traders (Source: Adapted from Google Earth in July 2014).

Of the 14 African immigrant traders registered as companies, 8 claimed that the JMPD always harassed them; as opposed 6 who claimed that they did not have problems with the checks by the JMPD.

In addition, of the 18 African immigrant traders who were registered with the JMTC, 13 said that the JMPD always harassed them and in some cases impounded their goods, but all South African traders who were registered in a similar capacity did not complain of any harassment by the JMPD.

Another point to note is that both the African immigrant and the South African traders who were not registered stated that they were always harassed. Overall, in the regulation of street traders in this case study, it seems as though South African traders were tolerated more than African immigrant traders, based on the statements that registered businesses operated by African immigrant traders were harassed by the JMPD, where the South African ones were not.

Therefore, even though the point was made in Section 3.4 of Chapter 3 that urban informality was regarded negatively, in the City of Johannesburg this case study suggests that informality by African immigrant traders is regarded more negatively than that of South Africans. This seems to reinforce the literature review (Section 3.3.1 of Chapter 3).

- **Spatial spread and organisation**

Furthermore, what is suggested in Figure 5.2 is that even though both African immigrant and South African traders operate in the same space and in close proximity to each other, there appears to be a tendency for the clustering of businesses; it seems that African immigrant and South African traders tend to operate side by side.

This is most apparent at Linear Market in Wanderers Street, Metro Mall in Sauer Street, as well as along Plein, Bree, Eloff and Joubert Streets. The traders suggested that this was a question of preference. This does not seem to be the case, because the allocation of trading stalls by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Company does not operate on the basis of preference. Perhaps this could apply in the case of rented shops like those along Plein, Bree and Joubert Streets.

Therefore, in the case of trading stalls, it could be posited that African immigrants wanted to operate closer to their counterparts as was the case with the South African traders.

- **Nature and types of African immigrant and South African traders' businesses**

The question of what African immigrant and South African traders do, whether they are formal or informal, specifically answers the questions raised in Section 2.2.3 of Chapter 2. Therefore, a discussion of which types of African immigrant and South African traders' businesses were formal and informal – and what exactly their lines of business were – helps to examine further the first objective of this research.

In this regard, it is necessary to take up the discussion of the formal, informal and unregistered African immigrant and South African traders raised at the beginning of Section 5.5 by analysing exactly what the business did (Tables 5.2 and 5.3), which suggests that in this case study there were more formal businesses owned by African immigrant traders, that is, 14 out of 40 (35 %), as opposed to 4 out of 40 (10%) in the case of South African traders.

This seems to counter the claim that African immigrant traders always had problems in registering their businesses. Apparently, it is not always correct to suggest that all African immigrants face discrimination and xenophobia in formally registering their businesses.

In this case study, more African immigrants actually own formal businesses than South African citizens. Another aspect reflected in these tables is that 34 out of 40 South African traders (85%) seem to dominate in the category of registered street traders by the JMTC, as opposed to 18 out of 40 African immigrant traders (45%).

However, there were relatively more unregistered African immigrant traders, who amounted to 8 out of 40 respondents (20 %) as opposed to 2 out of 40 (5 %) South African traders. Their operating in this status could be a reflection of difficulties in being granted trading permits or indeed a case of lawlessness. The latter is most likely, if the evidence from the JMTC that anyone could be registered as long as they had the required documentation, like a valid passport in the case of immigrants is accepted.

Table 5.2: Types of African immigrant traders' enterprises in the Johannesburg inner city, July 2012

Nature of business	Number of formal Businesses	Number of informal Businesses	Unregistered Businesses
Beadwork and embroidery	2	0	0
Bedding	0	2	0
Cell phones and cell phone accessories	0	1	2
Clothes, blankets, shoes and household goods	5	4	2
Consumable goods	3	4	0
Cosmetics	1	2	1
Courier company	1	0	0
Handmade sandals	2	0	0
Ladies shoes	0	2	0
Traditional clothes		2	1
Fruits and vegetables		1	2
Total	14	18	8

*N=40*

Table 5.3 Types of South African traders' enterprises in the Johannesburg inner city, July 2012

Nature of business	Number of formal Businesses	Number of informal Businesses	Unregistered Businesses
Belts and stockings	0	2	0
Clothes, blankets, shoes, household goods		5	0
CDs DVDs	0	5	
Consumable goods	2	9	0
Cosmetics	0	4	0
Electrical appliances	1	0	0
Fruits and vegetables		5	1
Hair braiding products		2	1
Spices	1	0	0
Sunglasses	0	2	0
Total	4	34	2

*N=40*

In addition, the researcher observed that those African immigrant and South African traders who operated randomly on the streets would quickly gather their wares and flee when the JMPD appeared and/or passed by – a suggestion that they were not registered with the JMTC and therefore traded illegally. The observations by the researcher converged with the results of the interview with the JMTC officials on the issue of some immigrants who randomly put out their goods for sale anywhere along the streets, constituting illegal activity. Thus, the accusation that such African

immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city were making these areas dirty could be justified. It is also clear that it is not all African immigrant traders who deserved this condemnation. Some were registered and at least operated in designated trading areas.

The following nationalities were involved in the unregistered trading: a Nigerian trader (cell phones and cell phone accessories), three Zimbabwean and one Mozambican traders (clothes), Malawian and Tanzanian traders (consumable goods) and a trader from the DRC (vegetables). The interview with the Inspector from the JMPD revealed that there were some African immigrant traders who used their businesses as fronts for illegal activities. While the researcher did not observe or get the information about the illegal activities, the JMPD asserted that some Nigerians used their shops as bases for selling drugs. This came to light as a result of JMPD operations, which resulted in the arrest of the Nigerian immigrant traders who sold drugs in the Johannesburg inner city.

In addition, during all the phases of the interviews with the African immigrant traders, the researcher observed that there were shops, especially those operated by Somalis and even some South Africans, who would swiftly close their shops when the JMPD appeared or passed by. This observation was further corroborated by the Inspector from the JMPD, who claimed that those traders, whether African immigrant or owned by South Africans, closed their shops when the JMPD were doing counterfeit inspections with brand holders. This suggests that some of the African immigrant traders and South African nationals also sold counterfeit goods.

In the final analysis, South African traders had more legal street trading businesses. This is because they had 38 out of 40 registered enterprises – 34 were registered with the JMTC and 4 with CIPC (95% - 10% formal businesses and 85% registered with the JMTC). This contrasts with 32 out of 40 for African immigrant traders, of whom 14 were registered with CIPC and 18 with the JMTC (80% - 35% formal businesses and 45% registered with the JMTC). During the second phase of the interviews, South African traders suggested that they did not have money to register and sustain companies; for example, renting big shops, buying goods in large quantities and employing many people. The issue of why African immigrant traders

have more formal companies than their South African counterparts, even though the latter have more recognised businesses is an area, begs further research.

In an attempt to shed more light on the nature and type of African immigrant businesses, a comparative analysis of both African immigrant and South African traders' businesses is provided.

- **Differences and similarities between African immigrant and South African traders**

What is suggested in Tables 5.2 and 5.3 is that there are differences and similarities in the nature and types of trading businesses operated by African immigrant and South African traders in this case study. For example, beadwork and embroidery, handmade sandals and traditional clothes, cell phones and cell phone accessories were specific to African immigrant traders. Other enterprises which were specific to African immigrant traders were sales of ladies shoes and different types of bedding.

A courier company was operated by a Nigerian immigrant trader, who shared that after realising that there were many foreigners, especially Africans, in the Johannesburg inner city, he reasoned that they would need to remit money and goods to their home countries. He therefore formed a courier company which sent money and in some cases material goods to some African countries.

Some of the African immigrant traders explained that the chosen lines of businesses were based on expertise gained from their countries of origin, such as beadwork and embroidery as well as repairing cell phones and selling cell phone accessories. The other reason was based on the need to reduce competition by engaging in businesses different to those operated by South African and other African immigrant traders. Trading businesses which were specific to South African traders included those which sold belts and stockings, spices, CDs and DVDs, earrings, electrical appliances, sunglasses and hair braiding products. The South African operating a shop selling and repairing electrical appliances explained that he had skills and expertise in this line of business. Regarding the other South African traders, they suggested that they engaged in types of business which were relatively easy to start.

Similarities can be identified in the shops selling clothes; for example, 11 out of 40 (27.5%) of the African immigrant traders were involved, compared to 5 out of 40 (12.5%) of the South African traders. Interview results suggest that this could be explained by the fact that some African immigrant traders imported cheap goods; they also knew of wholesalers in Johannesburg from whom they bought the clothes at lower prices, the latter claim being made by South African traders. In the shops that sold consumable goods, 7 out of 40 (17.5%) African immigrant traders were involved in this line of business, compared to 11 out of 40 (27.5%) of the South African traders.

This difference could be accounted for by the fact that African immigrant traders mostly served dishes that catered for their fellow countrymen, whereas South African traders catered for a large customer base, including hundreds of taxi drivers and other street traders and indeed African immigrant traders as well. Shops trading in cosmetics were evenly balanced at 4 out of 40 (10%) for each group of traders; whereas 6 out of 40 (15%) of the South African traders sold fruits and vegetables, against 3 out of 40 (7.5%) of the African immigrant traders. Both groups of traders explained that it was relatively easy to engage in this line of business.

▪ **Differences within African immigrant traders**

In an attempt to clarify the nature and types of African immigrant traders' businesses in this case study, it is relevant to further show that generally certain types of businesses were specific to certain nationalities. For example, the cell phone and cell phone accessories shops were operated by Nigerians, beadwork and embroidery by Ghanaians and Tanzanians. Somalis mostly specialised in selling clothes, blankets and a variety of household goods. It would seem as though these had had previous experience in their countries of origin. Somalis claimed that they imported their goods (clothes, blankets, shoes and different types of household goods) from China in larger quantities, which explains why they sold them at very low prices.

The interview with the Inspector from the JMPD also highlights the fact that the majority of the immigrant traders, especially those who operated clothing shops, were selling legal goods. He asserted that most of the goods, especially from the

African immigrant shops, were legitimate goods, properly imported and even though in some cases they were not branded, this did not make them counterfeit.

Congolese, Mozambicans, some Malawians, Tanzanians and Zimbabweans were involved in a bit of everything; that, in their view, sold faster. Although there were some Zimbabwean women who had worked on farms in Zimbabwe and this previous experience predisposed them towards selling farm produce such as fruit and vegetables, it would appear as though others were opportunistic street traders driven by the need to make quick profits and just survive.

- **Differences within South African traders**

Although this case study shows that South African traders from all provinces were involved in most of the types of businesses described in Table 5.3, specific patterns were identified. Women from Kwa Zulu Natal mostly sold consumable goods, especially meat and pap; one lady from this province sold spices. One man from Limpopo operated an electrical appliance shop, and another from the same province sold sunglasses. Other types of business were undertaken by South Africans from all provinces, but no interviewees were selected from Cape Town in the Western Province in this case study.

- **Link between African immigrant and South African traders and SMME economy**

There appears to be a link between the African immigrant and South African traders. Firstly, those who sold fruit and vegetables bought their produce from the same market, suggesting growth of business of their suppliers. Secondly, African immigrant traders also bought goods – such as consumable goods – from South African traders. Thirdly, South African traders claimed that they relied on African immigrant traders to repair their cell phones and supply them with cell phone-related appliances. Fourthly, some South African traders stated that they bought most of their blankets and household goods from the shops owned by African immigrant traders, such as the Somalis. Bearing in mind the definition of the SMME economy offered in Section 3.4 of Chapter 3, it is relevant to comment that the interface described in this section between African immigrant and South African traders suggests a mutual interaction which is conducive for the growth of the SMME economy, especially the businesses of both South African nationals and African



immigrant traders. Considering the buying and selling interaction which exists between African immigrant and South African traders, there is a possibility of growth of businesses within the framework of the SMME and urban informality. For example, many African immigrant traders who buy consumable goods from South African traders may result in the growth of enterprises in this line of business. In this case, African immigrant traders provided a ready market for the consumable goods, and this can foster growth of the enterprises which sell such goods.

The same argument can be made about a South African trader from Kwa Zulu Natal who sold spices. Considering the fact that some of the enterprises which sold consumable goods such as meat and pap needed spices, these were always readily and quickly supplied by the South African trader selling these spices. This example demonstrates the possibility of growth of businesses in the Johannesburg inner city. It is possible to posit that in the process of time such a business can graduate into a formally registered business with CIPC. This is a possibility, especially given the fact that there are fewer South African formal businesses in this case study than those of African immigrant traders.

- **Link between African immigrant traders and the formal economy**

Furthermore, African immigrant traders such as those selling cosmetics and some of those which sold shoes and house hold goods stated that they bought these from wholesalers around the Johannesburg inner city. A similar claim was made by South African traders. This shows that there is a close relationship between African immigrant traders and the formal economy in the study. In addition, 14 of the African immigrant traders were fully registered businesses, suggesting that there was an expansion or a possibility of expansion of the formal economy in the study area.

- **Possibilities for development**

The differences and similarities in the types of businesses operated by African immigrant and South African traders suggest a possibility for development. For example, African immigrant traders involved in beadwork and embroidery suggest an expansion of enterprises in this line of business by the introduction of East and West African styles of beadwork and embroidery. Such businesses could achieve two aspects; firstly the broadening of skills and talent in beadwork and embroidery

and secondly, an increase in the sheer numbers of small businesses involved in these lines of business.

In addition, Ghanaians also made sandals, and Malawians and Tanzanians mostly operated shops selling traditional African clothes. Furthermore, African immigrant traders who sold African and/or traditional attire stated that they noticed that in the Johannesburg inner city there were many immigrants from African countries. As a result, they reasoned that these foreigners needed a taste of traditional clothes in general and in line with their national or ethnic tastes.

Therefore, they opened shops specialising in traditional and other African attire and the response was overwhelmingly positive, especially from fellow immigrants. What was noteworthy from the interviews was that some South African citizens also bought these clothes. Malawians and Tanzanians led in the immigrant businesses which sold African and/or traditional attire. Some of these traditional clothes were imported, but some were handmade in their shops in the Johannesburg inner city. It can be argued that the importing and hand-making of uniquely African traditional attire is a contribution to the fashion industry. It is an addition of a dimension to fashion; an African fashion in the Johannesburg inner city.

A report on the state of entrepreneurship in South Africa (Davis 2010:21-23) records that the fashion and the textile industries needed to widen and identify opportunities, including the design and production of these commodities. In this regard, it can be advanced that what the African immigrant traders brought in the form of traditional clothes and beadwork can broaden the fashion industry in South Africa. What the African immigrant traders brought in this regard can and needs to be harnessed and developed. This suggests that the actual and potential contribution by African immigrant traders is relatively significant. Immigrant traders can contribute to the South African fashion industry because:

‘although there has always been a demand for African creativity in the Western world, this demand has not historically been fuelled by Africans. This is true in the field of fashion, where no African designer, to date, has been able to package and present an authentic African fashion and cultural life style that could catch on commercially with worldwide consumers. With globalisation and the increasingly

vibrant movement of people, goods and capital, successfully addressing this challenge has been more of a possibility for African designers' (Davis 2010:22).

Therefore, the presence of African immigrant traders involved in the fashion and textile line of business is an opportunity for the South African fashion and textile industry in the Johannesburg inner city to exploit and develop. It is important to add that the fact of the addition of a new aspect to the textile and fashion industry in the Johannesburg inner city as a result of African immigrant traders, demonstrates geographical significance, not by fact of the spatial movement of the people, but the addition of new styles. This illustrates that immigrants can change many facets of the host environment – in this case positively, through fashion – by the introduction of new African attire. This is a possibility for development of the Johannesburg inner city. Interview results also suggest that some of the African immigrant traders have previous experience of either running businesses or working in an environment similar to the line of business in which they are now involved. Such experience can be channelled towards the development of businesses in the study area.

A discussion of the role of African immigrant traders in other parts of the world (Section 2.2.3 of Chapter) suggested that African immigrant traders were playing an important role in the Middle East and South East Asia by setting up 'trading posts' (Bertoncello and Bredeloup 2007:97). In this case study, a discussion of the possibility for development seems to suggest that African immigrant traders, for example the Somalis, who sell large quantities of textiles, clothes and household goods, could potentially set up trading posts in the Johannesburg inner city.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This case study suggests that the majority of African immigrants came to South Africa for economic reasons, based on family decisions that some members of the family had to migrate in order to achieve a sustainable livelihood. Once in South Africa, the majority of African immigrant traders have not been able to utilise their professional skills due to the fact that their different types of capital were not always recognised. Using Bourdieu's theory of social practice, this chapter has suggested that the Johannesburg inner city as a social field has forced the African immigrants to adapt to the environment by adopting strategies that enable them to survive. In this case, they have resorted to trading on the streets. Although there are

suggestions that there may be cases of discrimination, hostility and xenophobia – in particular the harassment of African immigrant traders by the JMPD, which integrates with the literature review – care must be taken not to paint the picture that all African immigrants have experienced this.

This case study shows that there is a variety of trading enterprises which have been set up by African immigrant traders. They include those which repair and sell cell phones, beadwork and embroidery, clothes, blankets, shoes, household goods and consumable goods. Some are registered as companies with CIPC and others with the JMTC; the remainder illegally operate on the streets. There is evidence that African immigrant traders are positively linked with their South African counterparts, just as there is a link between the African immigrant and South African traders with the formal economy at the level of buying and selling of goods. In addition, there are indications that African immigrant traders together with their South African counterparts positively interact with the SMME economy in the study area, which may foster growth of this economic sector.

Overall, the nature and types of businesses operated by African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city and the ways that they interact and integrate with their South African counterparts and the formal economy seems to suggest that there are not only actual positive impacts, but also possibilities for development. For example, beyond the growth in economic activity as a result of buying of goods for resale from wholesalers in and around the study area, the skills in beading and embroidery and the introduction of African attire, which may broaden the textile and fashion sector in the inner city, are actual and potential sites for development.

In addition, the large clothing and textile shops operated by Somalis seem to point towards a possibility of the development of large trading sector in the study area. Although there are African immigrant traders who operate outside of the law by engaging in survivalist vending operations, which, because of their operating status may be considered negative, it is difficult to ignore the fact that some African immigrant traders' businesses play a positive role. Beyond the question of what African immigrant traders' businesses engage in, there is need for a detailed understanding of their actual contribution to the Johannesburg inner city and this is considered in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS` CONTRIBUTION TO THE JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

An analysis of the nature and types of African immigrant traders' enterprises in the Johannesburg inner city in Chapter 5 was limited to what these businesses actually did. Therefore, it is important at this stage to discuss the contribution of these enterprises to the Johannesburg inner city. As explained in Section 4.4.5 of Chapter 4, a discussion of the issues surrounding the threatening other is not limited to the responses to the questions in the interview protocols, but also those which arose during the in-depth interviews.

Thus, a discussion of aspects relating to the threatening other which do not appear in the interview guides – but which are raised by the interviewees and are relevant to this work – is perfectly in line with the methodology adopted in this study. Such information assists the research by providing an expanded view on the threatening other, based on the fact that 'we come to know what has happened partly in terms of what others reveal in their experience' (Stake 1994:240, 2000:442). In this regard, the results of the in-depth interviews highlight, among others, the following themes along which the discussion will proceed: employment creation and contribution to the achievement of South Africa's development goals; revenue generation and support for the formal economy; the provision of choices for consumers; revitalising the Johannesburg inner city; and unproductive and destructive traders and the transnational character of African immigrant traders.

In this regard, this chapter targets at a deeper analysis of the issues raised in the in-depth interviews and in the process unravel the threatening other in relation to African immigrant traders. Along these lines, the status of what the threatening other is must emerge by piecing together the 'contested versions of reality' (Tierney 2000:642) because social reality 'is like a sack which won't stand up when it is empty; in order that it may stand up, one has to put into it the reason and sentiment which has caused it to exist' (Pirandello 1921/1962 cited in Tierney 2000:643). On these grounds, this chapter targets a balanced assessment of what African

immigrant traders contribute to the Johannesburg inner milieu, and thus meet the second and third objectives of the research.

## 6.2 EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND TAKING AWAY JOBS

### ▪ Employment creation

The results in this case study suggest that the African immigrant traders created employment for South Africans as well as for foreign nationals, especially fellow countrymen and other African nationalities. Table 6.1 summarises the employment creation by African immigrant traders, which can be regarded as a contribution; South African nationals who are employed are salaried and this could improve the standard of living of their family members. In addition, more employment opportunities could result in more income and tax revenue, as some of the employees receive taxable earnings.

Table 6.1: Employment creation by African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, July 2012

Nationality of employer	Number of South African citizens employed	Number of employees from other African countries
DRC	0	0
Ghana	9	6 Zimbabweans
Malawi	3	1 Ghanaian
Mali	0	0
Mozambique	0	0
Nigeria	2	1 Nigerian, 1 Malawian, 1 Zimbabwean
Somalia	6	2 Zimbabweans
Tanzania	3	1 Tanzanian, 1 Malawian
Zimbabwe	0	0
Total	23	14

*N=40*

The evidence in Table 6.1 seems to be generally validated by the fact that, in the first phase of the in-depth interviews, 13 out of 40 (32.5%) South African traders stated that African immigrant traders created employment, but 11 out of 40 (27.5%) South African traders were of the view that African immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city took away jobs from South African citizens. In addition, 16 out of 40 (40%) South African traders were of the view that African immigrant traders neither created nor took away jobs. In the second phase of the in-depth interviews, 6 out of 10 South African traders, as opposed to 4 out of 10, stated that African immigrant traders actually created employment and in the third phase of the in-depth interviews, 2 out

of 3 as opposed to 1 out of 3, of the interviewees, were of the view that African immigrant traders created employment for South African citizens.

Against the background that some African immigrant traders – such as those from the DRC, Mali, Mozambique and Zimbabwe – did not create any employment (Table 6.1), this seems to link with the perceptions of the minority of South African traders in this case study as reported during all phases of the interviewing process that African immigrant traders did not create employment. However, most, South African traders in this case study suggest that African immigrant traders played a positive role in the creation of employment. This is instructive as it comes from South African nationals in this case study and agrees with the evidence from the African immigrant traders as captured in Table 6.1. That being so, an African immigrant interviewed during this research stated that;

‘I personally create employment for both immigrants and South Africans. My shop is so big that I cannot operate alone and for this reason I have employed people to help. I constantly hear this story that African immigrants take away jobs. Can I ask you, which jobs do we take? I came to South Africa and set up a business using my own money, I was not hunting for a job, not all foreigners are job hunters. I had a business in Nigeria and have a wealth of experience in running a business and also had the capital. I brought something – capital and a business – to South Africa. So, you see, this idea that we take away jobs is false’ (Interview with Oluche a Nigerian immigrant trader, Metro Mall, 18 February 2013).

At the same time, it cannot be said that all African immigrant traders created employment. Others – such as the DRC nationals, Malawians, Mozambicans and Zimbabweans – did not create any employment in this case study. This reality suggests that it may be inaccurate to say that all African immigrants in this case study create employment or that all of them do not create employment, while others do, some do not. They look after themselves and at best employ fellow African immigrants. This suggests that there may be an economic leakage in the form of remittances back to their countries of origin.

Regarding employment creation, the accusation that African immigrants do not create employment (*Sowetan*, 2 May 2012:12), is only part of the assessment; the other part seems to be that some African immigrants do create employment. Hence,

a South African trader stated that 'African immigrants create employment through their businesses. They employ both their fellow immigrants and South Africans. Even though the salaries may not be great, the fact that they do create employment for South African citizens is a good thing' (Interview with Tshepo, a South African trader, Linear Market, Wanderers Street, 6 February 2013).

For those who just form businesses, sell goods, realise profits which they send back to their countries of origin, accusations that they are threatening others may not be so wrong. What may be wrong with regard to employment creation is to say that all African immigrants are a threat. Some are a threat and others are not. In this case study, the latter may apply to those African immigrant traders like the DRC nationals, Malawians, Mozambicans and Zimbabweans who although they did not take away any jobs, their setting up of businesses whose profits were sent back to their countries of origin can be regarded as a threat, as there is 'no benefit' to the Johannesburg inner city.

This seems to link with the observation that 'African immigrant traders have taken over the whole of the Johannesburg inner city with the result that they are everywhere and are running the entire Johannesburg inner city' (Interview with Pumla, a South African trader, Metro Mall, 25 February 2013). For this South African trader, such African immigrant traders had taken over the Johannesburg inner city for their own benefit and from the point of view that South Africans did not benefit, it may be correct to regard African immigrant traders in this case study as a threat. The fact that they do not take away jobs does not necessarily equal to a benefit to the Johannesburg inner city. They may be selfishly exploiting the market in the Johannesburg inner city to sell their goods, make more money and go back to where they came from; that may be considered a threat.

Consequently, with regard to employment creation, a complex picture seems to emerge in this case study. Not all African immigrant traders created employment; some just operated their businesses in an economically viable setting in the Johannesburg inner city, which allowed them to realise profits which they sent back to their countries of origin. Thus, the fact that an African immigrant trader in the Johannesburg inner city does not take away a job should not lead to the conclusion that their businesses automatically benefitted the Johannesburg inner city. Others



did create employment for South African citizens and in the absence of evidence of the amount of salaries that they paid their workers, it can be speculation that these salaries actually improved the standards of living of such South African employees. They could be exploiting the South African employees just like other vulnerable African immigrants are exploited as discussed in the following part in this section, but this cannot diminish the mere fact of employment creation which the African immigrant traders do in this case study.

Furthermore, what is also suggested by Table 6.1 is that African immigrant traders in this case study also created employment for fellow immigrants. This, together with the evidence that African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city created employment for South African citizens, illustrates that in this case study, the popular view that African immigrants take away jobs is an incomplete appraisal. Within the macro-discourse that African immigrants take away jobs, there is another that they do create jobs. The latter discourse does not seem to be publicised like the former and this seems to link with the discussion in Section 2.3 of Chapter 2 and Section 3.3.2 of Chapter 3.

▪ **Taking away jobs and accepting low salaries**

Closely linked to the perception that African immigrants took away jobs is that they accepted low salaries and because of that eroded the bargaining power of South Africans in the job market place. This view was echoed by South African traders who asserted that African immigrant traders did not create employment. In the in-depth interviews with South African traders, in the first phase 11 out of 40 interviewees (27.5%), in the second phase, 4 out of 10 interviewees and in the third phase, 1 out of 3 interviewees supported the view that African immigrant traders took away jobs from South Africa citizens. However, a follow-up on this issue in the third phase of interviews with South African traders revealed a complex picture.

It emerged from the interviews that the view that African immigrants accepted low salaries was too simplistic. One South African trader charged that the issue of exploitation by South African employers could not and must not be reduced to a simplistic accusation of African immigrants accepting low salaries. They said that it could be true that African immigrants accepted low salaries but that did not make them the threatening other, because the low salaries were offered by South African

employers who were expected to know better about the minimum wages. If South African employers ignored this and preyed on the vulnerable immigrants who, as we have seen, came to earn a living because they migrated to South Africa for economic reasons, means that these employers are equally a threat. This is because they are breaking the law and exploiting immigrants, is a threat to people, whether they are South Africans or immigrants.

Even worse, other African immigrant traders who owned companies actually or potentially exploited their fellow African immigrants. It was shown in this case study that some African immigrant traders actually owned formally registered companies and also employed fellow African immigrants, so that this is not an unreasonable suggestion and connection. Thus, the threat could not be about South African employers but all employers regardless of national origin, who wanted to make profit out of desperate African immigrants.

In addition, all African immigrant traders in all phases of the interviewing process in this case study pointed out that the accusations about them taking away jobs were baseless; they could not fairly compete with the South African nationals because they did not have the bar-coded green identity document and this made it difficult to take away jobs. It was for this reason that those African immigrants who were employed were offered low salaries by unscrupulous employers. If, by accepting low salaries out of desperation with no bargaining power they were the threatening other, then the employers who offered these salaries to the African immigrants were a bigger and more vicious threat to the Johannesburg inner city and the threat in this case becomes more than the African immigrants accepting low salaries.

Overall, this case study seems to highlight the fact that African immigrant traders do create employment. This confirms earlier comparable researches (such as Rogerson 1997, Kalitanyi and Visser 2010). This case study also suggests that the perception that African immigrants take away jobs and accept low salaries is a complex issue, which does not seem to allow one dominant perception to prevail.

### **6.3 CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

In addition to the aspect of employment creation is the one that African immigrant

traders in this case study helped in the achievement of South Africa's development goals. These goals are outlined in the Republic of South Africa Millennium Development Goals: Country Report (2013). The relevant development goals are Nos. 1 and 8. Millennium Development Goal (MDG); No. 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty and No. 8 aims to develop a global partnership for development. These MDGs are integrated with the National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 (National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 2011).

African immigrant traders in this case study stated that they had assisted 74 South African nationals to start their own small businesses, as shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: South African traders assisted by African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city between 2000 and 2012.

Nationality of the immigrant traders	Number of South Africans assisted	Nature of business
DRC	10	Cosmetics retailing and selling vegetables
Ghana	2	Making sandals
Mozambique	2	Buying different assortment of goods from wholesalers and reselling
Nigeria	2	Selling clothes
Somalia	50	Selling clothes
Tanzania	1	Beadwork
Zimbabwe	7	Consumable goods and vegetables

*N=40*

It is important to clarify that the number of South Africans whom the African immigrant traders claimed to have assisted were not under the employ of African immigrant traders at the time of the in-depth interviews. Thus, the information in Table 6.2 should not be confused with the information in Table 6.1, because they show different aspects; for example, the two South African nationals who were assisted by the Ghanaians were not the same people who were under the employ of the same. Also, in Table 6.1, the DRC traders had not employed any South African nationals, but as shown in Table 6.3, they had assisted them to start their own businesses. Employment creation for and assisting South African nationals to start their own small businesses should not be regarded as the same thing.

The African immigrant traders from the DRC said that they had assisted South African nationals by giving information about the source of goods. Ghanaian traders

stated that they taught two South Africans how to make sandals and these South Africans had then opened their own shops. A Mozambican immigrant trader stated that he assisted South Africans by putting them into contact with wholesalers from whom they could buy goods cheaply and sell at low prices with handsome profits. Nigerian immigrant traders said that the South Africans were initially employees, who must have learnt how to operate a business and then gone on to start their own businesses. Furthermore, the Somali traders stated that they assisted South Africans to set up their own shops to sell clothes. They also claimed that they assisted the South Africans by giving them information on where to buy goods from wholesalers in and around the Johannesburg inner city.

The researcher was not able to get proof of all these claims, but during the second phase of the in-depth interviews managed to speak to a South African trader who sold vegetables from a stall. She stated that she was assisted by her Zimbabwean counterpart, and another who sold cosmetics credited that to the assistance she received from a Congolese woman. In the second phase of the interviews, the researcher also managed to interview a South African man who sold clothes, blankets and household goods and stated that the Somalis had helped him with information regarding where to buy cheap goods in larger quantities.

Due to the fact that the researcher was not able to interview all South African nationals who allegedly benefitted from the assistance of African immigrant traders to start their own businesses, it may be the case that the rest of the information may be inaccurate, but for those interviewed by the researcher, there is evidence that this assistance did occur. Since this is a case study, it means that the information from those who were interviewed was verified. Thus, the question of whether it is true that African immigrant traders assisted South African traders to start their own businesses seems to be settled, but what remains unclear is the extent and scale of the assistance.

Accepting the evidence, however limited, that African immigrant traders assisted their South African counterparts to start small businesses shows a developmental role of African immigrant traders in this case study. The question of the two groups of traders assisting each other implies working together and illustrates a partnership for development at grassroots level; this fits in well with MDG No. 8 which targets a

global partnership for development. It is argued that when African immigrant traders from different countries work together with the South African traders in the Johannesburg inner city in this case study, this illustrates a mutually beneficial partnership. A partnership should not be defined by standards of agreements between big companies and indeed between countries. Grassroots level partnerships also count and they can be more meaningful because the impacts are direct and rules of engagement are determined by the people involved; in this case African immigrant and South African traders.

Additionally, such businesses have the potential to reduce poverty because families have a source of income, as suggested by the example of a South African lady who had opened a vegetable shop, another a cosmetics shop and a man who sells clothes, blankets and household goods. In these cases, contributions to the achievement of MDG No. 1 are clearly demonstrated. The formation of trading businesses by South African nationals in the Johannesburg inner city as a result of assistance from the African immigrant traders means that more employment opportunities and productive work is opened up. This ties in well with the objective of 'involving communities in their own development, all leading to rising living standards' National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 (2011:2).

This detail helps to highlight the fact that the African immigrant traders do bring a developmental role to the Johannesburg inner city, which seems to link with the South African government's commitment to building the capabilities of people and communities to reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality (The National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 2011; *The Star*, 16 May 2012:6). While it is accepted that not all African immigrant traders in this case study have contributed positively as discussed in this section, what needs to be highlighted is that it may not be correct to assume that all African immigrants cannot and do not bring positives to the area under study.

#### **6.4 REVENUE GENERATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE FORMAL ECONOMY**

##### **▪ Revenue generation**

Of the 40 African immigrant traders who were interviewed in the first phase of the interviewing process, 14 (35%) had registered companies and were therefore supposed to pay tax (Table 5.2 of Chapter 5), but it must be noted that the South

African government implements a graduated structure of taxing small businesses (Black et al. 2003:176), which suggests that some African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city may not pay tax at all. Although it was not possible to establish the exact amounts that these immigrants paid, the fact that they were compelled by law to pay tax could be taken to mean that they contributed to revenue generation in the Johannesburg inner city.

Another aspect of revenue generation is that 18 African immigrant traders (Table 5.3 of Chapter 5) were registered with the JMTC through the STA. They paid monthly rentals which ranged between R100 and R300 and on average this means that the African immigrant traders who were interviewed paid R2 400 a month or R43 200 cumulative annually, and, since the majority of the immigrants had been in the country for over five years, this means that they had contributed R216 000 to the Johannesburg municipality. This is an average estimate based on a small percentage of the immigrant traders studied. The actual figures could be more, but this reflects the contribution that African immigrant traders make to the Johannesburg inner city. Such income could be used by the Johannesburg municipality to provide public goods, and the contribution of this revenue by African immigrant traders can never be small. Surely this detail about the role which African immigrants play in the Johannesburg inner city needs highlighting. One can argue that if all the African immigrant traders were investigated in the Johannesburg inner city – and there were thousands – the results would show that in a month they contributed millions of South African Rands to revenue generation in Johannesburg municipality. This is a possible area for further research.

Since 8 out of 40 (20%) African immigrant traders were not registered either as companies with the CIPC or the JMTC, this means they did not contribute to revenue generation. In addition, and because it was not possible to obtain the amount of tax payments for 14 out of 40 (35%) of the registered companies, what has been established in this case study is that 18 out of 40 (45%) companies which paid rentals to the JMTC, as discussed in this section, made a definite contribution. In the absence of actual evidence, what is certain is that 45% (18 out of 40) of the African immigrant traders actually contributed towards revenue generation. For the registered companies, it is only probable that they paid tax based on the

requirements of the law, which they may or may not respect. However, the chances are that they did pay tax, because penalties for not paying are harsh. This suggests that in respect of revenue generation, it may be incorrect to say that all African immigrants do not contribute, some do.

All immigrants interviewed in this study stated that they paid Value Added Tax (VAT) on all goods that they bought. Value added tax is a type of indirect tax levied on goods and services by the national government (Black et al. 1999, 2003). An indirect tax is a way of collecting revenue from people with small incomes and those who are not captured by the tax bracket with the aim of making all the people in a country contribute to 'the upkeep of the government' (Black et al. 1999:196, 2003:198). Studies show that VAT has the capacity to generate more revenue compared to the old sales tax, hence Black et al. (1999:199, 2003:201) argue that VAT has attained the reputation of being a 'money machine'. Raising revenue is very important to finance government expenditure and to correct what is commonly called market failure problems. Governments need to provide public goods like roads, street lighting, law and order and defence. These are services which cannot be provided by the private sector because there is no incentive to do so. Such services are needed for an economy to function properly and for that to happen revenue is needed to finance government intervention.

The present research argues that if the African immigrants are accused of flooding South Africa, the flood in VAT payments must be equally highlighted because if there are many African immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city, it means that VAT also increases and helps in revenue generation. It is important to clarify that the 35% of African immigrant traders who owned registered companies stated that they paid VAT and the remainder argued that, in their individual capacities, they were charged VAT whenever they bought goods from shops in and around the Johannesburg inner city. They stated that they did not have to register in order to pay VAT as any shops from which they bought goods – shops which were registered for VAT – charged VAT on the goods sold. Thus directly or indirectly, the view from all African immigrants that they paid VAT seems to be correct. The point is that VAT is not only paid by African immigrants, but with their increased numbers they do contribute to revenue generation, which is ultimately collected by the South African Revenue

Services (SARS). This highlights the contributions that the African immigrants make in this regard in the Johannesburg inner city.

In the first phase of the in-depth interviews, 31 out of 40 (77.5%) African immigrant traders also raised a related point: they claimed that they had bank accounts and had held these accounts for as long as they had been in South Africa. They asserted that the bank charges levied on them, just like any other customer, constituted an economic contribution, as the charges on bank accounts help to raise the banks' capital.

Another aspect which emerged from the in-depth interviews with the African immigrant traders in all phases of the interviewing process – and corroborated by their fellow South Africans – was that the African immigrant traders bought their goods (for domestic use and resale both in South Africa and in their countries of origin) for cash because they could not open hire purchase accounts. Over 80% (34 out of 40) of the African immigrant traders argued that in their home countries the banking sector had collapsed to such an extent that credit facilities were not available and/or were limited. Consequently, they had grown up in the culture of buying goods for cash, including cars and houses and did not find buying goods on credit attractive or clever.

As a result, the African immigrant traders argued that this contributed to money circulation, as cash is the most liquid of all assets and enables people to use it immediately, unlike credit. This also reduces the risk of default and improves business cash flows. If more people are buying for cash, shops are able to restock goods, business grows and more profits are made; thus, more revenue is generated in the form of company tax and VAT. This suggests a contribution by African immigrant traders to business turnover in this case study. Furthermore, buying for cash is a good thing when inflation is high, so that waiting to receive cash in six months or twelve months' time can negatively affect the real purchasing power of money.

▪ **Link between the formal and informal economy**

Based on the fact that 35 out of 40 (87.5%) in the first phase, 7 out of 10 in the second and 3 out of 3 African immigrant traders in the third phase of the in-depth interviews bought their goods for cash from wholesalers around the Johannesburg



inner city; this highlights a link between the formal and the informal economy where the latter arguably play an important role in keeping the former in sound business. This is because the African immigrant traders who bought goods from wholesalers and resold them to the consumers injected money into the wholesalers' businesses. It can be stated that this kept these wholesalers in business, which potentially created jobs. This is confirmed by comparable studies such as Cohen (2010); Dwyer (2010); Mapadimeng (2011).

Despite the fact that this appears to be limited evidence, it helps to show that African immigrant traders in this case study played a positive role. Finally, relative to revenue generation and support for the formal economy, studies have shown that increased immigration generally increases economic productivity (Productivity Commission 2006). Therefore, the influx of African immigrants, especially those who formed businesses and also bought (mostly using cash) different types of goods from many wholesalers in the Johannesburg inner city generally increased the purchasing power of the economy and thus boosted demand for goods and economic growth.

## **6.5 PROVISION OF CHOICE FOR CONSUMERS**

### **▪ Provision of choice**

During the first phase of the in-depth interviews, 15 out of 40 (37.5%) African immigrant traders stated that they imported goods to the Johannesburg inner city, and in the second phase, 2 out of 10 provided a similar answer. In the final phase this answer did not feature. Imported products included, for example, traditional attire and different works of arts and Malawians and Tanzanians dominated the business of importing traditional African attire. The evidence provided by these African immigrant traders was that their imported goods were very popular with both African immigrant traders and some South African citizens as well.

On this basis, it is possible to advance the argument that African immigrant traders provided a choice for consumers. Therefore, it needs to be emphasised that, when discussing the importing function of African immigrant traders in this case study, reference is being made to fewer than half of the respondents. This being the case, the value which the African immigrants play does not diminish, but serves to highlight

that this thesis does not intend to over-exceptionalise that African immigrant traders in this case study imported goods to the Johannesburg inner city.

In addition to this, Ghanaians and Malawians claimed that they had brought special knowledge and products to South Africa. The Ghanaians, Malawians and Tanzanians claimed that they were still waiting to see a South African trader in the Johannesburg inner city who could do beading and embroidery. They claimed that they had freely taught their skills to those South Africans who were willing to interact with them and learn.

▪ **Quality goods at affordable prices**

Beyond the question of choice, which the importing of goods by African immigrant traders achieved, was the view that African immigrant traders provided goods to consumers at low and affordable prices. In this vein, 36 out of 40 (90%) African immigrant traders during the first phase of the interviews, 8 out of 10 in the second phase and 2 out of 3 in the third phase asserted that they provided quality goods at affordable prices. These immigrant traders stated that their goods were not only of a higher quality but were also fashionable as well. This assertion was confirmed during the second phase of interviews with both African immigrant and South African traders, in which 8 out of 10 of the latter group declared that they were happy with the goods which the African immigrant traders provided and added that in this regard, the African immigrant traders played an important role in the Johannesburg inner city.

Against the charge that these goods were of a lower quality, the African immigrant traders in all phases of the in-depth interview process claimed that if this was the case, they would not be in the enviable position of trying to keep up with the high and ever-increasing demand. The fact that customers flooded their shops was clear testimony that they were happy with what they were buying. This argument by African immigrant traders was corroborated by a South African trader who stated that:

‘These goods meet the demand and buying power of South Africa consumers who earn low incomes. So in a way, the cheap goods are necessary. Some of these cheap goods are of a high quality and indeed the same quality as the

goods that you get from stores like Edgars. For me I do not see any problem with the cheap goods. After all, the people who say these goods are cheap are those people with money who want to buy expensive goods, and they would not buy clothes from the stalls along the streets. The poor people who are the ones that buy and are dependent on these goods are not complaining' (Interview with Tshepo, a South African trader, Linear Market, Wanderers Street, 6 February 2013).

The researcher also observed that the African immigrant shops and trading stalls often had many customers and this caused congestion along streets like Bree and Plein at month end and over weekends as customers scrambled to buy from African immigrant traders' shops. The African immigrant traders argued that the best judge of the quality of the goods was someone who bought goods from them, and not someone who had had no experience of this interaction. Hence a South African trader argued that:

'The other blame is that African immigrant traders sell cheap low quality goods. The goods that the immigrants sell could be cheap, but they are affordable to many poor South Africans who cannot buy from the big and expensive shops. Quality in my view is relative. How is it cheap quality and to whom? The people who buy these, including myself, do not necessarily think so' (Interview with Sibusiso, a South African trader, at corner Bree and Eloff Streets, 3 February 2013).

As such, the fact that the consumers kept coming for more suggests that the African immigrant traders provided choice for consumers and they chose from both affordable and expensive goods, the former being made available by the African immigrant traders. On this basis, it appears as though African immigrant traders play a positive role in the Johannesburg inner city milieu. Other than this, African immigrant traders argued that there were shops which were owned by South African citizens which sold cheap goods but were never condemned for this. For this reason, African immigrant traders believe that:

'The complaint that African immigrant traders are selling cheap and low-quality goods is empty. I know shops that are owned by South Africans which sell cheap and sometimes low-quality goods. The shops are found all over the Johannesburg inner city, for example there is one in Hillbrow, another one in the

northern parts of the Johannesburg inner city and there is another one just after Newtown. The African immigrant shops even sell better goods at low and affordable prices. If it is about cheap goods and low prices, why are shops owned by South Africans not blamed? Is it because immigrants come from poor countries, whatever they do is illegal and destructive?' (Interview with Oluche, a Nigerian immigrant trader, Metro Mall, 18 February 2013).

Investigating further the view that African immigrant traders sold cheap goods of a low quality revealed that African immigrant traders in this case study were of the opinion that such a perception was far from reality as they were not responsible for the flood of cheap goods in the first place. A Congolese trader in this case study was adamant that;

'The view that African immigrants bring and sell cheap goods is a misleading fallacy. I can tell you that it is only a few years ago that the South African government reached a deal with the Chinese government to supply a quota of textiles to South Africa. My starting point is that the South African government gives the green light for the import of cheap Chinese goods. Even the officials in the ANC government put on the so-called cheap goods from China. How then is it a problem of the African immigrant traders that there is a flood of cheap Chinese goods in South Africa? Why does the South African government allow the import of large quantities of cheap Chinese goods in the first place? When these goods are sold by the Chinese they are not cheap and of low quality, but when African immigrants order from the Chinese wholesalers and sell the same goods at low prices it becomes a problem. My question is why it is like that or allowed to be like that? Do the goods become cheap and low quality when they are sold by African immigrant traders and expensive and high quality when they are sold by the Chinese business people, when it is the same type of goods from the same sources?' (Interview with Kasongo, a DRC immigrant trader long Eloff Street, near corner Bree and Eloff Streets, 29 January 2013).

It must be noted that in 2006, the South African government entered into a pact with the Chinese government to reduce the import of textiles, which was damaging the South African textile industry and leading to loss of jobs (Le Roux 2006; Biacuana 2009). The South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU) reported in 2006 that over 60 000 jobs had been lost in the sector as a result of cheap Chinese imports (Le Roux 2006), a view corroborated by Biacuana (2009). It is also

recorded that China is a leading exporter of clothing (Biacuana 2009). Therefore, even though the imports from China were reduced, the fact remains that cheap Chinese goods are allowed into the country by the government, which raises questions on why African immigrants are accused of selling cheap and low-quality goods from China. In addition, 'while quotas did succeed in reducing imports from China, SA's total clothing and textiles imports did not decrease. Instead, retailers predictably sourced imports from other low-cost Asian producers, such as Malaysia, Vietnam and Bangladesh. This clearly indicates the lack of competitiveness in the local industry even under a highly protected environment' (Biacuana 2009:1).

In this regard, the arguments by African immigrant traders are valid to the extent that the flood in the textile sector can be blamed on government policy regarding imports of textiles, and on the structural labour, policy and productivity issues in this sector because,

'SA's lack of competitiveness stems from a host of factors, most importantly labour: High labour costs could be offset by high productivity; however, local industry lacks the requisite skills, and technology. Labour productivity is further constrained by rigidities arising from a highly unionised labour force. SA's lack of competitiveness is aggravated by the inability of local industry to achieve short turnaround times relative to Asian counterparts who meet very short and reliable delivery times. Hence, the decline of SA's clothing and textiles sector cannot be entirely blamed on imports from Asia (or China). There are serious competitiveness problems that need to be dealt with if the sector is to have any sustainable future' (Biacuana 2009: 1-2).

Consequently, there may be some validity in the claims by African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city that the accusation that they sell cheap and low-quality goods may be an incomplete evaluation. As such, it is also evident that African immigrants are not responsible for the flood of cheap textile imports into the Johannesburg inner city.

▪ **Businesses competition**

The in-depth interviews also revealed the issue of business competition in the Johannesburg inner city. In the first phase of in-depth interviews, 22 out of 40 (55%) South African traders asserted that they felt threatened by other traders – both South African and African immigrants – who sold their goods in front of their shops. This

threatened their businesses and had nothing to do with whether competing traders were South Africans or African immigrants, registered or not. It is also interesting to record that, during the first phase of in-depth interviews, 17 out of 40 (42.5%) African immigrant traders also felt threatened by street traders, regardless of nationality. This suggests that the mere presence of African immigrant traders is not such a big problem with the South Africans who are in daily contact with these people.

Related to the above is that African immigrants as human beings are not the threatening other; the threat is about the way they operate their enterprises and the profits that they make, which the South African traders seem to have been not able to do. Results in this case study show that 33 out of 40 (82.5%) during the first phase of the in-depth interviews, 7 out of ten during the second phase and 2 out of 3 interviewees in the third phase of the in-depth interviews with South African traders were of the view that African immigrant traders realised higher profits in their businesses than the South African traders. These South African interviewees accepted that this does not make the African immigrant traders bad. The fact that African immigrant traders achieved good profits could be due to their hard work ethic and working extremely longer hours. The same South African traders in this case study and discussed in this section stated that African immigrant traders achieved higher profits than them, and also highlighted that African immigrants operated from spacious and smart shops and sold their goods in bulk. This lowered prices even further, which negatively impacted on the South African traders who claimed they could not afford the high rentals for spacious and smart areas where the African immigrant traders operated.

This suggests that the threat here is not about being foreign but about business practices and making a profit. This can provide a lesson for policy direction in terms of properly empowering South African traders in the Johannesburg inner city to acquire business skills through effective capacity-building programmes and also to have the necessary resources to launch viable enterprises – something the African immigrant traders are seen to have been able to do. The results suggest that the dearth of capital affects South African traders in the Johannesburg inner city. The starting point would be to properly empower them. An argument can be made that if African immigrant traders are occupying large and spacious offices which the South

African traders fail to do, it is not correct to view the immigrant traders as placing limitations on the capacity of South African traders. Thus, this narrative responds to the questions raised in Section 1.3 of Chapter 1 about the nature of business relations between African immigrant and South African traders and whether this was the source of the threatening other.

## **6.6 REVITALISING THE JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY**

Before giving an appraisal of what African immigrant traders have contributed in the revitalisation of the Johannesburg inner city, it is necessary to briefly describe the spatial and environmental conditions in the study area based on the in-depth interviews and field observations by the researcher.

### **▪ Spatial and environmental conditions**

Some of the shops in this description belonged to those African immigrant traders who declined to be interviewed, and while they fall within the study area, they are not shown on Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4 and Figure 5.2 in Chapter 5. Their inclusion in this narrative is intended to highlight the overall conditions in the study area.

- Between Loveday and Rissik Streets along Bree Street to the East, there were several clothing shops operated mostly by Somalis. The researcher noted that there were two big shops which had been renovated.
- Between Rissik and Joubert Streets, along Bree Street both to the East and West, over 25 shops operated from visibly unclean trading stalls. The researcher identified one refurbished shop (on the eastern side of Bree Street) to be operated by an African immigrant trader.
- Along Joubert Street, two refurbished shops were identified and the researcher interviewed African immigrant shop owners who operated from spacious and renovated shops, but the area is generally overcrowded by both African immigrant and South African traders
- Between Joubert and Eloff Streets, along Bree Street, the researcher noticed that African immigrant shops operated side-by-side with established outlets such as Ellerines and, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). Another observation was that on the pavements and next to the streets, where some African immigrant operated from stalls, the area was filthy and full of garbage – especially dirty old boxes and bags which used to contain clothes,

spoilt vegetables, used hair products and other types of litter. This was also evident along both Eloff and Joubert Streets within the study area.

- Between Eloff and Wanderers Streets, along Bree Street, a similar pattern was observed, as was the pattern between and along Joubert and Eloff Streets.
- At Linear Market (Wanderers Street), refurbishment by the City of Johannesburg had taken place but areas from which African immigrant and South Africa traders were operating were dirty.
- Along Wanderers Street, before the intersection with Plein Street, there were three refurbished shops from which some African immigrant traders operated.
- Along Plein Street, between Wanderers and Eloff Streets, there were four refurbished shops, mostly operated by African immigrant traders. The streets were dirty, mostly from cooking utensils being cleaned by both African immigrant and South African traders selling consumable goods, especially meat and pap. They washed their plates and threw water onto the pavement and the street.
- Between Joubert and Eloff Streets, along Plein Street, the area was crowded with stalls and the streets were dirty.
- Between Rissik and Joubert Streets, along Plein Street, there was refurbishment of two shops, some of which had been painted and tiled.
- Along Plein Street, between Rissik and Loveday Streets, the area was generally dirty and between Loveday and Harrison Streets – especially at the intersection of Harrison and Plein Streets – the area was crowded with shops. Between Harrison and Simmonds Streets is the Home Affairs Building, to the South of which is Metro Mall.
- Metro Mall was generally crowded and both African immigrant and South African traders operated.

### **Revitalisation or dilapidation and ghettoisation?**

The following is a detailed discussion on the impacts of African immigrant business on the environmental conditions in the study area.



- **Refurbishment by the City of Johannesburg**

The discussion in Section 3.5.3 of Chapter 3 suggested that revitalisation or the gentrification of the Johannesburg inner city is on the agenda of the City of Johannesburg, as expressed in the Joburg 2040: Growth and Development Strategy (2011). The refurbishment of the Linear Market at Wanderers Street (Figure 5.2) is an attempt by the City of Johannesburg to clean the area and make it conducive for traders, be they immigrants or South Africans. The composition of the traders suggests there are both South African nationals and African immigrant traders. However, after the refurbishment by the City of Johannesburg, Linear Market is generally dirty and littered. Considering that both African immigrants and South Africans operate from this market, without a proper quantification of which group of people littered more than others, it is possible to argue that at the Linear Market, both African immigrant and South African traders are not helping the efforts of the City of Johannesburg to clean up the area.

- **Revitalisation by African immigrant traders?**

Within the study area, 14 shops had been revamped by African immigrant traders: two between Loveday and Rissik Streets, along Bree Street; one between Joubert and Rissik Streets, along Bree Street; two along Joubert Street; three along Wanderers Street; four between Wanderers and Eloff Streets, along Plein Street; and two between Rissik and Joubert Streets, along Plein Street. The interviewed African immigrant traders explained that the landlords had rented them shop spaces and granted them permission to partition, paint and tile the shops and also make any other improvements. The cost of refurbishing and revitalising the shops had been an effort by the African immigrant traders and not the landlords. Given the fact that 14 out of over 300 shops and stalls in the study area had been revitalised, this looks insignificant.

However, given the fact that private capital from the African immigrant traders had been used to give a facelift to buildings which were nearing dilapidation can be considered important, however small the effort. It was discussed in the Section 3.5.3 of Chapter 3 that the City of Johannesburg wanted to clean the Johannesburg inner city by attracting both the private and public sectors to invest in and renovate the buildings. Although the interviewed African immigrant traders in this case study had

not bought the buildings, they had achieved some renovation and this falls perfectly in line with the agenda of the City of Johannesburg to give the Johannesburg inner city a facelift.

It is accepted that African immigrants have done a little to regenerate the study area, but that little bit contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the cleaning and revitalising the Johannesburg inner city. It can be considered as a bottom-up strategy of gentrification based on individual people who invest their own money. Although these African immigrant traders repair these buildings for personal and even selfish reasons, such as to attract many customers and make more money, the indirect result is that they revitalise and develop the Johannesburg inner city, even though this happens on a very small scale.

However, it is important to state that the revamped shops operate side-by-side with environmental conditions which seem to add degeneration and dilapidation to the area. For example, along Joubert Street, two shops had been refurbished, but on the same street there was overcrowding and the area was generally dirty and littered. The same observation was made in the area between Eloff and Joubert Streets, along Bree Street, as well as between Eloff and Wanderers Streets, along both Bree and Plein Streets, and also at the Metro Mall. In some areas, African immigrant traders on the streets littered the pavements in front of food outlets such as KFC and big retail outlets like Ellerines, Fair Price among others.

This scenario questions the developmental role of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city regarding their efforts to revitalise the area under study. Could we call it a positive impact on the environment when refurbished shops coexisted with garbage and litter and when African immigrant traders operated in front of and littered places around food outlets like KFC? There is no definite answer to these questions, just as there can be no definite apportioning of blame. Those African immigrant traders who have clearly redeveloped the areas in which they operate should not be classified under the same label as those who litter and wash cooking utensils on the streets.

In addition, this discussion suggests that South African traders are guilty of littering the area under study. Thus, it appears as though, far from there being one certain

answer that African immigrants have led to the dilapidation or ghettoisation of the Johannesburg inner city, they have led to both positives and negatives. They have led to the revitalisation of shops in the study area; some have littered the place and some have crowded the place. Regarding the revitalisation of the Johannesburg inner city, are African immigrant traders completely bad and negative? It seems as though some can be regarded as having a negative effect and some do not. As discussed in this section, some areas have been developed by the African immigrant traders and some have been destroyed. Thus, in the study area there are spatial and environmental manifestations of gentrification and/or regeneration and dilapidation existing side-by-side and African immigrants have been responsible for this paradoxical coexistence.

### **6.7 TRANSNATIONAL CHARACTER OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS**

Some African immigrant traders in this case study, such as Nigerians, Tanzanians, Ghanaians, Malawians and Zimbabweans, demonstrated a transnational character. These African immigrant traders have brought new goods to the Johannesburg inner city – for example, African traditional attire – and this enriches the market (Section 6.5 of Chapter 6). From the in-depth interviews, it was clear that African immigrant traders also took South African products to their countries. The Nigerian entrepreneur who ran a courier company also confirmed this. In this case study, 11 out of 40 (27.5%) African immigrant traders came to the Johannesburg inner city not for employment, but to set up business and buy various goods and services for their businesses back home.

Before a discussion of the implications of the transnational character of African immigrant traders in this case study, it is important to briefly discuss the nature and forms of transnational activities in which these African immigrant traders engaged. Malawians, Mozambicans, Tanzanians and Zimbabweans (23 out of 40), representing about 57.5 % of the African immigrant traders, imported goods to the Johannesburg inner city which they sold from their trading stalls. Once these goods were sold, they bought goods from the Johannesburg inner city for resale in their countries of origin. This is an example of 'circulatory transnationalism' (Ambrosin 2014:622).

In addition to this, Ghanaians, Malawians and Tanzanians also imported traditional African attire for sale to fellow African immigrant traders and South African citizens. This is an example of or 'commercial transnationalism' (Ambrosin 2014:622). In this case study, 17 out of 40 (42.5%) African immigrant traders who did not travel to their countries of origin explained that they sent remittances, especially money. Regarding the monetary remittances, it is instructive to note that an average of about R20 000, was sent out every month. These remittances show economic leakage. Zimbabweans, Malawians and Mozambicans also sent material goods. This transnational pattern conforms to 'connective transnationalism' (Ambrosin 2014:622).

A discussion on the implications of this transnational aspect of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city is important as it assists the aim of this research.

#### ▪ **Imports and exports**

Concerning the actual and potential benefits of goods which were imported by African immigrant traders, an argument was made in Section 6.5 of Chapter 6 that these goods provided variety to the market. In addition, African immigrant traders also exported goods which they bought from wholesalers in and around the Johannesburg inner city. While it is accepted that there are Chinese wholesalers in the study area, what is also true is that there are South African wholesalers from whom African immigrants bought goods, which they in turn exported. Additionally, all African immigrant traders explained that they bought their goods from both Chinese and South African wholesalers, and it was impossible to work out exactly the percentages of African immigrant and South African traders who bought their goods from either Chinese or South African groups of wholesalers. This is because the same African immigrant traders who bought from Chinese wholesalers also bought from South African wholesalers, depending on the availability, price and type of goods which they were looking for.

Based on the fact that African immigrant traders bought their goods from South African wholesalers as well, it can be argued that these African immigrant traders provided easy avenues for export of South African goods to the African market. The extent to which this can economically contribute to the Johannesburg inner city economy begs further research, but what is suggested is that the immigrants do

export goods made in South Africa to their countries of origin, although they also export Chinese goods. After all, these Chinese wholesalers operate from, among other places, the Johannesburg inner city. It is possible to argue that even when African immigrant traders export goods from these Chinese wholesalers operating in the Johannesburg inner city, there is an increase in economic activity which should ideally benefit the Johannesburg inner city. Again, this is a possible area for future research.

In the process of exporting goods from the Johannesburg inner city, Zimbabwean immigrant traders claimed that not only did they operate businesses in the Johannesburg inner city, but they also bought goods such as clothes and building materials which they later resold in Zimbabwe. A similar view was expressed by Malawians, Mozambicans and Tanzanians. It is not the government, South African companies and/or wholesalers that were importing and exporting these goods, but African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. On a very small scale, this demonstrates a positive economic benefit to those wholesalers and industries in the Johannesburg inner city from which goods are exported. Furthermore, the consumers in general also benefited from tastes (imports) from other countries on the African continent.

This aspect suggests that the import and export activities of the African immigrant traders are integrated with the economies of the Johannesburg inner city, thus further highlighting an interface between the formal and informal economy. This is a benefit, but more empirical research is needed to define and elaborate on the exact nature and extent of integration between the urban formality and informality in the study area and benefits that South African companies in the Johannesburg inner city enjoy as a result of goods exported to the African region by African immigrant traders.

- **Import and export taxes**

While discussing the issue of imports and exports, it necessary to comment on whether African immigrant traders paid import and export taxes. In the beginning of this discussion it was noted that 23 out of 40 (57.5%) African immigrant traders were involved in the import and export activities. Of these, 9 out of 23 (39.1%) stated that they paid import duties. These respondents stated that the amounts they paid at the

border were not uniform, as it depended on the goods which they were importing. They stated that they filled in 'declaration forms', and paid import duties accordingly.

Although the number of people who paid these import duties is low, the contribution which they made can still count towards revenue generation. It is possible that the other African immigrant traders in this case study imported their goods without paying import taxes and in that way prejudiced the government of revenue. Even worse, those African immigrant traders who stated that they did not import actually did so, which could mean substantial economic leakage.

An interesting revelation was that the same African immigrant traders who stated that they paid import tax when they brought their goods into South Africa did not pay any tax when they exported goods. They highlighted that at the South Africa border, it was not a challenge to export, but to import. The researcher did not follow up on this issue. Hence, follow-up research on this is necessary to establish if it is standard procedure to export goods without paying a tax, or whether it is dependent on the types of goods exported, and how this impacts revenue collection for the government.

- **Transnational African immigrant traders and regional integration from below?**

The evidence of transnational activity by African immigrant traders aptly demonstrates the concept of transnationalising traders, which are entrepreneurial activities that take place across national borders (Yeung 2009). For example, Ghanaians, Malawians, Nigerians, Tanzanians and Zimbabwean traders in this case study have shown that they were transnationalising traders in the sense that their businesses were not limited to, but spread beyond South Africa in a periodic mobile fashion. The importing of goods from other African countries to and exporting of goods from South Africa demonstrates that the African immigrant traders in this case study were integrating the economic activities of the African countries concerned. This seems to be in keeping with the stated objectives of the African Union as highlighted in the Abuja Treaty (African Union 1991).

Taking this argument further, it is important for this thesis to comment on the fact that the integration of the African continent to form the AEC should be based on fully

functional regional economic blocks like the EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, CEN-SAD, COMESA, GAD, UMA and SADC (Section 3.5.3 of Chapter 3). South Africa is part of the SADC and the AU and by extension the proposed AEC. Therefore, when African immigrant traders from Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe import goods from their countries and also export South African goods, this can be considered as integrating the SADC region economically. This enhances functional interdependency between the South African companies in the Johannesburg inner city and consumers in other African countries.

This is because these African immigrant traders sell their goods from their own countries in South Africa and they do the same to South African goods in their countries. Such is grassroots economic integration and this is in line with the both the objectives of the AU and SADC, the latter being stated in the Declaration and Treaty of SADC (1992). Indeed, Mitrany (1975) argues that bottom-up economic processes such as cross-border trade are central to regional integration, because top-down approaches tend to be resisted by people. Thus, there seems to be a case in the argument that transnational economic activities by African immigrant traders in this case study could contribute towards the integration of the SADC.

In this regard, this research suggests that African immigrant traders can be a basis for regional economic integration and also a mechanism for developing those areas that lag behind; the areas from which immigrants originate. Therefore, when these immigrants attempt to make a living in the Johannesburg inner city, they are attempting to economically advance themselves and their communities in their countries of origin; they are attempting to close the gap between the rich and the poor. This is of geographical relevance in terms of showing, firstly, the unevenness of development, and secondly, the gaps between the rich and poor countries and how migration can potentially and actually help to reduce these imbalances. This is one of the reasons for the formation of SADC and the proposed AEC.

The African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city seem to be doing that well. For example, a Nigerian trader operating a courier company shared that he delivered goods to over 20 African countries. He was distributing goods from the Johannesburg inner city, suggesting that companies in the Johannesburg inner city were integrating with consumers in 20 African countries. In this sense, these African

immigrant traders can be seen as spreading globalisation from below, which in the same vein Yeung (2009:211) calls 'mobile carriers of globalisation'. How these African immigrant traders can be avenues for regional economic integration and developing the underdeveloped regions in Africa deserves further research, but the present research points towards this potential.

## **6.8 UNPRODUCTIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE TRADERS**

In order to fully appreciate the contribution of African immigrant traders to the Johannesburg inner city, it is necessary to briefly explore the illegal activities of destructive and unproductive traders. Such enterprises lack legitimacy and the approval of the communities in which they operate (Baumol 1990, 1993; Anderson and Smith 2007; Van Aardt et al. 2008, 2011; Bendeman 2011). The view that African immigrant traders engaged in illegal activities in their shops, such as selling drugs and other crime, is widespread as discussed in Sections 2.3 of Chapter 2 and Section 3.3.2 of Chapter 3. In this regard, the present research considered the views of fellow African immigrant traders, the South African traders, in all phases of the in-depth interview process, and the JMPD, in order to get close to the reality of the situation.

### **▪ Drugs**

The first phase of the in-depth interviews suggested that 7 out of 40 (17.5%) African immigrant traders stated that fellow African immigrant traders sold drugs as opposed to 11 out of 40 (27.5%) South African traders. In the second and third phases, 2 out of 10 and 1 out of 3 African immigrant traders stated that their fellow traders sold drugs, as opposed to 4 out of 10 and 1 out of 3 South African traders, respectively. What is suggested by these results is that both African immigrant and fellow South African traders believe that drug peddling by African immigrant traders does take place. The fact that African immigrant traders sell drugs is bad enough and this makes them a threat, especially given the fact that there is a consensus of views from both African immigrant and South African traders. Even if these views are in the minority, this should not make the selling of drugs a small problem.

The interview with the JMPD inspector confirmed that some African immigrant traders like Nigerians sold drugs. The Inspector explained that some Nigerians in the Johannesburg inner city used their shops as fronts for drug peddling. He asserted that those Nigerians pretended to be selling sweets and repairing cell phones when



in fact they were selling drugs. He explained that what he was saying was based on the fact that the JMPD had arrested Nigerians who were guilty of this practice. Based on the views of fellow African immigrant traders, South African traders and the JMPD, it is clear that some African immigrant traders sold drugs.

When asked further about this issue, the African immigrant traders said that criminal activity, including selling drugs, was not a profession reserved for African immigrants. They claimed that it was true or possible that there were some African immigrant traders who were involved in illegal activities in their businesses, but there were others that were working for their money honestly. They argued that, just as there are good and bad South African citizens, why can't there be bad and good African immigrants? Why is it that all African immigrants are seen as bad and criminals? That being so, a Nigerian immigrant trader stated:

'I have seen foreigners who sell drugs. I have seen Ethiopians and even my fellow compatriots selling drugs. What is more interesting is that I have also seen South African citizens who sell these drugs as well. From this, it is clear that to blame drugs on African immigrants is untruthful. These drugs are sold to South African and other nationalities, which means that African immigrants are negatively affected by the drug peddling activities. It is not only South African citizens that are victims, but when you read newspapers about drugs, we get the impression that they are only sold to South Africans by African immigrants and South Africans are the only ones affected. That is an unfortunate misrepresentation. Problems in society affects everyone, they do not select nationality or citizenship' (Interview with Oluche a Nigerian immigrant trader, Metro Mall, 18 February 2013)

It is apparent that some African immigrant traders engaged in illegal activities, which makes them destructive. However, their South African counterparts are not innocent because some are guilty of the same practices. What must be told is that both African immigrants and South African nationals are responsible for these ills and blaming one side and promoting the other will not solve the problem. In the light of this evidence, it is clear that media reports like these are not well informed: 'Many of us live in fear of foreign gangsters and conmen' (*Daily Sun* 14 April 2008:3) and 'magic rats are stealing my cash, a tuck shop owner believes that a Zimbabwean merchant is sending debt collectors to her place – magical rats – the frightened

woman admits that she has owed the alien merchant money since last year' (*Daily Sun* 14 April 2008). Such reports give the impression that African immigrants are con stars and cannot do business properly. In the same vein, the South African is referred to as a woman and the Zimbabwean is called an alien, when it is known that the person is from Zimbabwe. The newspaper chose to emphasise the alien part, rather than the fact that she is an immigrant from Zimbabwe

In addition, African immigrant traders argued that they were equally affected by criminal activities just like any other person in South Africa, and to apply the label of drug peddler to all African immigrant traders was inaccurate. The interviews with the South African traders, fellow African immigrants and the JMPD show that the majority of African immigrants do not sell drugs, which means the claim that there are good and bad African immigrants is true, just as it is true that there are good and bad South Africans. Therefore, the fact that a very limited number of immigrants are engaged in drugs does not make all of them in the Johannesburg inner city guilty *ipso facto*.

During the second phase of in-depth interviews, the researcher was alerted to a Nigerian immigrant trader who had been arrested a few days earlier for selling drugs; he was out of jail and back in his shop. The African immigrant and the South African traders who alerted the researcher to this man claimed that the Nigerian was bragging that he was out because he had bribed the police. It can therefore be argued that the issue of selling drugs would be limited if the law enforcement agents were not interested parties. Two interviewees, one South African and the other an African immigrant trader, reasoned that illegal activities such as selling drugs continued unchecked because of corruption on the part of the JMPD.

Seemingly, this is a complicated set-up, and how it is the sole result of the African immigrant traders only, is difficult to understand, suggesting it is wrong to apportion the label of the threatening other to the African immigrants traders only, at least in respect of drug peddling. In this scenario, it is reasonable to argue that the JMPD allow it to continue because they benefitted. If those who deal in drugs, (however small the quantities) are arrested, there will be no more bribes for the police. In this way, the police become responsible for the continued existence of and, by extension, become accomplices in drug peddling in the Johannesburg inner city. It clearly

follows that a proper and objective accusation of the role of African immigrant traders in respect of drug peddling in the Johannesburg inner city must of necessity capture these dynamics.

- **Pirated goods**

Linked to the issue of drugs is that of pirated goods. During all the phases of in-depth interviews, the researcher observed that some African immigrant traders would close their shops whenever the JMPD passed by. It was established that these immigrant traders were guilty of selling fake brands and improperly imported goods. This makes their shops destructive. However, in the second phase of the in-depth interviews, the researcher unearthed that there was a lot of corruption involved. Some African immigrant traders claimed that their goods had passed through immigration or ports of entry by paying bribes. It was not possible to follow up on the issue, but what is clear at a preliminary level is that some of the pirated goods enter South Africa at ports of entry where African immigrant traders paid bribes.

Therefore, when African immigrant traders pay these bribes it is wrong, but for the South African authorities at ports of entry to accept these bribes and allow illegal goods into the country is not only bad, but worse. In this case, the threatening other goes just beyond the African immigrant traders. This is a clear case where both the South Africans and the African immigrant traders are equally guilty, but it is arguable that, if corruption on the side of the South African authorities who accept bribes at ports of entry was non-existent, then the issue of pirated goods would be limited.

In addition, those unregistered traders who operated along the streets suffered police corruption because the police confiscated their goods, which made the traders either pay heavy fines or bribe the police in order to have a right to trade on the streets of the Johannesburg inner city. African immigrant traders commented that the JMPD was corrupt because whenever those patrolling the streets needed money, they approached shops owned by African foreigners and made accusations about the failure of these shop owners to observe some laws, of which they had never been aware. If African immigrant traders failed to bribe them, they looted their goods from designated trading zones. Those who bribed the police earned the right to trade on the streets of the Johannesburg inner city.

It can further be commented that due to the fact that the JMPD allowed all manner of people to trade on the streets, including in undesignated trading zones, this provided fertile ground for the proliferation of dangerous underground economic activities. If the African immigrant traders break the law in terms of conducting illegal activities and trading in undesignated zones, they must face the full course of the law, and not be made to pay bribes. Therefore, when police officers solicit, and the African immigrant traders offer bribes, this makes the two parties corrupt, but most unfortunately promotes dangerous underground economic activities. This has the potential of turning Johannesburg inner city into a dangerous place.

Also, the African immigrant traders also asserted that immigration or customs officials allowed the importation of pirated goods into South Africa. These immigrants asserted that that was the reason there were tonnes of pirated goods in the Johannesburg inner city; even though they were 'imported', they were not formally registered. This was another dimension of corruption on the part of South African officials that was manifested in the space of African immigrant traders. Consequently, the African immigrant traders argued that:

'A related point is that many foreigners from outside Africa smuggle goods into South Africa. These goods pass through some official entry points where the officials are bribed. When we order these goods, they are already pirated because the culprits who are not always African immigrants bribed customs and immigration officers. When we sell them in our shops, we would have bought them from wholesalers around Johannesburg inner city, but it is sad that we, African immigrants, are branded as the lawless people who sell pirated goods, when in some cases we unknowingly bought goods from big wholesalers who are not even troubled or visited by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police. The African immigrant traders suffer and are labelled negatively because they are easy targets, vulnerable people, who cannot always speak out and be heard' (Interview with Oluche a Nigerian immigrant trader, Metro Mall, 18 February 2013).

In relation to corruption by South African authorities, the findings of this research were later confirmed by an Amnesty International Report that South Africa has become more corrupt since 2009, and on a corruption perception index it was now ranked 69 out of 176 countries globally. This corruption involved, among other

issues, the harassment by police officers of foreign traders. The police officers are accused of confiscating and/or looting and reselling goods belonging to immigrant traders (Brooke 2012; Giokos 2012)

Closely linked to the above is the issue of pirated musical CDs and DVDs, associated with African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city. The interviews reveal that both African immigrant traders and South African nationals were involved in the selling of pirated musical CDs and DVDs. The researcher observed and conversed with both South African and African immigrant traders who were selling these pirated goods. It is difficult to understand why the African immigrant traders appear to be the guilty party in this situation. What is certain is that this illegal trade is harmful to the music industry in that it deprives the artists of income and the government of taxes that are due. Both South African and international artists suffer. While the traders, whether African immigrants or South Africans, make quick profits, the long-term effect is that it amounts to stealing from the artists and the government. This cannot be celebrated as entrepreneurial.

Therefore, regarding destructive and unproductive traders in this case study, the interview results suggest that these could be operating just as much as there are good and productive shops run by African immigrant traders, but this cannot diminish or erase the contributions of good, honest and hardworking African immigrant traders. As such, the claim that all the African immigrant traders are the threatening other in terms of the criminal activities is not supported, because there are good and honest African immigrant traders who are themselves threatened by illegal and criminal activities by both South African citizens and African immigrants. The threatening other in this case is not the African immigrant traders only.

## **6.9 SPREAD OF DISEASE**

It is important to consider what the African immigrant and South African traders said about the spread of disease. This is relevant in view of the fact that African immigrants are accused of importing and spreading diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). All African immigrant traders interviewed in this study argued that it was not a fact that they spread diseases; they claimed the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS was a result of the interplay of many and sometimes complex factors such as culture, level

of education, poverty and indeed migration. They argued that to attribute the increase in HIV/AIDS rates in the Johannesburg inner city to the presence of African immigrants was simplistic.

During the second phase of in-depth interviews, a South African man who operated from a stall at the corner of Bree and Eloff Streets contested the claim that African immigrants bring in and spread disease by suggesting that in KwaZulu-Natal, especially in the rural areas, there were higher incidences of HIV/AIDS infection and there were no foreigners in these rural areas. The South African man stated that these are South African people who are based in rural areas where there is limited or no contact with foreigners. He asserted that the example that he gave showed that it was not exactly correct to accuse foreigners of being promiscuous and in the process spreading disease. This is telling to the extent that it comes from a South African citizen who is in daily contact with the African immigrants and understands that some accusations are baseless.

#### **6.10 TAKING OVER THE JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY: BURDEN ON INFRASTRUCTURE**

Against the charge that they had invaded and taken over the Johannesburg inner city, the African immigrant traders in this case study argued that this is an oversimplification of the real issue on the ground, which was that the stalls which the African immigrants currently occupied had been empty and they had applied to the JMTC which allocated them. All along the South Africans had not been interested in these stalls.

Consequently, African immigrant traders contend that because they applied for and were granted permission to operate in an economic space, it cannot be regarded as taking over or invading. While it is true that there may be African immigrants who were illegally trading, it is curious that they are the ones mentioned and highlighted more than those who were legally and legitimately allocated trading stalls and spaces.

Regarding the view that the African immigrants were a serious burden on the social and physical infrastructure, the African immigrant traders argued that this was an over-simplification and a misrepresentation of the reality. This was because the African immigrants were not exactly connected to South African resources, as they

were not South African citizens. The African immigrant traders claimed that they paid for the social and physical infrastructure that they used and did not get anything free of charge. They maintained that by paying cash for the different types of infrastructures that they used, they felt that they contributed to the Johannesburg inner city, rather than taking away from or destroying the infrastructure. They asserted that both physical and social infrastructures were built to be used and the fact that they paid for their use, emphasises the inaccuracy of the view that they prey on the South African resources and infrastructures. This view was forcefully advanced by a Nigerian immigrant trader, who adamantly asserted that;

'There are claims that we prey on South African resources, which I think is not absolutely correct. I believe that the majority of African immigrants in South Africa today are not connected to South African resources. I can demonstrate this by telling you that the bar-coded green identity book is the most recognised document and rightfully so for purposes of employment and access to resources, which means that with a passport and work permit, the latter of which is nearly impossible to get, African immigrants are excluded already, they are not directly connected to employment, and this leaves them vulnerable and easy prey for unscrupulous employers who offer them meagre salaries. Secondly, the social and physical infrastructure that we use, we pay for them. We do not ask for houses, we buy or rent flats and houses for. We also pay for the rates and rent. When claims are made that we prey on and use up resources what else does that mean, except that African immigrants are not wanted in South Africa? The shops that I rent, I pay the South African owner as do many other foreigners. The goods that I order from the wholesalers around Johannesburg inner city and others that I import are sold at affordable prices. I raise these points because I want to show that it is impossible for all the African immigrants to be a threat or a problem, which your research calls the threatening other' (Interview with Oluche, a Nigerian immigrant trader, Metro Mall, 18 February 2013).

However, the argument against this view can be levelled; the fact that it is not so much about paying for the infrastructure, but exerting too much pressure. If there are many people on limited infrastructure; whether they paid for it or not, does not stop it from wearing down. After all, it was not all African immigrants who rented and paid for the business shops; others actually traded from the undesignated zones along streets, which can qualify as a burden on infrastructure. That aside, the

argument from the Nigerian immigrant trader seems to highlight what they think they contributed; which contribution need not be exaggerated and must be considered against the negative outcomes that may be associated with the use of the infrastructure.

### **6.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter suggests that African immigrant traders in this case study are, on the one hand, linked to their South African counterparts and on the other to the formal economy with both actual and potential economic and social contributions. In addition, African immigrant traders in this case study do contribute towards, for example, employment creation, South African development goals, revitalising the Johannesburg inner city, the provision of a variety of goods in the market at affordable prices as well as revenue generation. What is also suggested by these results in this case study is that, it is not all African immigrant traders who make the contributions mentioned in this section. Not all African immigrant traders create employment and contribute to the achievement of South Africa`s development goals, for example. Some actively contribute towards the deteriorating environmental conditions in this case study.

Furthermore, what is also suggested by the results in this case study is that it is not all African immigrant traders who are transnational import and export goods and pay import and export duties, just as not all are destructive in terms of conducting illegal activities or importing pirated goods and spreading disease. An examination of the evidence provided by the African immigrant traders – and largely corroborated by South African traders in this case study – suggests that the issue of African immigrant traders as the threatening other is not simple and straightforward because contributions made by African immigrant traders are of a variegated nature. Therefore, whether African immigrant traders are the threatening other or not remains unsettled. Hence, in an attempt to settle this question and highlight the complex nature of the issue of the threatening other, the next chapter takes up the deconstruction of the threatening other further through an intensive appraisal of the evidence obtained in this case study.



## **CHAPTER 7: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The results of this case study suggest that the dominant discourse in contemporary South Africa which portrays the African immigrants as the threatening other is not the complete assessment. Dependent on what the African immigrant and South African traders have said, new views on the threatening other and what is not said about African immigrants emerged in this case study. Based on this, this thesis is re-authoring the prevailing discourse, to include suppressed, marginalised or excluded views about African immigrants, emanating from the three-tier interview phases of both African immigrant and South African traders (first phase 80 interviewees: 40 African immigrant and 40 South African traders; second phase: 10 African immigrant and 10 South African traders and finally three interviewees from both the African immigrant and South African traders).

It is important to reiterate that this research illuminates the dynamics in the Johannesburg inner city and does not pretend to represent the whole of Johannesburg or the whole country. Consequently, the results of this research are that African immigrant traders in this case study bring a mixture of positives and negatives suggesting that absolute portrayals of African immigrants as the needy, destitute, defiled and dangerous anti-citizens should not have a place and must not be accorded one in the public and private discourses. In this light, this chapter traces the deconstruction process (Figure 2.1, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2) which had attained these results.

### **7.2 REINTERPRETING THE HIERARCHY**

In order to show which hierarchy this study attempts to reinterpret, it is relevant to re-state that this thesis investigates the dominant discourse in the South African media (*Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:8; *Daily Sun*, 9 May 2008:2; *Sowetan* 2 June 2010:3; 14 November 2011:9; *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011:21; *Sowetan* 2 May 2012:12) and public domain as reported by scholars (Neocosmos 2006; Vigneswaran 2007; Crush 2008a; 2008b; 2011; Landau 2008; Nyamnjoh 2010; Muzondidya 2010; Rugunanan 2011; Crush and Tawodzera 2014:656) that African immigrants in contemporary South Africa are perceived as a problem. African immigrants in general are

conceived as burdens on the social and physical infrastructure: they take away jobs meant for South African citizens and are involved in crime and other anti-social proclivities like using witchcraft to steal money and livestock in South Africa. The negatives also extend to importing and spreading diseases, including the deadly HIV/AIDS.

Consequently, using a case study of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, this thesis reinterprets this hierarchy by posing alternative and competing views, which undermine the complete negative portrayal and depersonalisation of African immigrants in contemporary South Africa. This reinterpretation of the hierarchy is the deconstruction of the threatening other through in-depth interviews with the people who are actively involved in the scene – African immigrant traders and their South African counterparts. This was considered important because the views and perceptions of the people involved proved more valuable than the information from the popular press and the public domain.

Therefore, the interviews with the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city necessarily included rebel voices, which troubled the dominant discourse that African immigrants are the threatening other. The criteria for choosing interviewees (Section 4.4.4 of Chapter 4) which yielded these rebel voices and alternative views was considered satisfactory to the extent of informing a study of this nature. By highlighting alternative perceptions, these interviews denied the authority of the discourse that African immigrants are a problem. Consequently, the conception of this research was and still is reinterpreting the hierarchy that African immigrants in contemporary South Africa are a problem.

### **7.3 TRACING WHAT IS NOT SAID**

Inclusive of all the three phases of the interviewing process, this case study of African immigrant and South African traders in the Johannesburg inner city demonstrates that what is not said about African immigrants are their positive or other contributions to the communities in which they have elected to live. The literature review (Sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.3 of Chapter 2; Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 of Chapter 3), seem to suggest that what is not said is by design, and not a result of naïve representations. These omissions relate to the following:

### **7.3.1 Employment creation**

There is evidence that some African immigrant traders in this case study created – and indeed some did not create – employment for South African citizens (Section 6.2 of Chapter 6). The popular discourse does not seem to separate between those who create employment and those who do not; the perception is that all African immigrants take away jobs and by extension do not create any employment. This research argues that in the media and public discourse, there should be a separation of African immigrant traders on the basis of those who create employment and those who do not, just as in this case study there are South African traders who argued that some African immigrant traders created employment and some who said they did not.

In addition, African immigrant traders in this case study also created employment for other African immigrants. This illustrates that African immigrants help each other and may not always be dependent on the government and the City of Johannesburg for help. In the example of employment creation by African immigrant traders and the questioning of the discourse of the threatening other, several views emerge. The first is that, although not all African immigrant traders in this case study created employment, it is no longer debatable that African immigrant traders create employment what is debatable is the scale of this contribution. Secondly, the fact that some African immigrant traders create employment means that that the complete accusation that African immigrants take away jobs is disabled. Thirdly, this means that not all African immigrants are destitute, needy and burdensome. Not all of them are anti-citizens.

However, without undermining the fact that African immigrant traders contribute towards employment creation, this thesis takes the debate further and comments on the fact that African immigrant traders who set up their businesses and exploit the business potential in the Johannesburg inner city may in fact be regarded as selfish. While it is accepted that there may be other factors which lead such businesses to fail to create employment, the views from some South African traders that such businesses may be a threat by sending profits back to their countries of origin may not be very wrong. However, in cases where such African immigrant traders have operated legally and registered their businesses, would it be wrong to invest the

profits elsewhere? Do they become anti-citizens by remitting profits to their countries of origin? After all, there is direct employment which, in this case study, some of these African immigrant traders did not create, but this could be looked at differently. These African immigrant traders buy and sell goods (Section 5.5. of Chapter 5) which it could be suggested generates demand for some goods and services from the wholesalers where they bought these goods. Such demand promotes the productive sector to employ more labour. The fact that they did not create direct employment may not mean that they cannot indirectly contribute towards the creation of employment. A possible area for future research is how the informal and formal economy intersect to create employment in the Johannesburg inner city.

Nevertheless, concerning employment creation, African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city both create and also do not create employment. This is not said in the popular press and public discourse and this research fills that gap and challenges reports (*Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:8; *Sowetan* 14 November 2011:9), which seem to suggest that all African immigrants take away jobs. They may not be great jobs, but they are still jobs from which South Africans are salaried. Furthermore, although this researcher did not explore the issue of salaries paid to South African citizens who were employed by African immigrant traders, it is possible that they could have been exploited. This is another possible area for future research. If the suggestion that exploitation of South African citizens was possible in the African immigrant shops is accepted, the aspect of employment creation by these African immigrant traders becomes open to many questions. Queries can be raised regarding the quality of employment that African immigrant traders create, such as: Are the conditions of employment good and the salaries above the minimum wage? While it is accepted and arguable that some employment is better than no employment, these questions are brought to the fore so as to contextualise and qualify the contribution to employment creation by African immigrant traders in this case study.

### **7.3.2 Contribution to the achievement of South Africa`s development goals**

Although the researcher did not interview all South African traders who were assisted by African immigrant traders to start their business in this case study, it is

settled that the assistance did occur in light of the evidence presented in Section 6.3 of Chapter 6. Based on this evidence in this case study, the suggestion is that African immigrant traders have contributed towards the achievement of MDGs 1 and 8, as expressed in the Republic of South Africa Millennium Development Goals: Country Report (2013). These Millennium Development Goals also tie in with the objectives of the National Development Plan Vision 2030 (National Development Plan 2011:5).

An argument was made in Section 6.3 of Chapter 6 that regarding MDG 1, African immigrant traders have taught some South African traders skills and some of the South African traders now earn a livelihood based on the businesses which they now operate in the Johannesburg inner city. The popular press and public discourse does not pay attention to such details.

In addition, the fact that African immigrant traders work together with South African citizens, 'teaching' each other no matter how small the numbers of people involved may be, aptly demonstrates a semblance of a partnership for development, that is achieving MDG No. 8. If development is conceptualised as a multidimensional process which includes all attempts aimed at the improvement of the human condition, the fact that South African traders learn some business skills from African immigrant traders and apply the same to earn a living also qualifies as an aspect of development. In addition, such partnerships suggest that there is a possibility for the transfer of skills and knowledge, as in the case of beadwork and embroidery which the Tanzanians and Ghanaians said they have taught South African citizens in the Johannesburg inner city who were keen to learn. This is not mentioned in the popular press and public discourse. On this basis, there seems to be a limit to the perception that African immigrants do not benefit South Africa as presented in *Sowetan*, 2 May 2012:12. It can never be correct to state that all African immigrants do not benefit South Africa. Some of the African immigrant traders in this case study do benefit South African citizens.

Notwithstanding the fact that not all African immigrant traders in this case study have assisted South African citizens to start their own businesses – just as South African citizens have not been willing to be 'taught' by African immigrant traders – this should not be allowed to obscure positive aspects between these two extremes.

South African traders who have benefitted from the interaction with African immigrant traders seemed grateful, and indeed welcomed the continued interaction and the presence of the latter. If South African citizens who are actively involved in the scene state that African immigrant traders have assisted them to start small businesses which have enabled them lay claim to a descent livelihood, and such South Africans were observed in the field operating such businesses, this is enough evidence that a contribution has occurred.

The view that both African immigrant and South African traders generally work together does not seem to be isolated. It was suggested in Section 6.5 of Chapter 6, that the issue of business competition between African immigrant and South African traders did not make these two groups of people enemies. On the basis of this, it cannot be impossible that some African immigrant traders actually assisted some of their South African counterparts to learn certain skills or business techniques. This suggests that there are actual and potential cases of partnership for development between African immigrant and South African traders. Such dynamics are not highlighted in the popular press and public discourse.

### **7.3.3 Revenue generation and support for the formal economy**

The discussion in Section 6.4 of Chapter 6 suggests that African immigrant traders registered with the JMTC paid rentals and although this research did not get proof that those registered as companies paid tax, it is debatable whether they actually do pay tax. However, for those who contribute towards revenue to the municipality, it is still a contribution to the City of Johannesburg, which may use such money for the up keep of the city.

In addition, African immigrant traders in this case study stated that they contributed towards VAT both as registered businesses with CIPC and in their individual capacities as consumers who bought goods from shops in the Johannesburg inner city, which shops were registered for VAT. From the point of view of the African immigrant traders, they contributed towards VAT by buying different kinds of goods and services from shops in the Johannesburg inner city. This is still a contribution towards revenue generation, suggesting that increased numbers of people may not always lead to negative results. If African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg

inner city paid for all their goods and services from shops which were registered for VAT, their argument that they contribute towards revenue collection may not be so wrong, over and above the fact that some had businesses which were registered to pay VAT.

Furthermore, regarding the registration status of the businesses of African immigrant traders, an impression is created in the popular press and public discourse that all their businesses are illegal (*Sunday Times* 18 May 2008:6; *Daily Sun*, 9 May 2008:11; *Sowetan* 2 June 2010:3). In this case study, only 8 out of 40 (20%) African immigrant traders operated illegally, but they seem to be the ones who are reported on more than the clear majority who are registered (14 as companies with CIPC and 18 with the Johannesburg Metropolitan Trading Company: Section 5.5 of Chapter 5). This case study seems to suggest that it is incorrect to group all African immigrants under the category of bad and illegal African immigrant traders. Some contribute towards revenue generation and some do not and this makes African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city different, although they come from countries in Africa.

In addition, registered and unregistered African immigrant traders stated that they bought their goods for cash from the wholesalers in and around the Johannesburg inner city. Whether the wholesalers were Chinese-owned (Chinese citizens and/or immigrants; not Chinese as a population group) cannot hide the fact that the African immigrant traders in this case study were inextricably linked to the formal economy, actually injected capital into the latter and also that there was an active interface between these two sectors.

Even supposing that the wholesalers were Chinese-owned, the fact that they are part of the formal economy in this case study and African immigrant traders bought their goods from them suggests an interface between the formal and informal economy. On the assumption that the Chinese wholesalers were part of the formal economy and their businesses' turnover increased as a result of the capital injection from the African immigrant traders suggests that company tax from these wholesalers would also increase. It can be posited that even if some of the profits were taken back to China, some benefits such as business turnover, company tax and employment created by these wholesalers cannot be exported and would benefit

the Johannesburg inner city. After all, not all wholesalers from which the African immigrant traders bought their goods were Chinese-owned; others were owned by South Africans which suggests that there were even more benefits, as discussed in this section. This is not said in the popular press or public discourse.

Additionally, this case study suggests that urban formality and informality are inseparable and thus confirms other researches (Cohen; Dwyer; 2010, Mapadimeng 2011). If this is the case, it can be argued that African immigrant traders play an important role in keeping the formal sector operating. Although more research is needed before final conclusions can be made, it is possible to advance the argument that if the African immigrant traders interact in a positive and mutually beneficial way with the formal sector, then the African immigrant traders, together with their South African counterparts, are integrated into the Johannesburg inner city economy and the formal economy cannot do without the informal economy, and vice versa. The popular press and public discourse does not highlight the part played by African immigrants in this, but they choose to emphasise that African immigrants do not benefit South Africa and are a problem (as reported in Sowetan 2 May 2012:12; Sowetan 14 November 2011:9).

#### **7.3.4 Provision of choice for consumers**

When Malawians, Mozambicans and Tanzanians import certain goods to the Johannesburg inner city, this widens the choice for consumers. If the consumers, represented by both the African immigrant and South African traders who were interviewed, declare that such imports provided variety, then this should be accepted as a reflection of how the consumers in this case study perceived goods brought by African immigrant traders. Despite that fact that not all South African traders, as discussed in Section 6.5 of Chapter 6, thought that the goods were of a good quality, they were in the minority.

However, their views also show that it can never be correct for this research to say that all South Africans were happy with goods provided by African immigrant traders. Just as choice is subjective, the subjective view of some of the interviewees that they were happy with the products brought by African immigrant traders should not and cannot be dismissed as a contribution. It is taken in this research as evidence that some of the consumers enjoyed choice as a result of African



immigrant traders. This is not said in the popular press and public discourse. It is not stated that some consumers are happy and some are not with the goods supplied by African immigrant traders. Granted that African immigrant traders may import dangerous goods like drugs, South African traders are not innocent either (Section 6.8 of Chapter 6), but the fact remains – based on the evidence in this case study – that some African immigrant traders import desirable goods (Section 6.5 of Chapter 6). Therefore, some African immigrant traders bring dangerous choices of goods and some bring good choices of goods, just as South African traders in this case study seem to be guilty of the same thing and it can never be correct to allow one view that all African immigrant traders bring low quality cheap goods and drugs to prevail. The popular press and public discourse seems incapable of providing this analysis and portrayal.

### **7.3.5 Revitalising the Johannesburg inner city**

As discussed in Section 6.6 of Chapter, 6, the contribution of African immigrant traders to the revitalisation of the Johannesburg inner city also illustrates a mixture of positives and negatives. It was reported in Section 6.6 of Chapter 6 that 14 out of about 300 shops in this case study had been refurbished by African immigrant traders. It was also highlighted that there is overcrowding and littering. What is important for this thesis to comment on is that the spatial and environmental conditions in this case study seems to indicate both improvement and deterioration existing side by side. There is evidence that African immigrant traders have at least refurbished some of the buildings using their own capital. The researcher observed that there are some African immigrant traders who litter the area and wash cooking utensils on the streets. Thus, regarding the gentrification or ‘ghettoisation’ of the area under study, there is evidence that African immigrant traders are responsible for both. There are those enterprises which sell consumable goods and hair products on the streets, which contribute of the deterioration of the environmental conditions. There are also those African immigrant traders who sell different types of clothes and household goods from refurbished buildings and that are always kept them clean. This suggests that there are good and bad African immigrant traders, the former contributing towards the efforts of the City of Johannesburg, and the latter opposing the efforts of the City of Johannesburg to clean the Johannesburg inner city. This is not highlighted in the popular press such as the *Daily Sun* 17 April

2008:1, which suggests that all African immigrants are bad and destructive. The corollary of this is that African immigrants can never be capable of bringing anything good. This study challenges this thin representation by highlighting the fact that it is a narrow, limited and inaccurate representation of African immigrants, as reflected in this case study

Beyond the question of the contribution African immigrant traders make to the Johannesburg inner city, it is relevant to comment on the fact that they are by no means the only ones who operate in the study area. South African traders also operate in the area and may contribute to the bad environmental conditions. For example, those who sell consumable goods also wash their utensils on the streets suggesting and this lowers the quality of the environment. This is not said in the popular press; only that African immigrants are capable of destroying infrastructure.

Consequently, regarding this discussion, several scenarios emerge. There are negative African immigrant traders who run down the infrastructure in the Johannesburg inner city by littering, preparing food on the streets, washing cooking utensils on the pavements and disposing of dirty water on the streets. The same can be said of South African traders. There are African immigrant traders who have refurbished the areas in which they operate by, for example, renovating, painting and tiling. In such a set-up, can it be correct to blame the deteriorating environmental conditions on the African immigrant traders? The answer is that it can neither be correct nor accurate to blame African immigrant traders for the worsening environmental conditions. What can be correct and accurate is to state that there are classes of African immigrant traders – those who take care of the environment in which they operate, repair and renovate buildings, and there are those who only care about making money even if involves littering and degrading the streets and pavements in the Johannesburg inner city. The former, as discussed in Section 6.6 of Chapter 6, contribute towards the Joburg 2040 vision and the latter work against the same. The popular press and public discourse miss this.

### **7.3.6 Transnational African immigrant traders**

African immigrant traders, especially the Ghanaians, Malawians, Mozambicans, Nigerians, Tanzanians and Zimbabweans in the Johannesburg inner city, are transnational to the extent of operating shops in the Johannesburg inner city as well

as in their countries of origin and in other countries. This transnational dimension plays an important role in exporting goods made in South Africa from the Johannesburg inner city to the whole African region. African immigrant traders order goods in bulk from wholesalers in and around the Johannesburg inner city for resale in their country and other African countries.

The effect of this export element is that the companies and/or wholesalers from which goods are bought grow in business, which boosts economic activity and creates employment in the Johannesburg inner city. Although this work did not do research to prove that economic activity was boosted as a result of the export of goods by African immigrant traders, this comment is made on the basis of the fact that African immigrant traders in this case study did buy the goods from the Johannesburg inner city for export. The important point is that African immigrant traders play an important role in this regard. This is not said in either popular press or public discourse.

### **7.3.7 Unproductive and destructive African immigrant traders**

There is evidence in this case study that some African immigrant traders were destructive and unproductive, for example those who sold drugs and pirated goods. There is also evidence which suggests that there are some African immigrant traders who are honest and hardworking people (Section 6.8 of Chapter 6). The popular press (*Sunday Times* 18 May 2008:6; *Daily Sun*, 9 May 2008:11; *Sowetan* 2 June 2010:3) seem to suggest that all African immigrant traders are bad and destructive, but this case study adds that such absolute classification seems to be challenged by this case study. African immigrant traders in this case study are of a variegated nature: some are simply criminal, illegal and destructive and on the other extreme, some are just honest and hardworking people. In addition, some South African traders in this case study (Section 6.8 of Chapter 6) stated that there are bad and good African immigrant traders. If the people who actively interact with African immigrant traders suggest that there are groups of good and bad, the essentialist assumptions of the media and popular press that there are only bad and destructive African immigrants is rendered partially accurate.

### **7.3.8 Spread of diseases: taking over and burden on infrastructure**

This case study did not establish whether or not African immigrant traders spread disease. It may be possible that they do, but highly improbable that all African immigrants import diseases, including the deadly HIV/AIDS. The popular press (*Daily Sun*, 9 May 2008:2) seems to miss this simple reality by suggesting that all African immigrant traders import and spread diseases. In the absence of a study and evidence to show that African immigrant traders import and spread diseases, it remains a baseless perception.

After all, Swaziland has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the world (26.1%), followed by Botswana (23.9%), Lesotho (23.2%), South Africa (18.1%), Zimbabwe and Namibia (15.3%), Zambia (15.2%), Malawi (11.9%), Central Africa Republic (6.3%), Tanzania (6.2%). All other African countries have HIV/AIDS prevalence rates of less than 6.0%, for example, Ghana (1.9%), Mali (1.5%) Nigeria (3.1%) and Somalia (0.50%) (StatWorld - Interactive Maps of Open Data). Given the countries of origin of African immigrant traders in this case study, it appears as though, in the case of HIV/AIDS, such African immigrant traders come from countries with lower rates of prevalence. It is possible to posit that, if the countries where African immigrant come from have lower HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, they cannot, in the absence of research, be accused of being responsible for higher HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in South Africa? The source cannot therefore have fewer diseases than the recipient, especially if the former is accused of spreading diseases to the latter.

Regarding the burden on infrastructure, this research suggests that African immigrant traders pay for the use of shops and other infrastructures. The fact that they pay for infrastructure, however, does not mean that it will not be overburdened. It may be the case that indeed there are many African immigrants who are in the Johannesburg inner city, with the result that there may be a burden on infrastructure. But what are the owners of the building doing about this? The owners of the buildings may be accused of pursuing profits and thus renting out their buildings.

In addition, this case study suggests that some African immigrant traders were allocated trading stalls, yet some of them operated illegally. Regarding those who

operated illegally, South African traders were also guilty. Some African immigrants were random survivalist traders (8 out of 40) who operated illegally from undesignated trading zones. This could be regarded as taking over and a burden on infrastructure, as these African immigrant traders were now converting reserved and protected areas into market places and not paying for them. This is simply wrong and is indeed a threat. For those who had been allocated trading stalls by a regulatory authority such as the City of Johannesburg, the issue of taking over infrastructure does not arise. It is an issue of regulation and allocation by the City of Johannesburg, which knows best about how to allocate infrastructure and to whom.

Regarding those who rented shops, they paid for the shops and the landlords chose their tenants. Could the fact that landlords prefer African immigrant traders who have money to pay for rent be regarded as taking over? This may be, but could the landlords let their buildings go to waste when there are people who can pay for them? These are difficult questions which serve to illustrate that the issue of the threatening other regarding taking over and being a burden on infrastructure is a complex issue, which should show the many classes of African immigrant traders and the types of spaces which they occupy for their businesses. As argued in this section, it appears as if the issue of being a burden on and taking over infrastructure can never be a simplistic accusation of all African immigrants.

#### **7.4 CONCLUSION**

In keeping with the nature and scope of the deconstruction framework (Figure 2.1 of Chapter 2), this chapter highlighted those issues which seem to be missed by the popular press and public discourse. The objective was to show the multiple perceptions which have been gained in this research regarding African immigrants as the threatening other. For instance, African immigrants in this case study do not seem to take away jobs, but some create jobs for South African citizens and fellow African immigrants. In addition, some African immigrant traders contribute towards the achievement of South Africa's development goals and some do not. Similarly, some contribute towards revenue generation and some do not, just as other African immigrant traders in this case study provide choice for consumers, revitalise the Johannesburg inner city, import and export goods and others do not make such contributions, they are simply criminal, destructive, illegal and unproductive.

If this is the case, it means that, in line with the deconstruction process introduced in Figure 2.1, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2, this study must proceed to the next and final level of deconstruction, which is finding new perspectives. After reinterpreting the hierarchy, tracing what is not said on the basis of what African immigrant traders in this case study do, the last chapter of this thesis focuses on what the findings of this research suggest regarding African immigrants as the threatening other. What are the new perspectives after reinterpreting the hierarchy, tracing what is not said, discussing the silenced and suppressed and accommodating rebel voices?

## **CHAPTER 8: FINDING NEW PERSPECTIVES**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study suggests that African immigrant traders are positively linked to their South African counterparts at the level of buying and selling goods (Chapter 5), just as there is a link between the African immigrant and South African traders on the one hand and the formal and SMME economy on the other. The result of this interface with both the formal and SMME economies is that there are actual and potential benefits relating to the boosting of economic activity in the study area, especially the growth of the SMME sector. It is argued that contributions of African immigrant traders in this case study consist of a mixture of positives and negatives (Chapter 6). Based on this finding, Chapter 7 is devoted to showing the missing pieces in the discourse that African immigrant traders are the threatening other. Arising from the actual and potential contributions of African immigrant traders in this case study – as highlighted in Chapters 5 and 6 – and what the discourse of the threatening other excludes – as argued in Chapter 7 – what perspectives finally emerge? How could the hierarchy that African immigrants are the threatening other be resituated? Answering these questions is a continuation and conclusion of deconstructing the threatening other – the principal aim of this work.

### **8.2 FINDING NEW PERSPECTIVES**

In the process of building up to the new perspectives, a synopsis of this work up to this point is deemed to be pertinent, to the extent that would demonstrate the development of the investigation undertaken for this case study.

#### **▪ Synopsis**

Chapter 1 provides a background to this research by raising the issue of African immigrants in contemporary South Africa as the threatening other. By briefly exploring migration and immigration experiences in other parts of the world, Chapter 2 contextualises and conceptualises the focus of this research on African immigrants and in this manner links with Chapter 1, thus responding to the framework of the thesis (Figure 1.1 of Chapter 1) on the point of African immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city specifically.

In the process of highlighting migration and immigration to South Africa as both historical and contemporary facts, Chapter 3 discusses the debates and the

construction of African immigrants as the threatening other and suggests that African immigrants have not always been the desired crop of immigrants. The Chapter also discusses how the deconstruction of the threatening other will be executed in this work (Figure 3.1 of Chapter 3, which links up with Figure 2.1 of Chapter) and this blends with the first two chapters in terms of discussing further the issues which were raised in these chapters.

Detailing how the evidence was collected through these means (Chapter 4) integrates all the issues raised in the first three and the last four chapters regarding whether or not African immigrants are the threatening other as reflected in this case study. This responds to topics for investigation raised in Figure 1.1 of Chapter 1, the nature and scope of deconstruction in Figure 2.1 of Chapter 2 and the analytical framework in Figure 3.1 of Chapter 3.

The way that the data was obtained in this research informs Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, and this shows that these chapters are tied to the first three previous chapters in three main ways. Firstly, Chapter 5 discusses the nature and types of businesses which African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city have set up. Such a discussion responds to the first objective of this thesis.

Secondly, Chapter 6 debated the contribution of these African immigrant businesses to the Johannesburg inner city. The indicated was an investigation of whether or not African immigrant traders in this case study were the threatening other and thus addresses the second objective of this study. Thirdly, Chapter 7 shows the issues which are omitted in the discourse and perception that African immigrants are the threatening other as reflected in this case study and this assists in responding to all the objectives of this research.

Consequently, the promises made in the first three chapters have been and continue to be addressed in this chapter. For that reason, this chapter carries forward the investigation of this work and in particular pursues the questions raised in Section 8.1 by revisiting the discussion on the nature and types of businesses owned by African immigrant traders, their socio-economic contributions and the issue of whether or not African immigrants are the threatening other. Such a reflection should not be regarded as repetition, but rather an attempt to illuminate the basis of the new perspectives.



- **Nature and types of African immigrant traders' businesses**

African immigrant traders in this case study have set up a variety of small enterprises, specialising in selling different kinds of goods and services, such as repairing and selling cell phones and cell accessories, making and/or selling beadwork, embroidery, clothes, blankets, shoes and household and consumable goods. Despite the fact that some of these are registered and some are not (Section 5.5 of Chapter 5), they have a clear link with the South African traders, the SMME and the formal economy. In this case study, such integration suggests a positive aspect in terms of the fact that it could promote the growth of these economic sectors.

While it is accepted that some of the African immigrant traders are operating outside the law, what seems to emerge is that the nature and type of the businesses of African immigrant traders in this case study appear to promote growth in economic activity as a result of buying goods for resale from wholesalers in and around the study area. As a result of imports by African immigrant traders like Malawians and Tanzanians, traditional African attire has been introduced which may broaden the textile and fashion sector in this case study; similarly, there is actual and potential transfer of skills such as beadwork and embroidery from African immigrant traders such as Ghanaians.

Large clothing and textile shops operated by Somalis in this case study appear to point towards a possible development of a large clothing trading sector. Regarding the nature and type of African immigrant traders' businesses, what seems to emerge is that there are good and bad ones. Not all African immigrant traders in this case study were operating illegally; some are registered as companies and some are recognised by the City of Johannesburg. Not all of these businesses are the threatening other

- **Socio-economic contributions**

Interactions between African immigrant traders and the formal and SMME economies and the contributions which accrue – as discussed in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and this chapter – suggest that, while there is a need to qualify the nature and extent of contribution, urban informality as represented by the activities of African immigrant traders generally plays an important socio-economic role. An evaluation of the socio-economic contributions by African immigrant traders in this case study reveals

complex scenarios. For example, with regard to employment creation, it is not a simple matter to say African immigrant traders create or do not create employment. As debated in Sections 6.2 of Chapter 6, and Sections 7.3.1 to 7.3.8 of Chapter 7, African immigrant traders create employment, provide choice for consumers, contribute to the achievement of South Africa's development goals and create revenue generation and support for the formal economy and the revitalisation of the Johannesburg inner city. These positive impacts are not absolute; they are relative and context-dependent. It is also true that some African immigrant traders are involved in unproductive illegal and dangerous economic activities.

On these grounds, the African immigrant traders in this case study occur in a complex setting such that it will be inaccurate to clearly say they are the threatening other. Evidence in this case study suggest that some may be the destructive and some are engaged in productive and beneficial activities. Some African immigrant traders are the threatening other and some are productive. Moreover, some groups of African immigrant and South African traders believe that there are productive and destructive African immigrant and South African traders.

- **Are African immigrants the threatening other?**

Arising from this, new perspectives emerge that the perception of African immigrants as the threatening other is a complex social reality which should never be reduced to a simplistic and absolute accusation of all African immigrants. As reflected in this case study, African immigrant traders exist in a complicated set-up with their South African counterparts, the formal, informal and SMME economy. Such that their threat or benefit can be objectively understood as stretching the length of a continuum along which some African immigrant traders benefit the Johannesburg inner city, others are destructive, yet others are both beneficial and destructive (this answers the questions posed in Figures 1.1 of Chapter 1, 2.1 of Chapter 2, 3.1 of Chapter 3 and Section 1.5 of Chapter 1 regarding whether or not African immigrants are the threatening other). In addition, this also responds to the issues which were raised in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of Chapter 2 and Sections 3.4 to 3.5.5 of Chapter 3.

Arising from the scenario that African immigrant traders in this case study do not fall into the neat dualism of beneficial or threatening other but straddle the two aspects, this research proposes the hybrid beneficial-threatening other model as a useful

guide to the analysis of African immigrants in a setting like the Johannesburg inner city. This model illuminates the complexity of the human-people space interactions as reflected in this case study. As argued in this chapter, such a model does not seem to accommodate a one-sided portrayal of the burdensome and all-destructive or beneficial African immigrants.

Furthermore, the question of whether or not African immigrant traders are the threatening other is context-dependent, just as it varies from one group of African immigrant traders to the other. In the case of employment creation, it has been shown that some African immigrant traders create employment and others do not. For example, Ghanaians, Malawians, Nigerians, Somalis and Tanzanians create employment, whereas the Congolese, Malians, Mozambicans and Zimbabweans do not. This latter group of African immigrant traders assisted South African traders to form different types of businesses; on this basis it can also be posited that this has increased economic activity in the study area. Nevertheless, by failing to create employment, these African immigrant traders could be regarded as a threat, because they have exploited the business potential in the Johannesburg inner and siphoned the profits back to their mother countries. What about the transfer of skills to South African traders and helping them to form their own businesses? Does the fact that they failed to create employment but managed to help some South Africans to form businesses make African immigrant traders both a threat and a benefit? It appears as though they can be regarded as a bit of both. These details capture the essence of the hybrid beneficial-threatening other model which this research proposes.

Taking this argument further, the aspects relating to revenue collection and support for the formal economy and the link between the formal and informal economy, suggests a complex interplay of human-space/environment interactions. Regarding revenue collection, fewer than half of the African immigrant traders definitely paid rentals to the City of Johannesburg, and this is a contribution. However, the researcher did not obtain evidence of African immigrant businesses registered with CIPC or ascertain whether they had paid company tax to SARS. In this case, some African immigrant traders were definitely beneficial and for others it was never confirmed, which raises questions regarding 'benefit or threat'. The issue of revenue generation seems to illustrate that the question of contribution or threat is dependent

on the group of African immigrant traders concerned, such as those who pay rent and taxes and those who do not.

To continue the illustration of the complexity of whether or not African immigrant traders are threatening other or not, the issue of the provision of choice for consumers is a case in point. In Section 6.7 of Chapter 6, this thesis shows that some African immigrant traders import and export goods to and from the Johannesburg inner city and some do not. Some of the goods which were sold by African immigrant traders in this case study were relatively cheap and it emerged from the interviews that both African immigrant and South African traders did not agree with the view that such goods were cheap and of a lower quality.

Some South African traders argued that quality and low price were relative. They asserted that they were the ones who bought the goods and were happy with both the price and quality and that this suited their income and standard of living. Therefore, what may be cheap and of a low quality is relative. What may be considered as cheap and low quality and thus a threat by certain groups of people may be seen as a huge benefit by other sections of the population. Some South African traders in this case study are examples. Those who were interviewed argued that whoever accused African immigrant traders of selling cheap and low-quality goods did not buy from them and were not qualified to make judgements. Rather, the people involved were better judges of price and quality of the goods in question.

Another point of discussion is the revitalisation of the Johannesburg inner city. This thesis argues (Section 6.6 of Chapter 6) that African immigrant traders are responsible for contradictory spatial and environmental conditions. Some have refurbished shops; others have destroyed the environment through overcrowding and misuse and/or abuse of the environment. The latter would relate to the conversion of pavements to areas for washing cooking utensils. Along these lines, and in discussing the issue of the revitalisation of the Johannesburg inner city, it should be stated that some African immigrant traders have played a positive role and some have actually destroyed the area. Hence, some are good and some are a threat, because they work against the objective of the City of Johannesburg to improve the health and safety of the area under study. Not all African immigrants can be blamed for the deteriorating spatial and environmental conditions in the study

area. What is noteworthy is that South African traders were also involved in the 'ghettoisation' of the area under study. This suggests that to label African immigrant traders as the threatening other should not be regarded as a simple matter.

Furthermore, regarding destructive and unproductive activities which were conducted by African immigrant traders, South African traders were also involved and it was not only African immigrant traders who sold drugs, were involved in corruption and spread diseases. For example, in this case study, some Nigerian immigrant traders were accused by both their fellow African immigrants and compatriots and South African traders of selling drugs; something which was corroborated by the JMPD. Other African immigrant traders in this case study did not feature in the illegal activity of selling drugs.

What this suggests is that there are good and bad African immigrant traders – drug peddlers, honest small business people and those who spread diseases. Thus, it seems as though it is inaccurate to declare that all African immigrants sell drugs. Taking this discussion further, another case in point is that of pirated goods and corruption. Pirated goods are illegally imported into the country through ports of entry, suggesting twin acts of corruption by African immigrant traders and South African officials who clear the goods at ports of entry. Accordingly, both African immigrant traders and South African officials are threats as they deprive the government of revenue and also allow illegal goods into the country. It is debatable that South African officials at ports of entry are a greater threat because they provide fertile grounds for corruption to flourish.

After the illegally imported goods reach the Johannesburg inner city, consumers are happy to buy them. From the point of view of consumers represented by South African traders in this case study, African immigrant traders who import these goods are not a threat. They provide good quality and affordable goods, yet some formal businesses, as discussed in Section 6.5 of Chapter 6, regard this as a threat. To such an extent, what may be a threat to certain sections of the population in this case study is a big benefit to another. This shows how the perception of African immigrants as the threatening other should never be regarded as absolute and certain.

Notwithstanding the fact that these issues were discussed extensively in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, they are briefly raised again in this section for the purpose of finally showing that the contribution of African immigrant traders to the Johannesburg inner city is a motley collection of intricate interactions and interrelationships. There are different contributions that African immigrants make, just like there are different types of African immigrants in this case study. Some create employment while others do not; others are drug dealers and some are honest people trying to earn a living. In addition, some African immigrant traders destroy the Johannesburg inner city and others regenerate it. Accordingly, not all African immigrants in this case study are the threatening other, and for those who may be regarded as the threatening other, this is relative as it depends on the context and environment within which it occurs.

This should be the basis of tolerance and inclusivity. If African immigrants in this case study are understood to be a heterogeneous group made up of good and bad, the sweeping accusation that they are a monolithic entity only capable of homogeneously bad activities will not arise. As suggested in this case study, an objective analysis of African immigrant traders should be sensitive to differences between and within groups of African immigrants. For example, Nigerian and Zimbabwean immigrant traders should not be treated as a similar group of African immigrants, just as not all Nigerians and Zimbabweans are the same – there are inter- and intra-group differences. By extension, not all Nigerian immigrant traders in this case study are drug dealers, some create employment and are honestly earning a living in the Johannesburg inner city. Not all Congolese, Ghanaians, Malawians, Mozambicans, Malians, Somalis, Tanzanians and Zimbabweans are good or bad, some are beneficial and some are destructive and/or the threatening other.

Where there is evidence of positive or beneficial contribution, such African immigrants should be embraced and their positives highlighted. This work advances the position that there are good and bad African immigrants, just as there could be good and bad South Africans. Should the bad African immigrants be used as a yardstick to measure all African immigrants? This work suggests that the answer to this question is negative, which should be the basis of forging a good relationship between the South African and African immigrants.

- **Significance of the new perspectives**

At this point, it is important to emphasise that this thesis did not, contrive, devise or invent the perception that African immigrants in contemporary South Africa are the threatening other. Several scholars (Crush 2000, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; McDonald 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Campell 2010; Geschiere 2010; Laher 2010; Landau 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009 2010, 2011, 2012; Crush and Tevera 2010; Maharaj 2010; Mawadza and Crush 2010; McGregor 2010; Muzondidya 2010; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007, 2010; Crush 2008; Campell 2010; Gordon 2011; Joseph 2010; Attias-Donful et al. 2012; Dyers and Wankah 2012; Crush and Tawodzera 2011; Crush and Tawodzera 2014) have problematised the negative perception and treatment of African immigrants in contemporary South Africa.

Consequently, the findings and new perspectives generated by this work integrate with and extend research on African immigration to contemporary South Africa. On the basis of these new perspectives, this thesis adds to literature on African immigrant traders and their contribution to the Johannesburg inner city. Such literature provides an expanded analysis and view of how they make meaningful contributions. It does this by considering the complex socio-economic and even political environment in which African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city occur.

A discussion of how the African immigrant traders contribute to employment creation, revenue generation, support for the formal economy, provision of choice for consumers, and imports and exports, for example, provides a broader framework for the analysis of what and how these African immigrant traders contribute. In addition, this thesis suggests that the immigration of African immigrants to South Africa as reflected in this case study does not always spell doom, but that there are good and bad dimensions and both must always be considered in any assessment of African immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city. If this is the case, any research on this subject which does not bring to the fore the complexity of the place-space people environment dynamics is questioned. 'What remains to be thought' (Royle 2000:11 cited in Royle 2003:25) about research and scholarship on migration, immigration and African immigrants in contemporary South Africa should, in the opinion of the researcher go beyond the tag of the threatening other.

In addition, some newspaper articles (*Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:1; *Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:8; *Daily Sun* 9 May 2008:2; *Daily Sun* 9 May 2008:11; *Daily Sun* 20 May 2008:3; *Sunday Times* 18 May 2008:6, *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011:21; *Sowetan* 2 June 2010:3; *Sowetan* 14 November 2011; *Sowetan* 2 May 2012:12) actually portray African immigrants as the threatening other. This case study directly responds to the media construction of African immigrants as the threatening other by highlighting that such a construction and portrayal is not always true. Although this is a case study, it thoroughly questions the source of information of the media, which completely frames African immigrants as the threatening other. Where and how do the media obtain completely negative information about African immigrants? Consequently, this case study questions 'partial or distorted' (Norris 2007:67) reporting by the media. As suggested in this case study, there is a need for media to carefully, accurately and objectively report on African immigrants.

Closely linked to this is that this case study implies that there is a huge difference between the negative perception of African immigrants and what they actually do. While popular perception, which may be fed by media reporting, is that African immigrants are burdensome and destructive anti-citizens, this case study suggest that in reality this is not always the case. For example, this case study shows some evidence of redevelopment of areas in the Johannesburg inner city. Some African immigrant traders have refurbished and painted some of their shops. When these African immigrant traders use their private funds to develop and regenerate certain parts of the Johannesburg inner city, this is an illustration of a possible and potential partnership between the City of Johannesburg and the African immigrant traders. This partnership may assist in eradicating destructive impacts by other African immigrant traders such as those who litter and trade illegally.

Such a partnership may instil a sense of responsibility on the part of African immigrant traders in this case study, implying that they can work together with the City of Johannesburg. It would therefore be beneficial if the City of Johannesburg embraced their efforts and entered into partnerships with African immigrant traders in order to redevelop the Johannesburg inner city. The City of Johannesburg encourages public and private partnerships in the revitalisation of the city (Winkler 2009, Olitzki and Luiz 2013), which suggests that they can do the same with those



African immigrant traders who have a demonstrated development impact as suggested in Section 6.6 of Chapter 6 and Section 7.3.5 of Chapter 7.

Such activities by African immigrants on the ground need publicity and reporting to show the difference between the negative perception of African immigrants and their positives. Perhaps the media could play a role in reshaping public perception of African immigrants. Since it was argued in Section 4.4.1 of Chapter 4 that the media may indeed frame public opinion negatively regarding African immigrants, it follows that the same media could positively frame public opinion of African immigrants in line with findings reflected in this case study. In this case study, the negative perception of African immigrants and reality of what they do and contribute do not always match.

Furthermore, concerning African immigrants as the threatening other, it can be advanced that their negative portrayal and treatment restrict efforts to limit xenophobia. This thesis argues that unfairly portraying African immigrants as the threatening other and fighting xenophobia cannot coexist. There is either the objective portrayal of African immigrants and fighting xenophobia, or the negative portrayal of African immigrants and fuelling xenophobia. Promoting the latter will lead to the denial of xenophobia, as illustrated in newspaper articles (*Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:8, *Sowetan* 25 May 2011:12) which convey the idea that there is no xenophobia, but rather isolated criminal acts. It can be argued that the consistent negative portrayal of African immigrants provides fertile ground for a xenophobic discourse, as it engenders animosity and angst between the citizens and immigrants.

However, if African immigrants are objectively and positively portrayed, this can contribute to fighting xenophobia, because objective and positive portrayal and reporting could encourage a culture of tolerance and acceptance. This is because positive and objective reporting is accommodative and welcoming. Hence, it could reduce the chasm between 'us' and 'them'. It could obliterate the image of the 'barbarians at the gate' (McDonald 2000:2) plotting to 'break into the house', and instead build the image of 'all people in the house', building and taking care of the same.

It was argued (Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 of Chapter 2) that African immigrants were especially targeted due to the perception that they were the harbingers of a plethora of problems in South Africa. Thus, the fact that African immigrants are perceived as the threatening other justifies the extra legal efforts by police who arrest and detain African immigrants (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Krieger 2010; Landau 2010), tear up valid immigration documents (Kalule-Sabiti et al. 2012) and close off refugee reception centres (Landau 2012). To this list can be added what Peberdy (2009) regards as the advancement of an exclusively South African identity. It follows that this helps to inform restrictive immigration policy. Although immigration policy affects all immigrants in South Africa, this thesis argues that African immigrants are negatively affected the most (Section 3.2.2 of Chapter 3). The targeting of African immigrants suggests that they are the threatening other. This case study disagrees with this view. Regarding the opinion that African immigrants are the threatening other and contribute to restrictive immigration policy – as evidenced by the Immigration Regulations 2014 – this research argues that such immigration policy may be based on partial and/or distorted information.

On that account and supposing African immigrants, are objectively portrayed and perceived, this may perhaps correctly inform immigration policy. Granted that African immigrants, as discussed in this case study, positively contribute to their host societies, there should be limited preoccupation with attempting to keep them out of South Africa. If this is the case, this research questions the basis of restrictive immigration policies as evidenced by the Immigration Regulations 2014. It is argued (Section 3.2.3) that Immigration Regulations (2014) are restrictive regarding, but not limited to, the granting of business permits. However, if the African immigrant traders in this case study have an impact on development, what is the basis of restrictive immigrant immigration? It seems as though immigration policy in this regard needs to be sensitive to the realities on the ground regarding the actual and potential developmental impacts of African immigrant traders.

Finally, there is a need to directly address the question of whether this thesis has fully deconstructed the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other in the Johannesburg inner city. Based on the understanding and deployment of the deconstruction model (Figure 2.1 of Chapter 2) – and using the views of both African

immigrant and South African traders, triangulated with those of the JMPD and officials from the City of Johannesburg – it was possible to deconstruct the view that African immigrants are the threatening other. The findings of this research on which the new perspectives of this study stand, were built on data collected in a natural setting in the field, the deconstructionist analysis of which yielded these conclusions (new perspectives).

If this research, through a deconstructionist approach, was contesting the view by the media and popular discourse that African immigrants were the threatening other by gathering and assessing what people, represented by African immigrant and South African traders in the field do and say, then this study has fully deconstructed the threatening other. The critical issue for this research was to establish alternative interpretations to the one that African immigrants are the threatening other and the answer is that, African immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city are not always the threatening other. Since the research suggested that there were complex and competing interpretations to the one that African immigrants are the threatening other shows that the deconstruction project was achieved.

By reason of this study showing that African immigrants are not always the threatening other and in direct opposition to the position of media and public discourse suggests that 'knowledge is always insufficient or incomplete without the alternative representations' (Burman and MacLure 2005: 287) and that there is 'no generality and no configuration that is solid and given' (Derrida in an interview in 1993 cited in Royle 2003:26). On the ground that this case study advances the view that African immigrants are not necessarily the threatening other, suggests that there are 'other layers of meaning, layers that are different from the supposedly present' (Frers 2013:433). In such a manner, deconstruction of the threatening other is confirmed.

### **8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This thesis proffers an indication that African immigrants in this case study are not necessarily the threatening other. Based on this finding, the following recommendations can be made;

- South African traders in the Johannesburg inner city appear to suffer from a dearth of capital. A starting point would be to capacitate their businesses

financially, so that that they can grow and thus provide a sustainable source of income. Doing this would promote the positive relationship between the African immigrant and South African traders, as the former seemed to have relatively more resources than the latter. If the latter are financially resourced, they may not always view the former as a threat who rent big shop spaces and take away all customers. The two groups could work together as partners in development; the study shows that a good relationship between the African immigrant and South African traders actually exists. It needs to be nurtured and grown to contribute towards reducing xenophobia and in the long term promote tolerance towards African immigrants.

- The transnational African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city are already playing a positive role by exporting South African products from the Johannesburg inner city to their homes and other African countries, and are also bringing to Johannesburg inner city a variety of goods from these countries. This aptly demonstrates globalisation from below and can play an important role in regional economic integration from the grassroots level. This is because, as demonstrated by African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, ordinary people are taking matters into their own hands by exporting and spreading goods from one country to the other in the African region. On this basis, this research advocates that the legislative-regulatory regime at the level of immigration policy should be reformed to promote transnational immigrant traders. This can be done by making the granting of business permits for such traders more accessible than they are. African immigrant traders in this case study stated that the conditions for acquiring these permits are more stringent.

For those who were harassed by the JMPD (Section 5.5 of Chapter 5), they stated that not having a business licence exposed them even further and they were targeted as African immigrants, whether or not they had business permits. The suggestion was that those with business permits were better off than those without permits. The suggestion that it was nearly impossible to get a business permit seems to be validated by, for example, the Immigration Regulations 2014, in which the requirements for a business visa

as discussed in Section 3.2.3 of Chapter 3 may be too prohibitive and thus do not promote the activities of African immigrant traders.

Consequently, this thesis suggests that South African immigration policy does not generally encourage African immigrant traders. If such a legislative-regulatory environment is promoted in respect of transnational African immigrant traders, this can benefit the Johannesburg inner city in the ways illustrated in this thesis (Section 6.7 of Chapter 6) and also the African region by developing areas which are lagging behind in terms of development. This will be possible by moving more goods, remittances and capital from the developed core – the Johannesburg inner city – to the less developed periphery, being the countries from which immigrants originate.

Therefore, the gap between the rich and poor could be bridged, showing that African immigrant traders could be agents of development. This does not prove that African immigrants are necessarily a threat as suggested in this case study. Rather, migration can be regarded as a tool for reducing development gaps between the rich and poor African countries. This can lead to the integration of the economic activities of African countries and thus develop them. This fits in well with the AU's integration project, because the AU through the AEC aims for continental integration to be achieved through the establishment of the AEC (The Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community 1991).

The strategy for attaining the economic community is through regional economic communities (RECs), which will serve as building blocks for the continental economic community. In addition, the AU's New Partnership for Development (NEPAD) cites the migration-development nexus as a sectoral priority in NEPAD's Human Resources Development Initiative (African Union Executive Council 2006). In this regard, the role played by African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city in contributing to development and ultimately to regional integration although appearing to be minor, is a critical factor as it shows the integration of economic activities in Africa from below.

Through their transnational or cross-border activities, these African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city are the building blocks for RECs such

as the Southern African Development Conference (SADC), on which the AU's integration project will stand. Furthermore, the SADC Declaration and Treaty (1992) commits to, for example, uplifting the standards of the people of Southern Africa through regional integration and consolidates the links between the people of the region. African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, through their cross-border activities, are already working towards that goal.

It is important to add that the SADC Draft Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons implements the provisions of the SADC Treaty (Declaration and Treaty of SADC 1992). The overall objective of the SADC Draft Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons is to remove obstacles to human mobility into and within territories of member states (Draft Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons in SADC 2005). By December 2013, only six SADC states, namely, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia, had ratified the Facilitation of Movement Protocol (Nshimbi and Fioramonti 2013).

The Protocol is not yet in force and in the absence of a regional protocol to govern regional labour migration, national laws of respective member states regulate human mobility throughout the SADC region. Therefore, the South African government can work towards creating an enabling environment for the African immigrant traders such as those in the Johannesburg inner city. If South Africa can be a true leader in the SADC and on the African continent, they need to pay attention to the grassroots economic and social developmental activities, such as the African immigrant traders in this case study. At the moment, goods and remittances are being sent and exported by the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city, but the argument is that this can be enhanced and promoted through an enabling legal-institutional-regulatory regime.

On an international scale, development agencies and non-governmental organisations – usually funded by developed countries of North America and Western Europe – converge in Africa in an attempt to solve development and other problems. These institutions are readily welcomed and it is sad that

initiatives like African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city are frowned upon and not supported, but rather dismissed as the threatening other who crowd and make the city dirty, when in fact they can potentially have the same positive results as international development agents, if not better. African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city demonstrate this possibility even better and more clearly.

- There is evidence of illegal and destructive activities by African immigrant traders. However 'entrepreneurial' these may be, as long as they have a negative impact on the communities in which they operate and are supposed to benefit, their activities cannot be celebrated. As such, this thesis recommends that the City of Johannesburg, together with the JMPD and representatives of African immigrant and South African traders, should form a stakeholders' forum. This thesis posits that when those affected are involved, they may take ownership of good practices and help the police in policing the streets of the Johannesburg inner city, because a community and grassroots-based initiative is likely to be welcomed. This will work against irregular JMPD raids which are resisted by paying bribes or trading in undesignated trading zones among other bad practices by the African immigrant traders.

#### **8.4 POSSIBLE AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This thesis suggests that the phenomenon of African immigrant traders and their economic and social contributions to the Johannesburg inner city milieu presents potential areas for further research. These include:

- Given the suggestion in this case study that the media partially and negatively portrays African immigrants in contemporary South Africa, it may be necessary to investigate this tendency to grasp the source of such negative reporting. This case study suggests that the media does not represent the views of African immigrants and/or South African citizens who interact with each other on a daily basis. If the media declares African immigrants as the threatening other, whose views do they represent? Perhaps research in this media tendency could yield useful insights which can expand scholarship on African migrants and immigrants in contemporary South Africa.

- This case study shows a gender bias in favour of men. It would be beneficial to investigate the involvement of African immigrant women in street trading and in particular the nature and types of businesses that they undertake, and their experiences and achievements both in South Africa and their countries of origin. Such research would expand the understanding of the dynamic of African immigrant traders in contemporary South Africa. Lefko-Everett (2010) did research on Zimbabwean women in South Africa and explored among other aspects their strategies for survival and their experiences. The suggestion is to expand the research to include all African immigrant women traders.
- This case study suggests that African immigrant traders have more formal businesses than their South African counterparts. It could be beneficial to explore why South African nationals have failed to register businesses. This will assist in answering, among other questions: Is it because of lack of capital, skills, training or other factors? Answers to these questions may help to empower South African traders so that they can fully exploit their business potential in the Johannesburg inner city.
- In Section 6.2 of Chapter 6, the possibility of exploitation of South African citizens who are employed by African immigrant traders was raised. In order to achieve an accurate and expanded view of the nature and extent of employment creation, it may be necessary to explore whether or not South African workers receive decent salaries and whether their livelihoods have improved or not. Such an endeavour is desirable as it continues and takes up the deconstructionist stance adopted in this work.
- This thesis suggests but does not prove the issue of payment of taxes by African immigrant traders who are registered with CIPC. For instance, do the African immigrant traders who are registered with CIPC as companies pay taxes to SARS? If not, why not? If yes, how much? In addition, regarding those who are registered with the JMTC, how many are there in the whole of the Johannesburg inner city? How much do they pay the City of Johannesburg? Such questions could further probe the contribution of African immigrant



traders to the Johannesburg inner city and highlight their development potential.

- Some African immigrant traders suggested that part of the goods which were sold on the streets of the Johannesburg inner city were illegally imported. Research is necessary to map this phenomenon, so that corrective measures can be taken to fight corruption and also stop economic leakage, as the South African government potentially loses out on revenue collection.
- An argument was made in Section 6.7 of Chapter 6 that some of the African immigrant traders in this case study were transnational and the question was raised: How can they assist regional integration of the SADC and the AU? Based on the assumptions of both the SADC and AU (Section 3.5.2 of Chapter 3), actors such as African immigrant traders seem to be connecting the economies of countries from which African immigrant traders in this case study came and others. It may be beneficial to investigate how the actions of such grassroots actors actually facilitate regional integration from below. This could become an integral part of the debate around SADC and AU integrations.
- In Section 6.7 of Chapter 6, it was shown that African immigrant traders imported and exported different types of commodities to and from South Africa. It may be necessary to investigate this aspect further to unravel the nature and type of benefit to the wholesalers from which African immigrant traders bought and exported the goods. The extent to which this boosts and increases economic activity needs to be carefully analysed so that the positives may be enhanced and the benefits clearly elaborated to accurately define how and what African immigrant traders contribute to the Johannesburg inner city; for example, indirect creation of employment. In addition, such research could further illuminate the extent to which African immigrant traders are integrated into the economy of the Johannesburg inner city. This will shed more light on the exact linkages between African immigrant traders, urban informality, the SMME and the formal economy.

Closely related to the issue of exports was that African immigrant traders do not pay export taxes when they transport goods to other African traders. It is important to establish if this was the normal course of operations, or whether

African immigrants evaded the regulation? Does this illustrate a case of economic leakage or benefit? Answers to these and other questions can provide a deep and expanded insight into the operations of African immigrant traders and how they benefited or did not benefit the Johannesburg inner city.

## **8.5 CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCIPLINE OF GEOGRAPHY**

The empirical contribution of this research to the discipline of geography is its application of a three-phased in-depth interview approach to both African immigrant and South African traders. This allowed the researcher to spend more time in the field and monitor the responses of the interviewees. These responses were cross-examined with those of the JMPD and officials from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Trading Company.

On the basis of this experience, this study posits that the best way to access the perceptions of interviewees regarding migration-related contexts is through several sessions at different times, coupled with cross-examinations of the responses in order to validate the data gathered. The manner in which the qualitative in-depth interview approach was deployed in this study may provoke debate and in the process improve the application of in-depth qualitative techniques in the study of migration-related phenomena in a South African or even African context.

During the in-depth interviews, the researcher found that the more time spent in the field, the deeper the interviews became. It was like letting an experiment run its course. For instance, during the interviews and especially the second and third phases, the interviewees themselves provided further insights of how they understood the threatening other. In line with a deconstructionist and critical realist approach guiding this research, this research suggests that 'what is' (Losifides 2011:55) is not the limit of what can be known. A set of questions was not allowed to limit what the respondents could say. This further shows the utility of the in-depth interviews and that the researcher attempted to objectively carry out this research.

Hence, in this thesis there is a discussion of issues which do not appear in the appendices but are an integral part of this work. This does not mean that either the researcher had an oversight or that the instrument was limited and/or unsuitable, but that it was effective because it precluded preconceived ideas, such that the interviewees provided natural data in the way that they understood the threatening

other. Interview guides provided a setting. Therefore, the application of the in-depth interviews gave the interviewees freedom to think beyond an interview guide and this actually assisted the researcher to probe new issues about the threatening other as they were uncovered in the field. This expanded the depth of the in-depth interviews and was considered important in the discipline of geography in a study of perception issues about migration-related issues in a South African context.

The theoretical contribution of this thesis to the study of Geography is on two levels. The first is demonstrated in the approach which was adopted towards this research - 'the state of the mind' in the conception of the study and the stance of writing in terms of questioning the established discourse that African immigrants in South Africa are the threatening other. From the research design to the collection and analysis and presentation of data, the researcher remained sensitive to difference as a way of emphasising that in the representation of geographic phenomena in the academy, the only way of getting closer to the social reality or the status of the world is by achieving and maintaining a double view. The representation of the other amounts to giving voice to the silenced African immigrants.

In this way, the research demonstrates differences in space or spacing and explaining the status of the world by bringing to the fore the view that no one way is the way of knowing the status of the world. Paying attention to smaller differences as represented by the 'other' may help us understand the world better than suppressing the same. Suspicious of the dominant role of discourses in the geographical thought of African immigrants in contemporary South Africa, this study employed deconstruction in the study of geography by using it to effect a more reflective and critical gaze on the African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city.

The second, which is an extension of the first, involved the actual application of deconstruction in terms of contesting the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other, on the basis of analysing, interpreting and synthesizing data which was collected in the field. This thesis used a deconstructionist critique to debate whether or not African immigrant traders have contributed to the Johannesburg inner city by assessing, for example, employment creation, revenue generation and the provision of choice for consumers by African immigrant traders.

Based on such an analysis, this work establishes that depending on the context and indices used to measure and define contribution, African immigrant traders may be both the threatening other and a beneficial other. This demonstrates the analytical power of deconstruction which enables geographical analysis to unravel and illuminate differences in spaces and spacing and thus assist better understanding of the status of the world in its complexity and heterogeneity.

This work suggests that deconstruction can expand the study of geography by highlighting differences to the norm and these differences to the norm can help us understand better the norm and hence achieve a balanced view of the status of the world. This further illustrates that the representation of the suppressed views in geographical phenomena is as important as the hegemonic perspectives, because it enables a complete and not partial understanding of social processes. The study of the suppressed views pays attention to difference and differentiation, critical aspects of geography as a discipline.

The growth of these African immigrant businesses has changed the physical structure of the inner city in terms of streets lined up with trading stalls selling a variety of goods from all over Africa and other parts of the world, suggesting that that it may be valid to view immigrants as bringing resources and 'new practices' (Gold and Nawyn: 2013: 2). This has resulted in various contestations in terms of the accusations that African immigrants are taking over the Johannesburg inner city and must go back to their countries, which has not happened; African immigrant traders continue to be in the Johannesburg inner city. These observations illustrate that this thesis contributes to the discipline of geography by highlighting the fact that migration changes host societies both positively and negatively and this links with the view by Papastergiadis (2000:2) that migration is 'an integral part of the transformation of modernity'.

From a geographical point of view, the movement of immigrants from different parts of Africa is not necessarily a spatial transfer of problems to South Africa, but brings both positive gains and negative issues. In this case study, this reconfigures and reconceptualises the defiled position of immigrants by positing that they are not always the problematic other. Perhaps qualification for citizenship in contemporary South Africa should be expanded to include the contribution that African immigrants

make to the host society. For those who play an important role, they must be integrated as valuable members of the host society.

The objective understanding of African immigrants through a deconstructionist dismantling of the perception that they are the threatening other in this case study seems to put a case for an expanded citizenship for beneficial African immigrants. Migration and immigration in this age of globalisation is increasing (Heisler 2008) and cannot be stopped; it is a transformative process that affects all countries. It can neither be solved (International Migration Institute 2006) nor stopped, but can be managed on the basis of objective, impartial or distorted knowledge of the immigrants. The latter is not desirable as it can only stir xenophobia, conflict and distrust, which appear to be out of tune with the status of the world regarding increased migration, global fluidity and transnationalism.

## **8.6 CONCLUSION**

The migration and immigration trajectories in South Africa from about 1910 to 2014 seem to indicate that African immigrants both before and after the 1994 democratic dispensation have not been the most preferred immigrants. This has especially been the case since 1994, where on paper all immigrants to South Africa are welcome and eligible to apply for permits for which they qualify. The reality on the ground is that it is either difficult to acquire the different types of permits or if these are acquired, they do not lay claim to what their holders are entitled to. Although comparable studies show that the hostility to immigrants is a global phenomenon, several scholars (Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007, 2010; Laher 2010; Landau 2010; Attias-Donfut et al. 2012) seem to suggest that the South African case is peculiar in its targeting of immigrants from other African countries. Thus, African immigrants in contemporary South Africa seem to create a subject for scholarly investigation and consideration – this study is located within this debate.

Furthermore, because South Africa is economically developed in Africa, it has attracted and continues to attract more African immigrants, the majority of whom are economic immigrants. Due to their actual and perceived numbers in South Africa, they have attracted negative portrayal and depersonalisation. Through the deployment of a deconstructionist approach to examine the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other based on a case study of the Johannesburg

inner city traders; this thesis suggests that African immigrant traders exist in a society where there are cracks and indeed creative tensions. Cracks develop because of the conception of African immigrants as the harmful aliens who are ready to deprive South Africans of the gains of democracy. Creative tensions exist because the interaction of these groups of people illustrates positive potential even though there may also be negative impacts. The fact that there are cracks and creative tensions already suggests both good and bad impacts due to the presence of African immigrants in post-apartheid South Africa. It is on this basis that this case study highlights emerging perspectives relating to, and challenges the negative portrayal of African immigrants.

An example of the human-space interaction in this case study relates to some African immigrant traders who have formed trading businesses as a result of acts of discrimination. Yet some African immigrant traders specifically came to the Johannesburg inner city to set up businesses. This study highlights that care must always be taken not to assume that all African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city formed businesses as a result of discrimination. Even after forming their businesses, some African immigrant traders have not experienced discrimination, violence and harassment. African immigrant traders in this case study are not always victims. In some cases they are perpetrators of illegal economic activities, such as operating from undesignated trading zones and selling drugs and pirated goods. Yet some are honest hardworking people who run legitimate businesses.

The interaction of African immigrant traders with their South African counterparts seems to suggest a positive relationship – an example of a creative tension. Some of the businesses of the African immigrant traders are integrated with their South African counterparts on the one hand and with the SMME and formal economy on the other, suggesting a positive relationship that can foster growth and productivity. Comparable case studies of African immigrant traders in the Middle East (Bertoncello and Bredeloup 2007) and South East Asia (Bertoncello and Bredeloup 2007; Lyons et al. 2012) suggest that they play important economic and trading roles. Such development is possible in this case study. Beyond the question of the nature of the businesses which African immigrant traders have formed and how

these contribute to the Johannesburg inner city, this thesis suggests that the aspect of contribution is a complex matter. It cannot be reduced to the perception that African immigrant traders are the threatening other.

Some African immigrant traders contribute towards, among others; employment creation, revenue generation and support for the formal economy, exporting South African goods and importing a variety of goods to South Africa. Some do not make these contributions and yet others are simply illegal survivalist enterprises. Thus, an evaluation of the contribution of African immigrant traders to the Johannesburg inner city reveals that just as African immigrants are different people; their contributions are different and variable. It is not correct to view all African immigrant traders in this case study as the threatening other.

As reflected in this case study, the label that all African immigrants are the threatening other does not seem to hold, just as not all of them can be regarded as beneficial. Some are both destructive and beneficial; some are simply beneficial and some are just destructive and a threat. Therefore, the findings of this case study question careless generalisations such as the one that all African immigrants are the threatening other and do not benefit South Africa as suggested in the popular press (*Daily Sun* 17 April 2008:8; *Daily Sun*, 9 May 2008:2; *Sowetan* 2 June 2010:3; 14 November 2011:9; *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011:21; *Sowetan* 2 May 2012:12).

This recognition and acceptance that there are good and bad African immigrants, just as there could be good and bad South Africans as suggested in this case study, could help in closing the tensions which fragment the host society along the 'us versus them' divide. It is important to note that in this age of increased human mobility, migration has become a permanent reality. As such, migration and immigration cannot be wished away but are a reality which must be positively dealt with for the benefit of both the immigrants and the host society. As suggested in this case study, this could be done on the basis of a correct and objective understanding of what African immigrants do and bring. The deconstruction of the perception of the threatening other in this work seems to illustrate this view.

It is important to underscore the fact that prior to the 1994 democratic dispensation, African immigrants and South African citizens lived in relative harmony (Neocosmos

2006). If there were conflicts, they were solved at community level. As reflected in this case study, since the South African nationals who deal with African immigrant traders every day know and think that they are not always the threatening other, then the threatening other is a social construct which feeds into the public discourse. As a social construct, it could be reconstructed. In the same way that before 1994 African immigrants and South African citizens lived in relative peaceful coexistence and appreciated the contributions to the relevant host communities, after 1994, this is possible based on the insights from this case study that South African citizens who deal with the African immigrants on a daily basis recognise their contributions and do not always find them harmful.

This research does not overplay or inflate how well or nicely African immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city deserve to be treated, but rather that their beneficial contributions must be recognised. How they are viewed must be based on the correct and factual knowledge of what they do. Notions of what African immigrants in South Africa do and bring must not be allowed to remain static, fixed and permanent; they have to be dynamic in line with the contributions which they make – the case of African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city amplify the view that they are not always the threatening other.

African immigrants reflected in this study are heterogeneous between and within national groups. For example, not all Nigerians are the same in terms what they do in the Johannesburg inner city. Some may be criminal and some not. If some Nigerians are criminal, it does not mean that all Zimbabweans are too. That they are all African immigrants does not mean they all do the same things and behave in a similar fashion. For those who make meaningful contributions, they may – together with South African citizens – form a formidable partnership to developing the Johannesburg inner city.

Consequently, regarding the final response to the question of whether or not African immigrants are the threatening other, this case study suggests that African immigrants are a diversified entity, as are their economic and social activities. For those African immigrant traders who may be regarded as beneficial, there are degrees of benefits as is the case with those who may be regarded as a threat.



Accordingly, within the macro-discourse that African immigrants are the threatening other, this thesis generates many perceptions. Some African immigrant traders are destructive and the same who are destructive in one context may be beneficial in another. For example, the street traders who operate from stalls in front of big shops sell their goods at lower prices; this generates competition, forcing prices to go down. The consumers benefit, but the big shops find this to be a threat. Other African immigrants are positive and in another scenario may be regarded as a threat; for instance, those who sell illegally imported goods do so at lower prices, which benefit the consumers but deprive the government of import taxes.

What is the answer then? The answer is that the perception that African immigrants are the threatening other is too simplistic. It can never be correct to state that African immigrants in contemporary South Africa are the threatening other without capturing the dynamics that this work illuminates. It is on this basis that this thesis advances the hybrid beneficial-threatening other viewpoint to analyse the African immigrants in this case study, which highlights the complexity of the place-people-environment interactions.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

#### CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG  
INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Female

Male

Start time: \_\_\_\_\_

End time: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have read the consent letter on the following pages to interviewee and the same have appended their signatures as confirmation of consent and understanding thereof.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Based on the non-probability sampling technique of respondents for in-depth interviews, the respondents will be accessed, after which, this will be read aloud to the interviewee and they will add their signatures afterwards.

Welcome and thank you for agreeing to answer my questions.

My name is Inocent Moyo. I am a PhD student from the University of South Africa. I am doing a research titled: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS THE IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER.

For the next 20-45 minutes and - if you are chosen for the follow up second round of interviews, this may take the whole day or days - I will ask you questions. If some of the questions are difficult for you to answer, you have the right to withdraw or to skip any issues that you do not want to discuss. When and where necessary, I will translate our discussions. In doing so, your active participation in giving ideas, commenting, and engagement is essential for the completion of this research. Your participation is voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw from the same, should you so wish.

For the successful and effective progress of this interview, it is imperative for us to set ground rules. All information shared here is confidential. When you are explaining events or people in your community, it is important that you do not mention their name(s). This is because of the need to protect and maintain confidentiality in this transaction. I will use each other's first names during the session, but no names will be used in any of the reports I will produce using the information you share with me. No one will be able to link your name back to what you said. Try to speak up so that you are heard and I don't miss any of your comments. Please feel free to speak openly. There is no right or wrong responses.

With your permission, I would like to record our session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Having a chance to discuss with you is a unique experience and opportunity, and consequently want to make sure I represent your opinions and thoughts accurately and correctly. I assure you that these recordings and all notes taken will only be used for my research purposes. The information will be kept in a

safe and secured place so that no one will access it. If you think of any questions, feel free to ask.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this session and to keep in confidence information that could identify specific participants and/or the information they provided.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B: FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS**

FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM-INTERVIEWEES: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS

TITLE OF RESEARCH: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER.

My name is Inocent Moyo. I am a PhD student from the University of South Africa. I am doing a research titled; AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER.

I hope investigating the issue will lead to a better understanding of African immigrants in South Africa. For the next 20-45 minutes I will ask you questions. If some of the questions are difficult for you to answer, you have the right to withdraw or to skip any issues that you do not want to discuss. When and where necessary, I will translate our discussions. In doing so, your active participation in giving ideas, commenting, and engagement is essential for the completion of this research. Your participation is voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw from the same, should you so wish.

### **KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS**

1. Why did you migrate to South Africa? When was that? Where do you come from? How old are you? Why did you migrate to Johannesburg generally and the inner city specifically? Tell me more about your stay in South Africa and experiences of discrimination, hostility and or xenophobia.
2. What exactly does your business do in the Johannesburg inner city? Why did you engage in this type of business? Why did you locate your business in the Johannesburg inner city? Any opportunities and difficulties? Is this your first time do engage in business? Do you take South African manufactured goods and sell them in your country?
3. How many people are employed in your business? How many are South Africans? And the rest where do they come from? Is your business

registered? If not, why? Do you pay taxes? What type of goods do you sell and where do you buy these goods? Are the goods that you sell, produced in South Africa? How can you compare your prices? Tell me more about the area where your business operates, how have you developed or revamped this area? Have you assisted any South Africans in setting up their businesses and if so how many?

4. Are you threatening South Africa or South Africans in any way? What do you think is the threatening other in the Johannesburg inner city? Do you do illegal things in your business? Are you the threatening other? Tell me more about what you think your contribution is to Johannesburg inner city?
5. I would like us to discuss more the aspect of the threatening other, which we have been talking about a few minutes ago. In your view who is the threatening other? Tell me more about the informal and the formal traders and how they are regarded in the Johannesburg inner city. What exactly do you think is the issue in relationship to African immigrants and their perception in the Johannesburg inner city? Is the issue about foreigners operating businesses or there is something more? Please make any other comments regarding the issue which I am researching.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR MAKING TIME TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS.

## **APPENDIX C: FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - SOUTH AFRICAN TRADERS**

FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM-INTVIEWEES: SOUTH AFRICAN TRADERS

TITLE OF RESEARCH: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER

My name is Inocent Moyo. I am a PhD student from the University of South Africa. I am doing a research titled; AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER.

I hope investigating the issue will lead to a better understanding of African immigrants in South Africa. For the next 20-45 minutes I will ask you questions. If some of the questions are difficult for you to answer, you have the right to withdraw or to skip any issues that you do not want to discuss. When and where necessary, I will translate our discussions. In doing so, your active participation in giving ideas, commenting, and engagement is essential for the completion of this research. Your participation is voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw from the same, should you so wish.

### **KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADERS**

1. Where in South Africa do you come from? When did you migrate to the Johannesburg inner city? How old are you? What is your view of shops owned and operated by African immigrants? What can you say about the goods that they sell? Comment on the quality of the areas from which they operate. Have you been helped by an African immigrant trader in any way?
2. Are African immigrant traders the threatening other in the Johannesburg inner city? Do you think that African immigrant traders are a burden and a problem in the Johannesburg city? Tell me the economic and social benefits that you think the immigrants have contributed to the Johannesburg inner city. What have they destroyed? Are they a problem on the South African economy in terms of taking away jobs and competing for resources?

3. Who or what is really the threatening other? What is your view of businesses owned by South Africans in relationship to those that are owned by African immigrant traders? Any other comments?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR MAKING TIME TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS.



## **APPENDIX D: SECOND ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS**

SECOND ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM- INTERVIEWEES: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS

TITLE OF RESEARCH: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER.

My name is Inocent Moyo. I am a PhD student from the University of South Africa. I am doing a research titled; AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN THE JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER.

I hope investigating the issue will lead to a better understanding of African immigrants in South Africa. For the next few hours, I will ask you questions. If some of the questions are difficult for you to answer, you have the right to withdraw or to skip any issues that you do not want to discuss. When and where necessary, I will translate our discussions. In doing so, your active participation in giving ideas, commenting, and engagement is essential for the completion of this research. Your participation is voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw from the same, should you so wish. As you are aware, this is the second round of the interviews because there are issues which came up during the first round that I want to understand more and better.

### **KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS**

1. The Johannesburg Metropolitan Police as the threatening other, what exactly does this mean?
2. In the first round of I interviews, the idea that crime and illegal activities that African immigrants allegedly do affect both the immigrants and South Africans came up. Tell me more about this.
3. Some African immigrant traders think that the threatening other is the registered formal business, while others think that the threat in the

Johannesburg inner city is the unregistered informal traders and others still think that the threatening other is a myth. Please tell me more about this.

4. Tell me about employment creation, buying in cash, VAT, taking away South Africans` jobs. Tell me more about how immigrant businesses support the formal economy in the Johannesburg inner city? There is the idea that South Africans and African immigrants live peacefully in the Johannesburg inner city, what is your view on this?
5. African immigrant traders assert that they play a positive role in the Johannesburg inner city? Please tell me more about this? In the first round of interviews, there were allegations that African immigrants do a lot of illegal activities and this is a threat. What is your view?
6. Do African immigrant traders provide choice for consumers? What about exporting South African goods to their own countries?
7. Please tell me more about the bad, unproductive and destructive African immigrant traders in the Johannesburg inner city? Any other comments?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR MAKING TIME TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS.

## **APPENDIX E: SECOND ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - SOUTH AFRICAN TRADERS**

SECOND ROUND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM-INTERVIEWEES: SOUTH AFRICAN TRADERS.

TITLE OF RESEARCH: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER

My name is Inocent Moyo. I am a PhD student from the University of South Africa. I am doing a research titled; AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG

I hope investigating the issue will lead to a better understanding of African immigrants in South Africa. For the next few hours, I will ask you questions. If some of the questions are difficult for you to answer, you have the right to withdraw or to skip any issues that you do not want to discuss. When and where necessary, I will translate our discussions. In doing so, your active participation in giving ideas, commenting, and engagement is essential for the completion of this research. Your participation is voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw from the same, should you so wish. As you are aware, this is the second round of the interviews because there are issues which came up during the first round that I want to understand more and better

### **KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF SOUTH AFRICANS**

1. African immigrant traders as a complete threat - a problem. Some South African traders think that African immigrants are a complete problem because they take away jobs, take over the city, accept low salaries, make the city dirty, sell pirated goods and do illegal activities. What is your view on this? Why is it a problem that African immigrant traders operate from big areas? Another issue that came up is that the illegal activities that African immigrant traders are accused of doing are also done by South Africans. What is your view of this? Another view is that the low salaries are offered by South African employers to the immigrants, so the problem is not the immigrants but the South African employers. What is your view? Why are African immigrant traders accused of spreading diseases like HIV/AIDS?

2. Based on the information from the first round of interviews, explain how African immigrant traders are neither a burden nor a problem? Tell me the economic and social benefits that you think the African immigrant traders have contributed to the Johannesburg inner city. Comment on the low prices of and quality of goods that the African immigrant traders sell. Please comment on the assertion that African immigrant traders provide choice for the consumers by bringing in goods from their countries as well skills such as beading and embroidery.
3. What do you think about the view that African immigrant traders bring value to Johannesburg inner city? Some South African traders think that the issue is business competition, not African immigrant traders. What do you think? Any other comments?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR MAKING TIME TO ANSWER MY  
QUESTIONS.

## APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL FORM

### INTERVIEW OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL FORM

This purpose of this interview protocol form is to record observations that the researcher makes during the interview as guided by the interview protocol form.

1. Name and appearance of the informant

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2. Main points-Reconstruction of the dialogue

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3. Description of physical setting

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4. Activities during the interview

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### REFLECTIVE NOTES

1. Speculation\_\_\_\_\_

2. Feelings\_\_\_\_\_

3. Problems\_\_\_\_\_

4. Ideas\_\_\_\_\_

5. Impressions\_\_\_\_\_

6. Prejudices\_\_\_\_\_

7. Date\_\_\_\_\_

8. Time and place\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE - JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN POLICE**

INTERVIEW GUIDE: JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN POLICE

TITLE OF RESEARCH: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER

I would like to ask a few questions about the businesses operated by the African immigrants. I did my research in the area bound by Plein and Bree Streets and Ntemi Piliso and Wanderers Streets. So my questions are based on this area.

1. Is this a trading zone for Street Traders?
2. The African immigrant traders claim that the JMPD take away their goods for no reason. Is this true?
3. Are there goods that Africa immigrant traders are not supposed to sell?
4. Are there trading zones in the Johannesburg inner city?
5. Do the African immigrant traders do illegal operations from their shops?
6. Why do most of the traders close their shops when they see the JMPD?
7. Tell me more about anything about the businesses that the African immigrant traders do in Johannesburg inner city.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR MAKING TIME TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS.

## **APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW GUIDE - JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN TRADING COMPANY**

INTERVIEW GUIDE: JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN TRADING COMPANY

TITLE OF RESEARCH: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT TRADERS IN JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY, SOUTH AFRICA: DECONSTRUCTING THE THREATENING OTHER.

I would like to ask a few questions about the businesses operated by the African immigrants. I did my research in the area bound by Plein and Bree Streets and Ntemi Piliso and Wanderers Streets. So my questions are based on this area.

1. Do you have trading areas or zones in the Johannesburg inner city, especially in the area in which I conducted my research?
2. What is the difference between formal and informal traders in terms of registration?
3. Must informal traders be registered with the Street Traders Association?
4. Can anyone just bring their goods in a trading zone and start selling? If they do this, are they doing something illegal?
5. What are the qualification criteria for a person to be registered with the JMTC?
7. Please tell me anything about the businesses owned and operated by African immigrant traders.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR MAKING TIME TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS.