

‘BOUNDARY WORK’ IN THE PROCESS OF INFORMAL JOB SEEKING

**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF CAPE TOWN ROADSIDE
WORKSEEKERS**

Hanneke Sterken

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Supervisor: Dr Andrew Spiegel

Faculty of Humanities

University of Cape Town

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation, in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been acknowledged, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date:

ABSTRACT

In the context of rising unemployment, an NGO called Men on the Side of the Road (MSR) was established to provide men who stand by the side of the road waiting to be offered jobs with job opportunities and skills. The purpose of the ethnographic study described here was to assess members' experiences and attitudes towards the work or income-earning opportunities introduced to members by MSR. The overall goal of the report was to assess why a large proportion of the work opportunities introduced to members were not taken up with great enthusiasm. After completion of the study, the researcher found that the day-labourers used three different labels ('locals', 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners') to describe themselves and other roadside workseekers. The present dissertation investigates roadside workseekers' use of such labels and their construction of social networks as strategic bases from which to search for jobs. It shows how day-labourers on the side of the road in a Western Cape suburb do that in a context of insufficient access to job opportunities. Through a discussion of such roadside workseekers' boundary work as revealed in their workseeking behaviour, in their attitudes towards alcohol consumption and towards their living spaces this dissertation demonstrates that roadside workers in Cape Town construct social boundaries between, and thereby social categories amongst themselves, and that they do that in order to claim particular arenas and employment opportunities/resources for members of specific categories, and in turn to exclude those of other categories.

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Hanneke Sterken, 2010

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

'locals'	Those roadside work seekers who referred to themselves as 'locals' or ' <i>skarreling</i> locals' and were referred to by other roadside work seekers as 'locals'
MSR	Men on the Side of the Road (an NGO)
'networking workers'	Those roadside work seekers who referred to themselves as 'networking workers' and were referred to by 'locals' as 'foreigners' and 'networking workers' or 'those who are connected' to networks by 'struggling foreigners'.
NGO	non-governmental organization
PC	Placement Coordinator – MSR employee whose task it was to help place MSR members in MSR-provided jobs.
'struggling foreigners'	Those roadside work seekers who referred to themselves as 'struggling foreigners' and were referred to by 'locals' as 'foreigners' and as 'struggling foreigners' by 'networking workers'.
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNISA	University of South Africa
WCP	MSR worker collection point

ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

It was 7am on a Monday in April 2010 when I arrived for the first time at a busy Cape Town suburban roadside for my fieldwork. Around fifty men were gathered there in small groups. At various moments, bakkies¹ (pickup trucks) pulled over at different spots to pick up men. Some ran towards the bakkies; others just waved a finger to signify their availability. In some instances when a bakkie pulled over, some men simply jumped into its loadbox. Once it had left the remaining men returned to their spots on the roadside.

A 'Men on the Side of the Road' (MSR) placement coordinator (PC) arrived around eight, indicating that this was an MSR Workers' Collection Point (WCP). Helped by two men standing nearby, he erected a gazebo with MSR's logo on it. His two assistants then stood with him under the gazebo, watching the passing cars. The other men at the site remained where they were, scattered alongside the road. None seemed to bother to go to the MSR tent.

By about ten o'clock the active roadside job search seemed to be over. The men now engaged in conversation and sat down. At eleven o'clock the MSR gazebo was removed and the PC and his two assistants left for the railway station.

That day, I saw twelve men being picked up, but none through MSR. Most of those remaining left the site between 11am and 1pm. The four who remained thereafter sat together on a street corner close to where the MSR gazebo had stood. They talked as they watched cars pass by. At 5pm they too left, one saying: "Let's go. No job for us today."

On my way home that first day I wondered how these men – aspirant day labourers in my mind then – made sense of and coped with their struggle to find employment on the roadside. I had observed many men waiting, but only a few being picked up for work. In the course of my subsequent eight weeks fieldwork, it became clear that these men had constructed a set of three different and only partially overlapping social networks to help them cope with their roadside job searching, networks that they understood to be groups that they had labelled as 'locals', 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners'. This study explores how being a member of one of these three emically-labelled social networks was used as a strategy for these suburban Cape Town roadside workseekers to find jobs. In this introduction I introduce

¹ This is a peculiarly South African word that comes from Afrikaans; the standard English word is 'pick-up truck'.

the research and provide background on the non-governmental organization (NGO) called MSR and its attempts to help roadside workseekers. Secondly, I discuss my search for a suitable definition for the participants in my research and explore the terms ‘members’, ‘day labourers’ and ‘roadside workseekers’. I then look at the available literature on day labour in South Africa and introduce the concept of ‘boundary work’ – a concept I use, along with the associated idea of symbolic boundaries, to demonstrate the importance of boundary construction for dealing with the exigencies of roadside work seeking. I end the introduction with a chapter outline.

1.2 MSR and its projects

MSR claims to help unemployed men who, in South African cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg, can be found every day waiting on roadsides for employment chances. According to its pamphlet, MSR’s vision is to ensure that all unemployed roadside work-seeking men can find jobs, and to provide reliable and skilled work opportunities to all unemployed people who daily seek work on city roadsides (MSR, 2004–09). Its stated mission is to organize, train and place reliable, skilled and affordable labour in jobs (MSR, n.d.a.).

MSR focuses on providing employers with reliable workers who are known to the organization and have verified skills. Its goal is to find and maintain long-term, sustainable employment for those men it considers to be its members. Its website claims that its further goal is to give such men “dignity and pride” (MSR, 2010), to “build unity amongst this group of individuals”, to “build a human connection” and to make sure that “people and assets are used to their potential” (Ashoka Citizen’s Base Initiative, 2007), and “making the men on the side of the road visible” (Tools For Self Reliance, 2010).

MSR’s historical development and growth, according to a University of South Africa (UNISA) evaluation report, can be divided into three main phases (Harmse et al, 2008:370–373): visibility,² training³ and placement.⁴

2 This phase is characterized by activities and media exposure that challenge the views of the community and society regarding the men on the side of the road by drawing attention to their motives and plight, such as lack of access to toilets and water. MSR also established a tool workshop for collecting and lending tools, with the main aim of collecting tools to provide for group projects or for use by the men on the street. These tools were also used in training men to repair tools.

3 In this second phase, MSR focused on training to enhance the employability and marketability of the men. The focus was mainly on gardeners and painters, with the aim of ensuring individual job placements.

Given the fluid nature of MSR's membership, no accurate figures were available on its total membership. However, records provided a figure of approximately 10,000 people having signed up with MSR nationally since 2001. Most members are men, although women have reportedly also started gathering at a few WCPs, and have become members. Members' ages range between 16 and 60 years. The majority are South African – mainly Xhosa in the Cape Town branch – and Zimbabwean. Most are gardeners, general workers, painters, bricklayers, plasterers, cleaners, tilers and construction labourers. The women members are largely domestic workers (MSR, n.d.b.).

1.3 Defining research participants

MSR recruits members from amongst unemployed people or people seeking work on the roadside and who are unable to procure permanent or fixed employment. According to MSR documentation, members are not considered to be MSR employees: they do not enter into any formal employment relationship with the organization or indeed with those who employ them (MSR, 2009).

Registration of members was previously done from the MSR head office, but now takes place at the WCPs. After completing a registration form⁵ workseekers are considered to be MSR members and receive a membership card.

Most roadside workseekers, however, did not consider themselves to be MSR members. A large proportion said they never thought of themselves as such, even after having registered. Many said they had been happy when MSR first registered them since, they said, they had

4 In this phase, MSR attempted to ensure employment through direct involvement by booking jobs and placing workers. For some time MSR provided transport, but this was abandoned as it proved to be financially impossible due to lack of funding. Placement is now the core service provided by MSR. It is the PC's responsibility to link members to employment opportunities, working off the centralised MSR database. When job opportunities are available, members are notified. They are picked up by employers at the worker collection point (WCP) or go to job opportunities themselves after receiving instructions on how to get there from the placement officer. Preference is given to members with verified skills and those who have received the highest rating from employers.

5 The registration form contains information such as the member's name, ID number, schooling, certified skills training with attached copies of any certificates awarded, work experience, work references, computer skills (y/n), criminal record (y/n), whether married or not (y/n), and bank account details. However, many of the men I spoke to failed to meet most requirements, but they were allowed to register anyway. They had no ID documents (many of the foreigners had expired refugee status and were worried that they would be kicked out of the country if they applied for a renewal. The South African day labourers I spoke to lacked documents too. They told me they did not want to apply for an ID document, because it would show their criminal records). Most had no certified skills training (skills were learned on the job or via friends), no bank account and no references (some did have phone numbers or the first names of previous employers, but refused to give out this information, saying they were afraid MSR would 'steal their jobs' for others).

understood that MSR had come to help them find jobs and to provide training to improve their skills. After the registration process, they added, they had expected to get jobs and to acquire skills via MSR, but no real sense of membership was established. While some reported having discarded their MSR membership cards, many said they had held onto them even though they actively sought work outside MSR's ambit. Of the 45 roadside workseekers I interacted with, only five stated that they were "one of MSR". Dean was one:

Dean: I am one of MSR.

Hanne: One of MSR?

Dean: Yeah, because I get work through MSR and when I go to the jobs I introduce myself and say I am from MSR. MSR is the organization that gives me jobs. John [PC] calls me and then he tells me where to go and what kind of job it is.

Hanne: So would you say you are a member?

Dean: Well, in some way. I mean, I signed up and I get jobs through them. But it is not like I feel like I am a member. I think of myself more as a networking worker, and MSR is one of the ways to get work. John and I, we get along and we are pretty close. So whenever there is a job available through MSR, he gives it to me, because he knows me. He can trust me. He knows that I will do a good job.

Given that even those actually employed via MSR felt no sense of MSR membership, the NGO's description of them as 'members' seemed misplaced.

Most existing literature refers to such roadside work-seeking men as informal day labourers. Valenzuela (2008:309), in his general overview of day labour in the USA, states that there is no formal definition of day labour. Yet he adds that the term is "mostly used to convey a type of temporary employment that is distinguished by hazards in or the undesirability of the work, the absence of fringe and other typical workplace benefits (i.e., breaks, safety equipment), and the daily search for employment".

Drawing on Peck and Theodore (2001)'s arguments, Valenzuela (2008:309-10) distinguishes between informal and formal day labour industries:

Informal day labour is characterized by men (and, in a few cases, women) who congregate in open-air curbside or visible markets such as empty lots, street

corners, parking lots, designated public spaces, or store fronts of home improvement establishments to solicit temporary daily work.

The formal day labour industry is primarily connected to for-profit temp agencies or “hiring halls” and places workers in manual work assignments at or around minimum wage. These temp agencies or hiring halls are less ubiquitous than informal sites and are located in enclosed hiring halls with boarded windows or other neighborhood-based establishments.

Although Valenzuela’s definition of informal day labour seems appropriate for characterising participants in the MSR project, the term implies that those concerned are seeking work for single days only. It implies no connection being established between worker and employer, which – as I demonstrate – was not always the case for the men amongst whom I worked. The term thus seems somewhat misleading. Although my research participants were sometimes picked up for just a day’s work, in many cases they attempted to use such opportunities to create links with employers for whom they might work for more than just that one day. Indeed I saw some men being picked up by specific employers who had recruited them for a week or a month, and others being called by employers whenever there was work. For that reason the term ‘roadside workseekers’ seems more appropriate when referring to such men.

In sum, the men with whom I worked are best described as roadside workseekers since they congregated on a suburban Cape Town roadside to search work, either through or outside MSR, sometimes finding work for just a day, sometimes working with an employer who collected them on a more regular, albeit intermittent basis.

1.4 Day labour markets

The limited existing literature on informal day labour⁶ markets in South Africa predominantly employed survey methods to document the scope of the phenomenon, the workforce’s demographic characteristics, and the characteristic pay and working conditions of this market (Blaauw & Bothma, 2003; Blaauw et al, 2006; Harmse et al, 2008).

Blaauw et al (2006) estimate that there are nearly 1,000 places in South Africa where roadside workseekers are found, while at least 45,000 people, mostly black African men

⁶ In this literature survey I continue to use the term ‘day labourer’, despite my decision that ‘roadside work seeker’ is a more appropriate term, because the literature uses ‘day labourer’ in this context.

between 16 and 25 years of age, seek any type of available work each day, often receiving only a small wage (R40–80 per day) for hard physical work. Blaauw (2005:19) notes that Pretoria-based “day labourers ... were found to be mainly male, fairly young, generally very low skilled, experiencing no certainty in terms of income security, supporting on average four people and working under harsh conditions”. Harmse et al. (2008), who also highlight some of the basic demographics of such populations, state that roadside day labourers across South Africa tend to gather at sites located close to garages or open fields, due to lack of toilet facilities; that most workseekers at any particular site are from a single dominant language group, and that such men tend to share what resources they have. They also argue that there are inter-regional differences in the circumstances facing South African day labourers, pointing out that they earn higher income in cities⁷ than in rural areas,⁸ and that their morale and spirit in Gauteng and the Western Cape were far more positive than that of their counterparts in other areas (e.g. Eastern Cape cities and towns). Within cities too, day labourers reportedly experienced different circumstances at the different hiring sites, some reportedly providing higher income jobs than others, and more frequently available jobs. Those with higher skills levels reportedly gathered at particular sites in each city or town surveyed.

Literature on day labour in the American context is more extensive, but it too remains largely exploratory. Most authors there also use survey methods and focus on uncovering the daily mechanisms of how the industry works, its workers, its connection to local neighbourhoods and economies, and worker-employer relations (Theodore et al., 2006; Valenzuela, 1999; 2003; Valenzuela et al., 2006). Malpica’s (2002) analysis of roadside workers’ social organization reveals some basic contours of the day labour market in Los Angeles, but it lacks the perspective of the workers’ viewpoint.

In contrast, Walter et al. (2004), Cleveland & Kelly (2009), and Purser (2009) all focus on how day labourers perceive, make sense of and cope with the labour market in which they participate. Walter et al. (2004) consider what they refer to as the “embodied social suffering” of immigrant day labourers who face injury, illness or disability. They also show how gender plays a role in shaping the social and psychological experience of injury. They argue that “cultural constructions of patriarchal masculinity among undocumented Latino day

7 In cities, the daily income ranged from R90 to R120 per day.

8 In rural areas, average daily income ranged from R30 to R40.

labourers organize their sense of self-worth and define their experience of poverty and social marginalization” (2004:1160).

Cleveland & Kelly (2009) examine how Mexican day labourers in New Jersey struggle to develop strategies used to negotiate their survival while presenting themselves in public to find work. They argue that, by presenting themselves as clean, quiet and orderly – qualities presumably embraced by the dominant white citizens who are their potential employers – they try to negotiate the social space in which they attempt to find jobs (2009:51).

Examining cultural meanings that day labourers assign to their work, and the role these might play in shaping where and how they go about what she calls the relentless task of searching for it, Purser (2009:120) develops the concept of ‘boundary work’ – one I use in this dissertation – and argues that the “construction of moral boundaries goes hand-in-hand with the cultural construction of gender: both involve the identification and repudiation of a contextually dependent ‘other’” (ibid).

1.5 ‘Boundary work’

Describing the notion of ‘boundary work’, Small & Newman (2001:38) have explained that “rather than a comprehensive theory, [it] is a perspective by which sociologists examine relationships between individuals or groups not by studying their inherent characteristics but by analysing the boundaries they draw between and among one another”. In other words, boundary work deals with “meaning-making” practices (Yodanis, 2002); practices effected through the construction and revision of boundaries that constitute framing devices that are themselves products of human action and the effects of struggles for control and identity (see White, 1992:127, 128); and which “have to be constructed, negotiated, and maintained and are often produced through narrative in the endeavour to achieve meaning and order” (Turnbull, 2005:757-758).

I use the notion of boundary work to understand the circumstances of and dynamics amongst roadside workseekers with whom I have worked. I do so in order to describe how they construct moral and symbolic boundaries, based on assumptions they held about their own and other roadside workseekers’ work-seeking behaviour, alcohol consumption, and living spaces. In other words, I use the concept of boundary work as a way to explain how roadside workseekers categorised themselves, and sometimes formed groups and networks, the edges of which they defined using their assumptions about each other’s behaviour and attitudes towards work and employment-seeking opportunities. I also consider how they did that in

order to mark out particular arenas for themselves in an insecure employment environment and to thereby to exclude others.

The concept of boundary work was originally proposed by Gieryn (1983). He used the term to describe “the discursive attribution of selected qualities to scientists, scientific methods, and scientific claims for the purpose of drawing a rhetorical boundary between science and some less authoritative residual non-science” (Gieryn, 1999:4–5). Following Gieryn, the concept of boundary work has been used by various authors to write about ordinary people’s self-definition (e.g. see Binder, 1999; Becker, 1999; Gamson, 1992; Lamont, 2000; Lichterman, 1999; Newman, 1999; Purser 2009).

Most literature on symbolically marked boundaries deals with the cultural aspects of class, gender and racial inequality. It also focuses on the construction of identity through boundary work, and on research on moral order, community and symbolic politics (e.g. see Erikson, 1996; Peterson & Kern, 1996). Studies of the social construction of symbolic boundaries, sometimes known as boundary work, attempts to document how symbolic boundaries are “often used to enforce, maintain, normalize, or rationalize social boundaries” (Lamont & Molnar, 2002:187), but also how they are sometimes “employed to contest and re-frame the meaning of social boundaries”. Such work is also concerned to describe “cross-cultural differences in how symbolic boundaries are linked to social boundaries” (ibid). Lastly such work shows how “in some cases symbolic boundaries may become so salient that they take the place of social boundaries” (ibid). Symbolic boundaries are “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” and social boundaries as “objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities”. (Lamont & Molnar, 2002:168).

In the present study I aim to show that symbolic boundaries are constantly constructed by roadside workseekers, and how they form part of their means to cope with the exigencies of their situation. I show too that these boundaries can be seen as an important social construct that roadside workseekers manipulate in their roadside search for jobs. I thus look at how boundary work takes place on the roadside and at how socially salient symbols are called upon to do so. In particular, I try to show how roadside workseekers tend to understand, and speak about, those roadside workseekers they consider to be their respective ‘other’.

1.6 Dissertation outline

In the following chapters I discuss roadside workseekers' ideas on proper masculine behaviour, proper alcohol use and proper living spaces in their search for jobs, particularly in respect of how these are seen as part of the symbolic and moral boundary work that such men employ to construct the labels they manipulate in roadside work-seeking. I document how symbolic and moral boundaries are constructed through deployment of the labels 'locals', 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners' to describe three distinct albeit partially overlapping categories that the men created of and about themselves. The men's use of these labels and of the social networks that inhere in each category, I argue, underpins one of the strategies that roadside workseekers in a Western Cape suburb employ in their search for jobs in a context of insufficient access to jobs for all to be regularly employed.

In Chapter 2 I elaborate on my research methods and the specific study I was commissioned to do by MSR. I also consider the ethical dilemmas I experienced in my fieldwork. Chapter 3 introduces the labels 'locals', 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners' and the categories they were used to describe. Chapter 4 deals with the construction of boundaries based on ideas about appropriate masculine work-seeking behaviour while Chapter 5 considers how the roadside workseekers with whom I worked constructed boundaries around ideas about appropriate alcohol use. Chapter 6 then documents how those roadside workseekers created boundaries based on ideas about living spaces. In Chapter 7 I describe how such boundary work influences the outcomes of MSR's work. In my conclusion I return to my main argument and demonstrate that the use, by roadside work-seeking men, of labels to signify internal category boundaries amongst themselves can be seen as symbolic and moral boundary work that is an important social mechanism manipulated by roadside workseekers as a resource in their search for jobs.

TWO: RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Introduction

I begin this chapter by discussing the study I was commissioned to do by MSR. I then discuss how I entered the field, how I made initial contact with my research participants and how I selected a sample from among them. Thereafter I discuss how I conducted fieldwork, first at the MSR office and then at the WCP, during the eight weeks 5 April and 30 May 2010. I also discuss my choices of ethnographic fieldwork methods and my use of in-depth interviews and participant-observation techniques. In a section on ethical considerations I discuss issues that arose during fieldwork that posed potential ethical dilemmas and how I dealt with them. I conclude with a section entitled ‘Self-reflection’ where I discuss the difficulties of ‘blending in’ with the participants and how I dealt with this issue.

2.2 The study

The overarching aim of MSR, where I worked as a short-term ethnographic research consultant, is to provide “reliable and skilled work opportunities to all unemployed people who daily wait for work on the side of the road” (MSR, 2004–09). Through experimenting with various approaches to finding work for its members, and continuously seeking innovative solutions and approaches, MSR personnel try to keep building MSR, ostensibly to benefit its members, i.e. roadside workseekers.

My consultancy role was to examine one particular MSR WCP as a case study. I selected one WCP⁹ in a Cape Town suburb. The MSR director had asked me, as a social anthropology student, to work to a brief requiring me to assess the experiences and attitudes towards the work and income-earning opportunities introduced by MSR of those roadside workseekers that MSR refers to as its members, and to find out why a large proportion of the work opportunities introduced to those men are not taken up with great success.¹⁰

I created a practical set of objectives to guide my research. Firstly, I decided to establish the level of social acceptability of MSR-provided income-earning opportunities through

9 The reasons I chose the selected suburb Cape Town are two-fold. Firstly, I selected one of three WCP’s in Cape Town that was easily accessible by public transport from my place of residence, as I thought it necessary to be able to be there early in the morning when the roadside workseekers arrived. Secondly, as became clear during the first conversation with the MSR Director, this particular WCP was also MSR’s first choice of site, as the organization considered it to be “one of the WCPs that is doing well” (author’s interview with MSR Director, 2010).

10 See appendix I for the full brief.

evaluating roadside workseekers' experiences of and attitudes towards such work or income-earning opportunities. Implicit in this objective was to establish what roadside workseekers at the selected WCP knew about the organization and its income-generating opportunities, and how that in turn might influence their acceptance or use of MSR. Secondly, I aimed to identify how the workseekers at the selected WCP sought work and what challenges they encountered. I anticipated that such information would be useful for the organization when designing future work or income-earning opportunities. Thirdly, I thought it necessary to determine whether any other institutional or social barriers amongst roadside workseekers were hindering their capacity to take work or income-earning opportunities, or to access MSR in their job search. I also looked at the extent to which the jobs made available fulfilled the men's work aspirations and their attitudes towards how prospective work opportunities were explained to them. Based on these data, I hoped I could explore possible reasons why some roadside workseekers were reportedly satisfied with particular MSR-provided jobs provided and others were not. My research findings were written up in a report for the organization in June 2010.

2.3 Entering the field

I began fieldwork at the MSR office, and for a week I interviewed and observed personnel and others there. Doing this allowed me to find out how personnel saw MSR and its projects. I also examined all available data on MSR.¹¹ This provided me with insights into the organization and how it was portrayed and imagined in various contexts outside the organization.

My first week thus provided opportunity for me to get to know MSR's personnel, including through random conversations, asking questions relating to the work they did for MSR and observing everyday office activities. I returned to the office various times during my final fieldwork week, primarily to ask further questions and make extra observations on issues I had missed out on earlier, but which had become evident as gaps whilst I was at the WCP and amongst the men I met there.

Before entering the selected roadside WCP I contacted my friend Morris,¹² a self-proclaimed

11 This included documents produced by the organization such as reports, funding proposals, newspaper articles and notes from personnel meetings.

12 Morris (a pseudonym) is a 30-year-old Zimbabwean male friend who is fluent in Xhosa, English and Shona. I chose him to be my research assistant because he was available, trustworthy, and familiar with the ways in which people look for work on the side of the road and through various other ways, as he had searched for jobs in previous years (2005–06) in similar ways.

former roadside workseeker. In part I did this in order to ensure my own security. After I had explained my intended research to him, he agreed to accompany me on my first day at the selected WCP. When it proved necessary, he also accompanied me while I conducted fieldwork, including various visits to bars, on several early morning train trips, and when I walked with particular research participants to Khayelitsha and Phillipi, two ‘townships’¹³ where they lived. Throughout the research, Morris also acted as my Xhosa- and Shona-to-English translator whenever necessary.

To make initial contact with those roadside workseekers that MSR regarded as its members, I met them at the WCP. I had earlier decided not to make contact via MSR in order to avoid the possibility that the men might not feel totally easy about sharing their opinions of the organization and its projects. I thus preferred to introduce myself as a graduate student from the University of Cape Town (UCT) doing research for my master’s dissertation, albeit one based on research done for and on MSR. That said, however, I did not hide the fact that I was doing the research for MSR. It simply meant that I emphasized that I was also doing the research for my own dissertation. This proved a good decision, as I experienced a general distrust among many of the roadside workseekers I interacted with. Almost everyone¹⁴ said that roadside workseekers do not trust one another; and some added MSR, the employers and me to that list. As one man called Trust said:

We are here to hunt for jobs, all of us. There are only a few jobs, so we do what we can to get that job. When you become friends with someone here he will just steal the job from you, because we are all desperate, you see. In this place, you cannot trust anyone. You must do it on your own.

In order to win their trust in this situation, I did not rush my fieldwork, preferring to give people time to get used to my being around. So every day, as I arrived at the WCP, I greeted the men and engaged in conversations that often included the men asking me questions about myself.¹⁵ Some asked me to show that I was not taping their conversations and looked at the

13 Townships in South Africa “were a creation of the apartheid system and its predecessor regimes of white rule. Apartheid was formally instituted as state policy in 1948, but dating from the white settlers’ permanent landing at what is now Cape Town in 1652, racial segregation was formal practice. The townships were racially discriminatory in that “black” African, “coloured” (mixed-race), and “Indian” people were ordered by the Land Act of 1913 and the Group Areas Act of 1950 to live separately. ... These laws existed until the early 1990s, and since then there has been only gradual desegregation of formerly white, coloured, and Indian areas” (Bond, 2007:405).

14 Only two of the 45 roadside workseekers I spoke to did not speak about distrust during our conversations.

15 E.g. where I live, what my home country (the Netherlands) is like, where I stay in Cape Town, and what kind of work I do.

notes to see exactly what I was writing down. To these men I showed my notes and explained that they were based on my observations of activities at the site. Most then seemed to see this as an opportunity to explain to me how they saw what was happening, which proved a good way of starting a conversation about their roadside job seeking.

By the second week at the WCP I was finding myself in conversations with men who had themselves initiated a discussion rather than waiting for me to do so. In these instances, I did not ask questions, but just let them talk. As the conversations evolved, however, I did start to ask questions based on what they had already said. In addition, I gave them opportunity to ask me questions, thereby hoping to show my willingness to be as open with them as I hoped they would be with me. In the third week, I returned to those men who, during the previous week, had given me their contact details or who had approached me when I showed up again. I discussed with several of them the possibility that I might 'shadow' them for a day. By taking time to observe the activities taking place at the WCP, and by giving roadside workseekers the opportunity to talk to me and to get to know me, it became possible to identify six primary informants during my first two weeks at the WCP. Among them were men who were willing to associate with me and answer questions, and to allow me to 'shadow' them for one or two full days. After having developed rapport with these six MSR-registered men (all occasionally finding jobs via MSR), I was able to follow them during their daily activities, such as sitting on the roadside whilst seeking a job.

I was then able to expand my sample to include others who were in one way or another connected to these six primary informants. However, I did not limit myself to these particular men and their networks. I also became connected to several others during the third week when those I had anticipated being with did not show up, or were unwilling to spend time with me. From these various contacts I was then able to follow up on a network of other roadside workseekers with whom they associated or to whom they were linked. I was able eventually to shadow seventeen men (my primary informants – see appendix II) as they went about their everyday lives, including accompanying them if and when they found a job and sometimes going to their job sites. Doing that in turn gave me opportunity to engage with their employers.

I also met and discussed this type of work seeking with various others, including other men searching for jobs and those the men referred to as family members or friends. This sample selection method proved useful to generate data. Whenever possible, for example, after the

man I was shadowing on a particular day had completed his job, or when he had ended his active roadside job search, I had conversations and conducted an open-ended interview with him. I accompanied four men by train to jobs they had obtained previously, and accompanied one man to a job he had found whilst on the roadside. On one occasion when I accompanied a man to his workplace I was told by the recruiter to sit with him in the bakkie's cab.¹⁶

In several instances, I was also able to visit men at their homes. I was thereby able to make contact with people that the roadside workseekers considered part of their social networks, including those they considered to be family members and friends. In all such instances, I ensured that I obtained permission to have conversations or interviews with these relatives or dependents – both from the men themselves and from their dependents, and/or those in their households or elsewhere who might have been supporting them during their periods of unemployment.

2.4 Methods

Ethnography differs from other social scientific accounts in that it attempts to make sense of people's experiences using people's own everyday categories and models. Sometimes this involves comparisons that highlight differences between ways of doing, seeing and saying. Sometimes the ethnographic process reveals similarities between social systems and relations that on the surface seem markedly different. The value of ethnographic approaches is double. Part lies in seeing people's lives from the inside, as it were; showing how they organise social life and make sense (or not) of what happens to them. This emic perspective is complemented by an etic approach which entails systematising that knowledge, extending it through abstraction, generalisation and comparison so that we can say something more broadly about the human condition. One might accurately describe the anthropological approach as 'inside-out' (Ross, 2010:9).

Fieldwork, as Wolcott (1995:66) defines it, is "a form of inquiry in which one is immersed personally in the ongoing social activities of some individual or group for the purpose of research". I undertook fieldwork to understand how work-seeking men viewed and understood their roadside job search.

¹⁶ I agreed, because sitting in the back of a bakkie is illegal in South Africa and I did not want to risk a fine.

This dissertation draws on ethnographic data collected through a combination of participant observation, secondary-source analysis and open-ended interviews with men at the WCP and people they associated with, such as friends, family, fellow roadside workseekers, previous and potential employers and MSR personnel. I used in-depth interview techniques for collecting data about the roadside workseekers in my primary sample.¹⁷ This helped me to understand what these men said was their understanding of their situation of unemployment and seeking work on the roadside. The interviews also dealt with ideas roadside workseekers had about employers, the organization MSR, other roadside workseekers and strategies for finding work. Some such conversations lasted only a few minutes; others went on for an hour or more.

In total, I interviewed 24 participants, 17 roadside workseekers, seven employers and three MSR personnel in depth.¹⁸ I also had various conversations with these people and with seven other roadside workseekers and 28 others (friends, relatives, other employers, permanently placed MSR members and other MSR personnel).

Work-seeking research participants ranged in age from 17 to 55. All 45 roadside workseekers I met during fieldwork were African males from Southern Africa, roughly 67%¹⁹ Zimbabwean and 27%²⁰ South African, and the remaining 6%²¹ from other African countries.²²

Interviews were supplemented by participant observation that verified some of the information I obtained through conversations and interviews. Participation possibilities in men's actual job search and their work activities proved to be limited because it was difficult for me, a woman not really desperate to find day-labour employment, to become an MSR member or roadside workseeker myself. This meant that I was not able to participate directly

17 The original fieldwork on which this dissertation was based was completed in order to write a report for MSR on why some of the roadside workseekers it refers to as members did not take up MSR jobs. For that reason, the main focus was on those roadside workseekers that MSR personnel refer to as its members. Therefore, my first primary informants were 'locals' and 'networking workers' who were registered with MSR, which results in a focus on these roadside workseekers in this dissertation. During the third week I started including in my primary informants sample other roadside workseekers this first group associated themselves with who were not registered with MSR and several roadside workseekers that considered themselves 'struggling foreigners'.

18 See appendix II for a list of roadside workseeking informants.

19 N = 30, of which 12 were primary informants.

20 N = 12, of which five were primary informants.

21 N = 3, of which none was a primary informant. I only spoke to these men once and received a phone number from one of them, but the phone number was incorrect and I never saw him again.

22 Two from Mozambique and one from the Democratic Republic of the Congo

as a workseeker or worker in the MSR-provided work opportunities or that men found by standing alongside the road.

Even though my sticking to a researcher role meant I did no actual job-seeking myself, I believe that my doing that would have detracted from my ability to gather data, if for no other reason than that I would then have been in competition with the men who were already feeling the pressure of competition from one another. Nonetheless, I participated as much as possible, for example, by standing with the men on roadside, sometimes travelling with them to a job or to their homes, and accompanying them to social gatherings.

I collected data in many varied contexts, including periods spent at the WCP talking informally to roadside workseekers and the people they associated with in the streets, at MSR-provided and other work opportunities, in trains and at stations along the Cape Flats train routes, in bars, in roadside workseekers' township living spaces, and in the squatter camp and 'bush' close to the selected WCP. Furthermore, I collected data by means of various activities, including participation in job-seeking activities alongside the road, joining drinking sessions at bars and visiting roadside workseekers' friends and relatives at their homes.

Although the gathered data represent much information on roadside workseekers and their job searches, they do not provide a full, comprehensive or representative description of the extent of those job searches, as the number of people I spoke to in depth and the time I spent on participant observation were limited temporally²³ and spatially.²⁴ Nonetheless, the findings discussed here illustrate many strategies roadside workseekers use in their job searches. They also provide a picture of their daily activities, especially in relation to their job-seeking behaviours.

2.5 Ethical considerations

Several ethically challenging issues arose during my research. One was that the process of investigating roadside workseekers might include the possibility of encountering individuals participating in illegal activities such as drug abuse. I did indeed observe several men using tik.²⁵ Accompanied by my research assistant, Morris, I was able to observe how this limited or enlarged the men's capacities for participating in work opportunities that became available either through MSR or otherwise. This was always done only after I had discussed the

23 Only eight weeks of fieldwork.

24 The sample did not, for example, include roadside workseekers from other WCPs.

25 Methamphetamine is a highly addictive drug that affects the central nervous system. It is locally known as 'tik', in the Western Cape (TNT, 2009).

potential dangers to and possible outcomes for myself, Morris and, indeed, the men concerned, and only in spaces that we knew well and with people that we trusted to be able to help us or to call the police if necessary – which was in fact never the case.

Another ethical issue that arose was around MSR personnel. Two MSR PCs said that they found it difficult to discuss their experiences and opinions about the organization at the MSR office. In order to enable them to express themselves openly about the organization, we thus met outside the office. The WCP PC at my fieldsite and I exchanged phone numbers during my first week of fieldwork at the office. Although we did not interact much at the WCP, I called him several times during the fieldwork, to chat and ask questions. We also met several times throughout the fieldwork, but away from the WCP at a coffee shop in the same Cape Town suburb, in the train or in the road where the MSR office is situated.

Another ethical issue arose when several roadside workseekers expressed discomfort, at the beginning of my fieldwork, about telling me their opinions of MSR and its projects. During my first fieldwork week at the WCP, many said they believed I was “one of them” (i.e. of MSR). Therefore I introduced myself mostly by emphasizing my identity as a UCT graduate student; and throughout the fieldwork I reiterated that my findings would be made available to anyone involved²⁶ and that my goal was to stay neutral whilst also making suggestions to MSR, based on my fieldwork findings.

Whenever speaking with people, I informed them that any information they gave me would be utilized for my consultancy report and for my thesis. I asked them on each occasion to decide whether or not to participate and promised to exclude information that they asked me not to use directly in my research. I have also kept identification information confidential by using pseudonyms for the individuals in the report and throughout this dissertation, and have therefore also not identified the WCP.

2.6 Self-reflection

While conducting my research, I was always conscious of how my own social position might affect the kinds of data I could gather and how the men would perceive me. As a white female, 23-year-old Dutch graduate student, I did not simply blend in with the male, mostly black, South African or Zimbabwean roadside workseekers. One of my biggest fieldwork

²⁶ A report was given to MSR, and after the fieldwork I contacted everyone involved in the research by SMS or phone. A meeting at the WCP was arranged where the report was discussed and copies were handed out to those who said they would like to have one.

worries was how difficult it might be for me to become accepted by my potential informants. My fears were soon allayed, however. From the first moments of my presence at the WCP, many men expressed curiosity about what I, a young white woman, was doing on the roadside amongst them. Some indicated that they thought that I was a potential employer by asking me for a job. When I explained that I was not there for that purpose, but to do research about their experiences of job-seeking and the role of MSR in that process, many showed a willingness to share their stories with me. As some explained, they could see I did not know or understand anything of what was going on at the site and they saw it as their duty to explain in detail everything that happened there. So initially I found that, despite my being viewed as an outsider, I was appreciated for my willingness to listen and learn. Many also said that they were happy I was not there to ‘steal’ their jobs.

Especially during the first week of fieldwork, many referred to me as *umlungu* or *murungu* (‘white person’ in Xhosa and Shona, respectively). Yet after several conversations and meetings, some men had started calling me Hanne or ‘sister’ and, when explaining my presence to others, referred to me as their sister or friend. When Justin,²⁷ for example, introduced me to his friend with whom he waits on the roadside for jobs, he said: “This is my friend Hanne. She is here to understand how we find jobs.” Similarly, when I accompanied men to their homes, I was introduced to people in the train and on the street as the friend of the man I was accompanying,²⁸ and I would then always add that I was there doing research as a means of maintaining my contextual social positioning as a researcher.

Before I began work at the WCP, I had anticipated that my black male research assistant would help me to become accepted, as he would be considered “one of them”.²⁹ Yet this proved a misconception on my part: in many instances the men asked me to exclude my research assistant from the conversation or interview because, they said, they felt uneasy expressing themselves about their work experiences and experiences of unemployment – experiences they considered shameful. Although it might have been easier to conduct the research were I a man, my sense is that I was readily able to enter the spaces that the men

27 I refer in various places to individuals by name. Biographical data about each such person is listed in Appendix II.

28 Morris, my research assistant, accompanied me during the first three shadow days. After this he was only there when I found it necessary for safety reasons or to help with translation. When he was not there, we had several phone calls throughout the day in which I told him where I was and how things were going.

29 Morris, my research assistant, and I discussed the possibility that the men would see him as a possible man that was there to ‘steal’ their jobs. Therefore I always introduced him as my research assistant and translator. I also gave the roadside workseekers the option to talk to me without Morris’s direct presence. Four men were interviewed with Morris standing approximately 20 metres away, while three were interviewed with Morris present for translation or safety purposes.

inhabited and to elicit from them their opinions and stories of their experiences. As indicated, one advantage of the men seeing me as their ‘other’ was that some seemed to feel responsible for explaining their situation to me.

A few individuals whom I asked stated that they were unwilling for me to visit them at their homes, saying their girlfriends might be jealous. But for the most part, and despite my initial concerns, I found I was repeatedly invited to accompany men to their jobs, to bars and to their respective homes rather than always having to ask.

With the aim of arranging to shadow certain men, I recorded several men’s phone numbers and called them to confirm their continued willingness to have me tag along for a day. Yet many also called me during the fieldwork period, ostensibly just to check up on me, although some then asked me to visit them again at home, at the roadside or at a job. After I had completed my fieldwork, some men called me again, or sent text messages wishing me a good weekend or asking how I was doing. I have also met up with several since then.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained my research methods, including how I entered the field, the ethnographic methods used, ethical considerations and a self-reflection. In the following chapters I discuss the data collected during the fieldwork to document the ways in which roadside workseekers create social boundaries and how and why they do so. After a brief introduction of the labels roadside workseekers use to categorize and thereby distinguish themselves from other roadside workseekers, I discuss how they construct symbolic and moral boundaries through the repudiation of other roadside workseekers’ behaviour as regards work-seeking behaviour, alcohol consumption and living spaces.

THREE: CATEGORIES AND THEIR LABELS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the ways categories, groups and networks are formed by roadside workseekers. To support that discussion, I explore the relationship between notions of category, group and network.

3.2 ‘Locals’, ‘networking workers’, and ‘struggling foreigners’

During my second week of fieldwork, I asked several men: “Who is standing on the roadside to look for jobs?” Their answers indicated immediately that they differentiated themselves into three categories that they referred to as: ‘locals’, ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’:

- Hanne So tell me, who is standing on the roadside to look for jobs?
- Courage Well, you find men here who look for work. There at the corner, you see, those are the locals. They live in the bush behind the dump. But they are not really looking for jobs. They just sit here all day because they have no home, you see. And then here you find us, the Zimbabweans, who live in the townships. We are the real workers, you know, because we have rent to pay and we don't eat out of garbage cans [laughs]. So we try to get connected to jobs by standing on the side of the road.
- Hanne So you have the locals and the Zimbabweans? And the Zimbabweans are the ones that work or look for work?
- Courage Yes. But you know, not all of us get jobs. We are the ones that work, we know the employers and so we get the jobs.
- Hanne Who is ‘we’?
- Courage I mean us, the workers. The other ones are also from Zimbabwe or from other countries, but they are not connected [to employers/jobs], so they are struggling. We also struggle, you know, but not as much as they [do].
- Hanne Why?
- Courage You see, because we help each other to get jobs. We sort each other out, so you don't struggle that much. Those struggling

foreigners they have nothing – they are just on their own, so they are hungry and desperate, you see.

Courage and many other participants differentiated roadside workseekers by dividing them into three categories. Courage and his friends referred to themselves as ‘workers’, ‘networking workers’, and sometimes as ‘Zimbabweans’ or ‘foreigners’. When using the last two labels (‘Zimbabweans’ or ‘foreigners’), they distinguished themselves from ‘struggling foreigners’, i.e. those who, they said, were unconnected to employers, jobs and the social networks of ‘networking workers’. They spoke about a third category of roadside workseekers as ‘locals’: South African men who sat daily at a specific corner on the roadside and lived in what other roadside workseekers called the ‘bush’. Such men referred to themselves as ‘*skarrelaars*’³⁰ (those who *skarrel*), ‘locals’ or ‘*skarreling* locals’ and spoke about the other roadside workseekers outside ‘their corner’ as ‘foreigners’ or ‘Zimbabweans’.³¹

3.3 Labels, categories, groups, and networks.

Concepts like ‘category’, ‘group’ and ‘network’ all refer to aspects of social ties creating a sense of cohesion among people. Such social ties are, however, never fixed; they are socially constructed and repeatedly reconstructed. As Boonzaier & Sharp (1988:11) have indicated:

A social category is a set of people who have one or more characteristics in common. Categories are fundamentally arbitrary; one classifies people into a category on the basis of some shared characteristic (they are all male, or have red hair, or are left-handed). It cannot be presumed that the people categorised in this fashion must inevitably share other qualities. Nor, quite clearly, does it follow that the people in an arbitrary category will form a group.

That is because, according to Boonzaier & Sharp (1988:14), for a group to exist it must meet three criteria: its members should interact with one another “in accordance with established

30 I discuss the concept of ‘*skarreling*’ in more detail in Chapter 6.

31 As explained in the list of abbreviations, throughout this dissertation I use the term ‘locals’ to refer to those roadside workseekers who referred to themselves as ‘locals’ or ‘*skarreling* locals’ and were referred to by other roadside workseekers as ‘locals’. I use the term ‘networking workers’ to refer to those roadside workseekers who referred to themselves as ‘networking workers’ and were referred to by ‘locals’ as ‘foreigners’ and/or as ‘networking workers’ or, by those who called themselves struggling foreigners, as ‘those who are connected’. Finally, I use the term ‘struggling foreigners’ to refer to those roadside workseekers who referred to themselves as ‘struggling foreigners’ and were referred to by ‘locals’ as ‘foreigners’ and/or as ‘struggling foreigners’ – especially by those who regarded themselves as ‘networking workers’.

patterns”; ... the people who interact in this fashion should “define themselves as members of a group”; and ... these people should also “be defined by others as belonging” to that group.

The general function of labels to designate both categories and groups is widely recognized as a method whereby people distinguish one thing from another (Sassenberg, 2002; Turner, 1985). They also tend to reflect particular characteristics of those assumed to be part of particular categories or groups, sometimes stereotypically.

Like Courage, quoted above, most roadside workseekers at the WCP tended to classify themselves into social categories under the labels ‘networking workers’, ‘struggling foreigners’ and ‘locals’, to which they assigned stereotypical characteristics abstracted from those they considered to represent the category. For example, ‘networking workers’ thought of ‘locals’ as lazy and ‘struggling foreigners’ as desperate, basing those descriptions on what the former observed of the latter two categories’ work-seeking behaviour at the roadside.³² Moreover, most of the men tended to emphasize their own division into those three categories and thereby to distinguish themselves from others like themselves – thus implying that the category ‘roadside workseekers’, into which they could all be placed by an organisation such as MSR, was insufficient for their own understanding of their situation – because, from their perspective, they did not all share all the same qualities or characteristics, especially as regards job-seeking and on-site work behaviour.

Thus ‘struggling foreigners’ emphasized their ‘Zimbabwean-ness’ to distinguish themselves from South African roadside workseekers (‘locals’) precisely in order to connect with ‘networking workers’ who were also Zimbabweans. Yet the latter distinguished themselves in turn from ‘struggling foreigners’, in part to protect their own relatively advantaged positions in a hierarchy of ease of access to the kinds of irregular jobs which were all any could aspire to.

Some roadside workseekers also formed groups from amongst members of one of the three labelled categories – groups in the sense that they referred to themselves, for example, as ‘networking workers’,³³ that they displayed similar work-seeking behaviour³⁴ that distinguished them from other roadside workseekers, and that they defined themselves as part of a group of ‘networking workers’ that was also considered such by others, including ‘struggling foreigners’. Among my primary respondents, those who referred to themselves as

32 This is discussed in more detail throughout the following chapters.

33 Promise, Trust, Dean, Comfort, Admire, Courage, Tendai and Tapiwa, respectively.

34 See appendix III and chapter 4 for a description of the work-seeking behaviour of ‘networking workers’.

‘locals’³⁵ formed a group in similar ways, displaying similar work-seeking behaviour, defining themselves as part of a group of ‘locals’, and considered by both ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ to constitute a group.

That said, the danger in taking for granted that those described by a particular label inevitably form a group becomes clear when looking at ‘struggling foreigners’. Although they portrayed similar work-seeking behaviour and were considered to be a group by ‘networking workers’, they did not define themselves as part of a group of ‘struggling foreigners’. Rather, they thought of themselves as individuals that aspired to, but were not yet regarded as ‘networking workers’.

Groups of roadside workseekers formed networks too. The concept ‘network’ is often used as a synonym for ‘partnership’, ‘collaboration’, ‘alliance’ or even ‘group’ (Gottlieb, 1981). However, I aim to use it more specifically to “describe the relationships that exist between groups of individuals or agencies, and the resources to which membership of such groups facilitates access” (Hawe et al, 2004:971).

For example, ‘networking workers’ each formed a personal network that included employers, other ‘networking workers’ and sometimes ‘struggling foreigners’. Through their networks with employers, they gained access to jobs while employers gained access to workers they knew. Their networks with others like themselves meant also that they shared resources such as jobs, food, money and drinks. Moreover, they sometimes included ‘struggling foreigners’ in their networks in order thereby to be able to place such men in less popular jobs that they and others in their immediate networks preferred not to take, but had to fill in order to maintain their relationships with employers and, in some instances, also to earn a small commission for having recruited a worker (see chapter 5). For ‘struggling foreigners’ this provided access to some unskilled and low paid jobs and opportunities to develop connections with employers so that, in time, they might realise their aspirations to become ‘networking workers’ themselves.

What this shows is that the relationships between those in a network were not always equal or similar, and that power relations manifested within such networks.³⁶ Through forming networks with some roadside workseekers, and excluding others based on the characteristics ascribed to certain other roadside workseekers, ‘networking workers’ managed to exclude

35 Luyiso, Mike, Bob, Dumisani and Thando.

36 I elaborate more on this in chapter 5 through a description of how and why Dean, a ‘networking worker’ gave Justice, a ‘struggling foreigner’ access to a job opportunity.

‘locals’ from most jobs.³⁷ For example, through their denigrating the work-seeking behaviour of ‘locals’ as lazy, ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ found common ground that enabled them to form networks and exclude ‘locals’ from jobs that ‘networking workers’ connections with employers provided.

3.4 Conclusion

All the social processes I have introduced above constitute examples of boundary work. In the following chapters I consider in greater ethnographic details three particular ways that such boundary work occurred: first through constructions of what, for roadside workers, constituted masculinity; then through the symbolic meanings they ascribed to alcohol use; and finally in the meanings they attributed to different kinds of living spaces.

³⁷ I elaborate more on this throughout the following chapters.

FOUR: WORK-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AND MASCULINITY

4.1 Introduction

In *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*, Lamont (2000:147) shows the importance of ideas about ‘morality’ among working-class men in France and the United States, and their perceptions of ‘self-worth’ and social hierarchy. However, as Purser (2009:120) suggests, Lamont only indirectly addresses “how gender shapes, and is – in turn – shaped through the repeated articulation of these moral boundaries” as part of a broad “cultural repertoire” that influences moral standards. Moreover, as Raissiguier (2002:7) notes about Lamont’s work, there is no “serious attempt at understanding how the term *men* in her book title and in the lives of her subjects functions to shape the very identities and social processes she sets out to explore”.

In this chapter I consider the gendered dimensions of roadside workseekers’ boundary work. I do so because ideas about masculinity played a central role in how they constructed moral and symbolic boundaries. I show how ideas they shared and expressed about masculinity are intertwined with what they understood to be appropriate work-seeking behaviour, and how that it turn reflects on the ways in which they created social boundaries based on ideas about masculinity and work.

4.2 Roadside work-seeking behaviour

Most ‘locals’ tended to arrive at the roadside every day together, although some did sometimes skip a day or weekend, reportedly ‘to rest’. Usually they arrived between 7.30am and 8.30am and sat down at a specific corner to watch cars pass whilst conversing with one another.³⁸ Whenever bakkies passed, they waved a finger in the air thus signalling to the drivers that they were seeking work. Their corner was close to a nearby municipal dumpsite entrance and, whenever a car turned into dumpsite they shouted to the driver: “Do you need help? I can help sir!” thus indicating willingness to unload the bakkie for money. Within an hour or two such ‘locals’ had usually started walking around, and most had left the roadside by 11am, going towards the station or into the nearby suburb to chat with friends, or towards the squatter camp to share drugs, a drink, cigarettes or to talk. Later, by about 12.30pm, they returned to the roadside and again watched passing cars again until 4pm to 5pm when they

³⁸ See appendix III for a map of the layout of the site and appendix IV for more details on roadside workseekers’ work-seeking behaviour.

abandoned their roadside work search to beg for money and food in the neighbouring suburb, or to visit the nearby shelter that provided meals at 6pm.

The 'locals' roadside behaviour differed from 'networking workers' and from 'struggling foreigners'. 'Struggling foreigners' arrived every day between 5.00am and 7.30am, and stood alone (or in pairs) alongside the road, carefully watching passing cars. Whenever a bakkie pulled over, they ran towards it, attempting to talk to the driver or to jump directly into the load box. Few engaged in intense conversations, instead focusing their attention on passing cars, at least until about 11am. They then left for the train station, attempting en route to make contact with 'networking workers'. Many later returned to the roadside to sit there watching passing cars and later to walk home.

Those in the category 'networking workers' tended to show up at the roadside between 6.30am and 7.30am, although they did not always show up daily. In part that was because seasonal circumstances, such as days of heavy rainfall during winter, decreased the availability of the mainly outdoor jobs. Often they came after already having made arrangements with employers to be picked up. Approximately twice a week they came without having any jobs directly available for that day and spent time job-searching through standing on the roadside and by chatting to fellow 'networking workers' and the PC.

Some explained that they had no need to stand at the roadside every day as they managed to find work through other employed 'networking workers' or through contacts with employers. However, this did not mean that they were always working when they did not show up. I shadowed four 'networking workers' during days that they did not appear at the roadside, and accompanied them visiting employed friends at their worksites or walking around in the suburban shopping mall. However, when they did appear at the roadside they arrived between 6.30am and 7.30am and stood in little groups, carefully watching passing cars.

Several 'networking workers' were picked up on a regular basis at the roadside by known employers. This followed the employers having called them on their cellphones to arrange to collect them in particular on a specific day. Employers then pulled over alongside their group and only they jumped into the bakkie load box. Whilst at the roadside, moreover, they greeted employers they knew if they drove past, nodding their heads or waving their hands. Moreover, when a known employer's bakkie pulled over close to them, they chatted with the driver, discussing future possibilities. And when a bakkie pulled over in front of other roadside workseekers, they sometimes walked there to negotiate with the driver.

Around 11am, most ‘networking workers’ who had come to the roadside but not found employment that day left the site to spend time in shopping malls, as they said, to pass time³⁹ or to visit other ‘networking workers’ or previous employers in order to sustain their networks through regular contact. Around 4pm they met at a bar in the area to share a drink, or they took a train home.

4.3 Masculinity and work

I now discuss how roadside workseekers attempted to make sense of their roadside work-seeking behaviour by considering their ideas about masculinity and work.

Masculinity is commonly defined as a set of role behaviours that most men are encouraged to demonstrate. Scholars now discuss masculinity as a type of collective gender identity – one that is fluid and socially constructed rather than a natural attribute (Courtenay, 2000) and one that is multidimensional (Brown et al, 2005). Brown et al (2005) argue that multiple masculinities exist within most societies, thus reflecting factors like men’s race, class, age, religious affiliation and geographical location. They add that not all masculinities in a society are equal and that “hegemonic masculinity is the ideal that men measure themselves against, and are measured against by others” (2005:587). As Barker & Ricardo (2005:4) say: ideas about manhood are “(i) socially constructed; (ii) fluid over time and in different settings; and (iii) plural”.

Several authors discuss the importance of participation in an activity described as work for achieving manhood (e.g. Brown et al, 2005; Barker & Ricardo, 2005). As Barker and Ricardo (2005:6) argue:

The chief mandate or social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa – for being a man – is achieving some level of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family. In much of Africa – where bride-price is commonplace – marriage and family formation are thus directly tied to having income and/or property. Men’s social recognition, and their sense of manhood, suffers when they lack work. Accordingly, men (in Africa and elsewhere) go to great lengths to meet the cultural expectation of work.

39 Sitting at home was regarded to be improper for men, who, they said, should be out of the house to work or look for work. Furthermore, it was regarded as making the day go by slowly, while going out was regarded as making the day go pass faster. When visiting shopping malls, ‘networking workers’ went into shops or looked through the windows. However, I never observed anyone buying anything.

Migration to cities is one way men attempt to find wage work (Campbell, 2001). This was the case for all ‘locals’ in my sample, who said they were originally from rural Eastern Cape areas but had lived in Cape Town for, on average, 13 years.⁴⁰ ‘Networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’, by contrast, said they were originally from Zimbabwe and had, respectively and on average, been in Cape Town for two years⁴¹ and for three months.⁴² All confirmed that a desire to find work was a primary reason for migration to the Western Cape. Indeed, most emphasized the importance of work, many saying that a man is (normatively) supposed to work:

A job is the only solution for my problems, because it will give money. I have the hunger, the poverty. Where must I stay? I must buy food. And then the marriage problems. How can you take care of the family without a job? The wife is angry; she wants *lobola*. And the children cry because they are hungry. And the school fees. I don’t want to run away, but now it is better to chase the wife away – too many problems, you see. For everything, you need money. I cannot steal, so I must work. When I get work, all my problems will be solved. Life will be easy. No job is so many problems. It is not good to rely on others, so I must find a job and get better [i.e. improve my situation]. (Dumisani⁴³).

Men repeatedly described unemployment as negatively impacting on their masculinity, decreasing their sense of manhood. By not working and not contributing to the family, many roadside workseekers said, they lost their sense of masculinity:

When a man loses a job he gets stress[ed], because you lose what you are usually doing. You don’t have money, and you don’t know how to support your family. That causes a lot of stress. That is why you see a lot of men drinking. They drink to get rid of the stress. They overdose. You can drink, but you can’t overdose. Then you are destroying yourself. You forget about yourself. It means you lose your sense of humanity – it is like you are not a human anymore. You are just nothing. You stop existing a bit. When I lose my job I start drinking too much. I don’t look smart anymore. Look at me – I am as rough as the bush. I am

40 N = 5; answers varied between seven years and 20 years.

41 N = 8; answers varied between 11 months and four years.

42 N = 4; answers varied between two weeks and six months.

43 See appendix II for a profile of each cited informant (including the labels under which they categorised themselves).

doing things that are not good. It means I don't care about myself now. I forget myself. I am not the man I was anymore. (Mike)

We are half dead; we walk around as useless beings craving for some use. We want to work, use our power. We want to be looked at with pride. We want to be real men. But things are not working [out] for us. (Justice)

These quotes indicate work-seeking men's expressed need to be able to find wage employment in order to generate income, a role considered to be part of what a man is supposed to do. When jobs were not available or were difficult to access, as was the case for most such men, they understood their sense of masculinity to be lost. 'Real men' they explained were supposed to work; and, as Mike said, losing one's job meant "I am not the man I was anymore".

All the roadside workseekers I interacted with expressed a compulsion to frame their job-seeking practices as appropriately masculine, thus reflecting their sense of a threatened masculinity. They did so through repudiating others' roadside work-seeking behaviour as inappropriate.

Yet what they understood as appropriate masculine work-seeking practices varied amongst them. For 'locals' it meant sitting and waving their index fingers in the air when cars passed, in order not to display desperation for work. For 'struggling foreigners' it meant running towards cars that pulled over to demonstrate determination to get jobs. And for 'networking workers' it meant displaying their ability to create connections with employers through greeting them as they passed and, when they had previously arranged a job, simply climbing into the employer's loadbox.

In order to understand how and why these men attempted to display what they considered appropriate masculine work-seeking behaviour, and their denigration of other men's such behaviour, I consider how they constructed moral boundaries via what Purser (2009:120) called "internecine strategies of social distinction and differentiation". The men's boundary work, as based on ideas of what constitutes appropriate masculine work-seeking behaviour, shows the 'basic emptiness' of gendered categories and their "malleability and variability" (Salzinger, 2003:25). While active roadside work soliciting was constructed as appropriate 'masculine' work-seeking behaviour by 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners', it was viewed by 'locals' as an indication of desperation. Similarly, while 'locals'' less active roadside work seeking was constructed as appropriate 'masculine' work-seeking behaviour

by themselves, it was viewed as lazy by the others. This supports Purser's argument (2009:120, citing Connell, 1995), namely that their "struggle for self-worth – the positioning of oneself as privileged on a symbolic hierarchy – cannot be divorced from the 'struggle over masculinity'".

In what follows I discuss the boundary work processes whereby roadside workseekers denigrated other such men's work-seeking behaviour as inappropriate masculine behaviour by calling the others lazy and/or desperate.

4.4 Lazy men

The Zimbabweans work better, you see. They want to work more and they deliver better work. That is because they want more – they are not lazy. I think they want more because they have no other choice. They need to take care of their families in Zimbabwe and they have nobody to rely on here. They are on their own, you see. They take any job, because they want to work. The South Africans in general are lazy. Not all, but most of them are. They are not here early in the morning; they show up late. And I am here early, you see. And they just work slow[ly]. They don't want to work hard. They just like to sit and hang out and not work hard. They don't feel like delivering good work, I believe. I don't know why exactly, but I think it is just their mindset. The Zimbabweans are different. They really want to work – any job. The South Africans complain and they only talk about the money. No matter what you give them, it is never enough. (Promise)

You see, the Zimbabweans are the ones that are willing to take work serious[ly] and work hard. But we don't have the papers or bank account. That is why you find us on the side of the road. But the South Africans might have the papers, but they feel so comfortable. They don't want to work because they live for free ... I am telling you. These South Africans don't care. (Justin)

'Networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners' considered those they referred to as 'locals' to be lazy for their just sitting on the roadside and, according to them, not being willing to work. As the quotes above indicate, men in the former two groups believed that they had reasons to work⁴⁴ and thus were willing to work. 'Locals' were often described as showing no

⁴⁴ That meant to be able to support wives and children in Zimbabwe; and friends and relatives to support in South Africa.

willingness to work by showing up late at the roadside, even though they lived close by. Furthermore, ‘locals’ did not seem to the others to be active in job-searching. ‘Networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ denigrated ‘locals’ ways of demonstrating they were seeking work – only raising a finger to indicate availability – as indicating laziness, something they regarded as an inappropriate characteristic:

Men are strong, you see. We have the power. You can’t just sit and be quiet, like a woman. When you want something, you must stand up for yourself. A man’s life is a struggle and fighting is part of it. (Comfort)

‘Struggling foreigners’ and ‘networking workers’ considered their own more active work-seeking behaviour – respectively chasing cars and creating networks with employers – to be appropriate masculine behaviour.

Another characteristic that seemed, in the eyes of ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’, to portray the laziness of ‘locals’ was the latter’s apparent unwillingness to obtain proper identification documents,⁴⁵ which were seen as necessary to find jobs that were not offered at the roadside. ‘Networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ often blamed their own incapacity to acquire such documents and work permits for their failure to find regular employment. Because of this, they said, they were forced into roadside work-seeking. For them it thus appeared that ‘locals’, who had a right to such documents and thus should readily be able to find regular work, were lazy and thus fell back on hanging about at the roadside ostensibly but not really seeking jobs. The fact that, with their right to such documentation and their lackadaisical attitude even to finding a job at the roadside, they were still seeking jobs was thus offered as proof of their unwillingness really to find work.

By casting ‘locals’ as displaying inappropriate masculine behaviour, in this case laziness, the ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ constituted themselves as engaged in an

⁴⁵ ‘Locals’ at the WCP had indeed lost such documents, and despite their right to obtain them, they had consistently failed to do so. Most employers that picked up roadside workseekers did not ask for identification documents and during previous registration with MSR they were allowed to register with the organization without showing their documents. However, as was visible in MSR’s incoming booking e-mails, some employers that asked MSR for workers did indeed require workers to have such documentation before being willing to employ them. Those who were unable to provide such documentation were then excluded from these jobs. Reasons ‘locals’ gave for their resistance to obtaining identification documents (despite a Home Affairs office not being very far away) were often a fear that these documents would show employers their previous criminal activities and the argument that employers who picked up roadside workseekers often did not ask for identification documents and they were thus not necessary. It could be that their resistance might have something to do with the old apartheid regulations/laws about workers having to have appropriate passes and documents, and that these ‘locals’ were resistant precisely because they associated ID books with such passes, but I have no evidence of this.

appropriately masculine and dignified pursuit of work. They did this through comments they made in conversations with the PC, with me, and amongst one another within their social networks as they stood together on the roadside.

Locals did not, however, refer to themselves as lazy. Rather, they spoke negatively about the ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ desperation to find work:

You see, they [‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’] are taking over, especially the ones from outside the country. But they are just boys. They have no skills; they have no experience. Me, I am a painter. I am a professional. That is my work. I don’t do it because I am desperate; I do it because it is my work. I can also do gardening and plastering. But painting I like the most. That is the work I do best. But now these desperate boys take all our jobs. They don’t know how it works, you see. They lower the prices and now I must work for 40 rand and I can’t do that. I am a professional! (Mike)

Mike referred to those unlike himself as boys rather than men. He emphasized his skills and experience and described himself as a professional, as opposed to those others to whom he referred as ‘foreigners’. According to Mike, ‘foreigners’ were unskilled and desperate, a perception expressed by various other ‘locals’ who complained of their willingness to work for little money as a less than a fully masculine trait – as Mike suggested by calling them boys.

4.5 Desperate men

So we sit here and wait for a job. But there are not that many jobs, and also [there are] the foreigners, you know. They are so desperate for work that they work any job and they ask less. So they will come here early in the morning and work very hard for nothing. That is why it becomes worse for us. We are angry, you know, because we lose out. This is our place; we have been here for a long time; but now these boys just take our income away. But I am telling you it is not a good thing, because in the end you need to survive as well. (Dumisani)

‘Locals’ considered those they referred to as ‘foreigners’⁴⁶ and boys to be desperate and willing to take any type of work for any amount, which forced them to lower their own prices

⁴⁶ Locals did not distinguish between ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ and referred to both of them as ‘foreigners’.

so as not to lose out on jobs. ‘Struggling foreigners’ indeed commonly ran towards, and jumped, without any prior negotiation, into the backs of bakkies that pulled over. ‘Locals’ commonly referred to such behaviour as ‘hunting for jobs’ or ‘chasing jobs’, something they disapproved of and called desperate, inappropriately masculine behaviour:

It is not good for a man to be so desperate. Why do you take any job for any price? They do anything to get some money, but they are just giving away their power to the boss. I can’t be so desperate. I can’t work for so little. When the employer asks me how much, I say 250 [rand]. When he does not want to pay me, fine; I am not going to do the job for 40 rand. I have the skills, so they need to pay me more. What am I going to do with 40 rand? (Thando)

Men in the ‘struggling foreigners’ category acknowledged that, whenever a work opportunity became available, they would take it up, no matter how little it paid or how hard they had to work. They said they did so as part of a strategy to work for less than the others in order, in the longer term, to establish a relationship with an employer and thereby to have later access to jobs – especially of the kind that ‘networking workers’ appeared to have found. Once, during fieldwork, I observed a bakkie pull over and seven ‘struggling foreigners’ run towards it with two ‘locals’ joining the group around the driver’s window. The negotiation went as follows:

Employer: I need two labourers.
Thando: For how much?
Employer: How much do you charge?
Thando: 200 for me and my brother.
Justice: 100 for me and my friend [Thando walks away after hearing this offer].
Delight: 80 for two.
Employer: You [pointing at Delight] get in and your friend. All the others out!

Having walked away when he heard Justice’s offer, Thando came to me and said: “You see now. Those guys make it impossible for us to find work!”

‘Struggling foreigners’ recognized that their strategies had negative aspects: that they angered those who did not get jobs, while those who got jobs were paid very little:

But you know what the main problem is? These people that pick us up they know that we are desperate for work. They know that we want the jobs so badly and because there are so many of us in this situation it just becomes a play [i.e. game] for them. They [are] just here to get the cheapest hard-working guy. That makes it hard, you know. (Knowledge)

‘Struggling foreigners’ said they were not proud of their desperate attempts at ‘chasing jobs’, as they preferred to become ‘networking workers’ which they said they believed would allow them to have access to jobs without running after cars and dropping their prices. However, they saw their job-seeking activities as necessary because they believed they had both to earn some money to survive and provide for themselves and, if possible, for their families in Zimbabwe – something they said they believed was a man’s responsibility and appropriately masculine – and to construct networks that might ensure future job reliability. Many ‘struggling foreigners’ mentioned that the jobs they were able to get in this manner paid very little and required hard physical work. Better paying jobs and less physically exhausting jobs, they said, had been taken by ‘networking workers’ – men who had managed to establish durable connections with employers, such as what ‘struggling foreigners’ wished themselves to establish. ‘Struggling foreigners’ therefore attempted to become part of the networks of ‘networking workers’ and thereby access the latter’s ‘better’ jobs. ‘Struggling foreigners’ did not consider ‘networking workers’ to be as desperate as they were, therefore they often called such men ‘workers’ or ‘networking workers’.

Gift, for example, had been job-searching at the roadside for less than two months and had managed to secure only five day-jobs so far. He said he never negotiated over the wage, as he feared that it would make the employer pick another workseeker. During the two days I shadowed him, we watched several ‘networking workers’ being picked up, while Gift remained at the roadside. On the second day, my research assistant Morris and I walked with Gift as he followed ‘networking worker’ Promise to the railway station when he left the roadside. While walking, he said to Promise: ‘*zviri sei*’ (how’s it?) or ‘*ndeipi*’ (what’s up?). He asked Promise where he was from (*unobva kupi?*), and Promise answered ‘*ndirobho*’ (I am okay), but remained silent thereafter. Gift’s attempts to ingratiate himself by speaking the language they shared, thus trying to highlight similarities between himself and Promise, were not successful. Promise seemed uninterested in connecting with Gift.

‘Networking workers’, like Promise, attempted to distinguish themselves from ‘struggling foreigners’. Like ‘locals’, ‘networking workers’ considered ‘struggling foreigners’ to be desperate. However, ‘networking workers’ considered themselves to be neither lazy nor desperate.

4.6 Workers

I am a good worker. I work hard and I do not do bad things. I do not steal and I am not lazy. I don’t chase employers; they will come to me, because they know I take it [work] very serious[ly], you see. (Dean)

Although all my WCP respondents were roadside workseekers who considered themselves unemployed, ‘networking workers’ also saw themselves as established workers with some access to durable jobs. They spoke about being workers in order to make sense of why they had access to durable jobs while ‘struggling foreigners were able only to aspire to these, and while ‘locals’ had become long-marginalised workseekers. ‘Networking workers’ distinguished themselves from ‘locals’, whom they thought of as willingly unemployed, and from ‘struggling foreigners’, whom they saw as unwillingly unemployed and desperately job hunting. Dean, for example, described himself as “partially employed”, referring thus to his irregular but durable access to jobs through networks with employers and with others like himself.

Dean had been job-searching on the roadside for two years and, at the time of my fieldwork, managed to access jobs through MSR and previous employers at least three times per week. For one employer, he had previously worked full-time on a year-long contract, having been laid off when he could not present a valid work permit. Whenever this employer needed a worker, however, he called Dean on his cell phone and collected at the roadside. Another employer, a small construction work contractor, had previously employed Dean through MSR and now called him directly whenever he needed a worker. Through chatting with and accompanying the PC in the train to the MSR office, Dean had managed to create connections giving him access to MSR jobs. The PC regularly called Dean from the office to tell him about job newly listed opportunities. Dean earned between R130 and R250 per day’s work and managed to pay for his rent, food, drinks and train ticket, and to support his child and South African girlfriend.

Promise too described himself as “employed”, referring thereby to his established durable connections with employers who, he said, contacted him as soon as work became available.

Promise had been job-searching on the roadside for two-and-a-half years and now managed to access jobs through MSR and previous employers at least twice weekly. I observed him visiting four employers on a weekly basis and intermittently calling on at least eight others. Most such employers had previously hired Promise at the roadside; but now they called him whenever they needed him. Through MSR, Promise had also managed to secure several jobs every month as he was considered by the PC to be amongst the MSR employer network's favourite MSR members. Promise also always left his personal contact details with employers, reminding them to call him directly whenever they needed him. Moreover, through maintaining friendly relations with the PC, Promise also managed to sustain regular access to MSR jobs – the PC regularly called him from the office to tell him about available jobs. Promise earned between R150 and R350 per day's work and paid for his rent, food, drinks and train tickets whilst also remitting approximately R200-R400 monthly to his wife and children in Zimbabwe. Through connections with employers and MSR, Promise had established durable access to jobs – something, he said, that meant he was a 'worker' – a status label whereby people such as he and Dean distinguished themselves from other unemployed men and thereby created moral and symbolic boundaries between themselves and other roadside workseekers.

'Networking workers' regularly spoke about what for them were normative notions of what it meant to be a 'worker': a real man capable of paying the rent, for food and drinks (see chapter 6), and also able to send money to family in Zimbabwe as well sometimes to help out other roadside workseekers, and relatives in South Africa. As Promise said: "After all, it is a man's job to provide". That is why we go out and look for jobs!"

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how roadside workseekers used ideas about proper masculine work-seeking behaviour to create moral and symbolic boundaries around themselves and to distinguish different categories of roadside workseekers. I have also shown how they did so primarily by repudiating what they interpreted to be the inappropriate masculine work-seeking behaviours manifested by others and also by valorising their own behaviour when it involved demonstrating their capacity to support family and others. I have done that through having demonstrated how the men in my sample divided themselves up into three apparently distinct categories; through illustrating how men in each category behaved and discussed their perceptions of the behaviour of those in the other categories; and through explaining

how they compared it with what they understood about their own behaviour in terms of their ideas about proper masculine behaviour.

All roadside workseekers in my sample emphasized that masculinity is achieved through having access to jobs and that men are therefore supposed to work. They used this notion to measure themselves and others. Their engagement in a very constraining job market left them with limited access to jobs; a situation they considered led to a loss of masculinity, something they attempted to reverse through reference to diverse ideas on appropriate and inappropriate masculinity in roadside work-seeking behaviour – ideas they used either to denigrate others' behaviour or to valorise their own. Their doing so illuminates the social constructedness of masculinity and the plurality of its popular definition. It also illustrates how roadside workseekers sub-categorized themselves and undertook boundary work in order to deal with their differential experiences of the exigencies of their location in the labour market. In the following chapter I consider another aspect of boundary work: roadside workseekers' ideas about appropriate alcohol consumption.

FIVE: A JOB, A BEER

5.1 Introduction

I have argued above that roadside workseekers' boundary work went hand-in-hand with ideas about masculinity. I now extend the argument by discussing how symbolic boundaries were constructed through ideas about appropriate alcohol consumption generally being treated by roadside workseekers as another signifier of masculinity. I thus consider how boundaries are created around ideas about what constitutes appropriate alcohol use and how those ideas are used to explain who should or does get jobs at the roadside. Through discussing roadside workseekers' ideas about reasons for drinking, and about how, where and with whom to drink, I show that this too is an aspect of the symbolic and moral boundary work of roadside workseekers that is this dissertation's main focus.

5.2 Alcohol consumption

Discussing the historical background to alcohol consumption in agricultural and cash economies, Pithey and Morojele (2002:7; following Gumede, 1995) note that "the consumption of alcoholic beverages has a very long history in South Africa dating back to very ancient times". Colson and Scudder (1988:65) noted that "[alcohol,] even more than food ... represented the basic reciprocities of social life", while Suggs (2001:244) states that alcohol consumption was seen as a "symbolic indication of social wealth acquired via seniority": "Like most people in southern Africa, beer was brewed as an incentive for relations to engage in labor parties. At the end of the day, the men who had labored gathered around the pot and they proceeded to drink until what was brewed was gone."

During South Africa's colonial and later apartheid eras, alcohol was used to establish and maintain economic and social control: "Employers on wine and other farms in the Cape, and in the emerging diamond and gold mines to the north, used alcohol to attract and retain workers from rural areas" (Pithey & Morojele, 2002:6).

Nowadays, shebeens, formally illegal alcohol outlets, remain a widespread cultural and economic phenomenon in South Africa, particularly among black South Africans (Parry & Bennetts, 1998). Such establishments are reported to have come "into being following controls that were placed on African people with respect to the production and sale of

alcohol” (Pithey & Morojele, 2002:7).⁴⁷ Shebeens thus become a central part of life, serving not only as liquor outlets, but also as a space for recreation and relaxation (Gumede, 1995; Parry & Bennetts, 1998).

In public spaces such as shebeens, argues Suggs (2001:245), alcohol has become a commodity, as opposed to its prior use as part of the creation of community:

Colson and Scudder (1988) argue that the integration of beer into the cash economy makes of it something wholly other than it was before. Where formerly it was a special food to be shared in the creation of community ... beer as a commodity is marketed as a drink to be drunk for the sake of drinking. In short, what was symbolic of community cooperation is likely to become symbolic of self-achievement, even if consumed in groups. This will, in turn, change the cultural meaning of drinking behaviours.

Alcohol consumption is seen by many South African men as part of masculinity (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Suggs, 2001; Brown et al, 2005). Suggs, for example, suggests that public bars (both shebeens and suburban bars, especially those close to railway stations) are regarded as male spaces – something that was legislated throughout the years of colonial and apartheid rule when all bars where alcohol was poured in front of customers were for men only. Suggs shows that drinking is now understood to be a celebration of labour success by males and that drinking together provides a sense of men’s gender solidarity (Suggs, 1995:600–602).

5.3 Alcohol consumption and masculinity

We must act as men and be the boss, the head of the family. But it cannot always be like that anymore ... I think it is because we cannot support the family anymore. We don’t have jobs, so how must we provide for the family? It causes a lot of stress and discomfort for men. It feels that as a man you cannot live up to the expectations ... [to] provide for the family. Because the man is [meant to be] the head of the family. That is what makes him proud. But it is a problem now there is no money. We want to find a job to raise the money, but it is difficult to find a job. So we drink. I want to stop drinking, but then I must have something that does not make me drink. If I come home I drink – I must buy brandy and

⁴⁷African people were legally precluded from purchasing commercial alcohol under apartheid legislation which changed only in 1962 (Mager, 2005:168).

drink the whole bottle. A man must drink; that is how we are. It is hard being a man. You must stay strong. Men are supposed to drink – they have to. A man must take care of himself and the people around him. It is pain that I feel now that I can't do it. (Luyiso)

Alcohol consumption was regularly mentioned as a way to enjoy life and forget the daily hardships of unemployment or working in jobs paying little and requiring hard physical labour. The roadside workseekers with whom I discussed the issue all said that, as men, they were supposed to drink and that drinking was a way to show masculinity. Their comments included: “I am a man, so I must drink” (Dumisani), “Of course I have to drink. I am a man. Men have to drink after work and in the weekends.” (Dean)

Just as Ross (2010:7) says that shanty residents attempted to “deal with the humiliations and eroded life chances they experience” through drug use and alcohol dependence which served as “temporary fixes”, so too did roadside workseekers use alcohol for such purposes. Although some spoke openly about their alcohol consumption and abuse, only a few mentioned drug use – considered to be less acceptable. Many spoke, like Luyiso above, about experiencing ‘stress’ and that alcohol and drug use helped them deal with it. Alcohol consumption also had a social aspect: sharing drinks with fellow roadside workseekers was understood as a way of creating and sustaining connections – see below.

5.4 Alcohol consumption and boundary work

In this chapter I focus primarily on how ‘networking workers’ actively created boundaries based on alcohol consumption patterns. ‘Locals’, who drank at the ‘bush’ and in the ‘informal settlement’ on a daily basis never spoke about ‘networking workers’ or ‘struggling foreigners’ alcohol consumption. They did not even know if individuals in these other roadside workseeker categories drank and, if so, where. They therefore did not create boundaries on the basis of other roadside workseekers’ alcohol-consuming behaviour. However, ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ used evidence of ‘locals’ alcohol related behaviour and their drug use, both of which were visible to others at the roadside, to mark strict boundaries between ‘locals’ and themselves.

‘Struggling foreigners’ shared the ‘networking workers’ attitudes about appropriate alcohol consumption, yet I never observed them consuming alcohol. ‘Struggling foreigners’ often said that they could not afford alcohol. They emphasized the importance of drinking at a bar as a means of creating and maintaining reciprocal social relationships, because they assumed

that ‘networking workers’, who had more regular access to jobs, shared jobs amongst those who shared beers. They saw ‘locals’ showing up at the roadside drunk and under the influence of drugs, and heard ‘networking workers’ talk about going to drink and meeting employers at the bar, but they lacked the resources to participate in the latter and denigrated the former as yet another manifestation of unmanly laziness.

I often heard ‘networking workers’, who drank together regularly at public bars, commenting about alcohol-related practices. They did so to create boundaries based on alcohol consumption patterns by distinguishing those who drank to enjoy themselves from those who drank for its own sake, between those who drank in a bar and those who drank outside, and by highlighting the importance of drinking partners. I consider each facet of drinking behaviour in turn, focusing mainly on ‘networking workers’ and, when necessary, including data on ‘locals’ and ‘struggling foreigners’.

5.5 Drinking alcohol for enjoyment versus for its own sake

Drinking is not a problem. When you get home from work, you get a beer. All the tiredness of the work will go away. When [I] come from work, I am tired and I get a beer and then I am fine. Alcohol is good, but you must drink responsibly – must not drink and drive [laughs]. I don’t have a car, you see. I don’t have a wife. I don’t have a job. That is why I drink. Everything that I need, I don’t have. (Promise)

Most of those who called themselves ‘networking workers’ concurred with Promise and saw drinking as part of their lives. After work, they met up with fellow roadside workseekers and went to a public bar close to Cape Town station to ‘enjoy’ themselves. Together they shared drinks, played pool or watched sport on the bar’s TV. They often spoke negatively about alcohol consumption by ‘locals’, whom they considered alcoholics who drank without limits and were dependent on alcohol and drugs, which, in turn the ‘networking workers’ said, left them unable to work or find work. ‘Networking workers’ believed that ‘locals’ were interested in alcohol for its own sake only; that they woke up only to drink and worked, when they did, only to be able to buy alcohol. ‘Networking workers’ said they were different, because they drank after work⁴⁸ and together in a public bar, to ‘enjoy’. In their attempts to define a boundary between those who drank ‘to enjoy themselves’ and those who drank for

48 ‘After work’ did not always mean literally that men drank after having found and done work. When they did not find work that day, they would still meet up in the bar and share drinks with those who had actually found work.

its own sake, one can see similarities to the process Ross (2010:205) describes when she describes how residents of a new formal settlement (The Village) attempted to distinguish themselves from ‘bergies’:

For residents of The Village, the ultimate degradation, the thing to be cautious of, is to end up as a bergie – unable to care for oneself, someone whose primary dependence is on alcohol or drugs rather than on people. Such a person is represented by residents – some of whom have come perilously close to this form of life – as having life but not fully living. In other words, a life worthy of the name is created by being dependent on others, and that dependence is precarious. It must be nurtured through extremes of passions and circumstances. Maintaining relationships is central to survival, to a sense of oneself as a person, and to one’s sense of belonging.

‘Locals’ did acknowledge their difficult relationship with alcohol. As one said:

We can’t stop any more. Everybody is a drug and an alcohol [addict] here [in the ‘bush’ and the informal settlement]. That is where the money goes – the little money goes to that. The daily jobs are used to pay for that. Because of alcohol and drugs, there are so many fights, the work is not done and they lose the jobs.
(Mike)

‘Locals’ current situation without work meant that alcohol consumption had become a way to forget or deal with life’s hardships. Although I never observed men drinking alcohol on the roadside itself, it was not uncommon to see ‘locals’ show up drunk, particularly on afternoons after they had found a piece job. In these instances, ‘networking workers’ made comments that indicated their moral assessments of particular living spaces (also see next chapter).

You see the locals? Drunk on the side of the road! Always thinking about drinks – that is all they care about. This is a place to search for work, and what are they? They are just drunk. That is why the employers don’t want them!
(Promise)

Often ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ added that, besides alcohol, ‘locals’ used tik (crystal methamphetamine), “an extremely cheap and easily manufactured drug that has flooded the Western Cape” (Ross, 2010:210). For ‘locals’, excessive alcohol and drug abuse was indeed considered part of everyday life, being understood as a way to escape life’s

misery. Although they explained their drug or alcohol abuse as a way to endure their life of *skarreling* and sleeping outside in the cold, the men concerned said they were aware that in the long run it undermined their chances of getting work:

When I use the drugs, I am very strong so that I can work hard. But it is an addiction, my sister. When you start the drugs, it changes you – it makes you very bad. So you start doing bad things to get the drugs. It is not good to be a druggie, but now I can't stop it. And the alcohol I need to sleep – it is cold outside, you see, and my blankets are small. But sometimes I drink so much to forget my problems. The next day ... you know, I feel sick again, so I can't work.
(Bob)

5.6 Drinking in a bar versus drinking 'outside'

Discussing appropriate alcohol use, 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners' referred to the spaces where drinking took place. Drinking in bars was understood to bring prestige and to show that those who drank there could afford to do so. They thus distinguished themselves from 'locals' who drank 'outside' in 'the bush'. 'Struggling foreigners' and 'networking workers' concurred that being able to drink alcohol in bars helped getting jobs and relative prestige on the roadside because, as they said, "jobs are shared among those who share beers". For similar reasons 'struggling foreigners' inability to pay for alcohol at bars was understood to limit their job finding capacity.

I accompanied several 'networking workers' to drinking sessions at two bars close to railway stations. After a day of work or job-searching, these men met up with their fellows and other employed friends to share beers and talk about money, politics, women and work. Drinking in such a public space, and interacting with women in such places, was seen as a way to gain status as a worker – through being seen as a man who can afford to drink. As several men pointed out, excessive drinking and picking up women were ways to demonstrate that one is a wealthy man:

It is easy to see that man [pointing at a very drunk man in the bar] is very wealthy. He has a good job, I think. He can afford all those beers, you see. Here, for men, it is all about showing off how wealthy you are. You must show that you have money. When you have money, you can drink a lot; have nice clothes, a car, smokes and many girlfriends. So when we come here, it is about status. I am jealous, you see, [of] those men that can afford many beers. He has money

for it and I don't. I wish I could get really drunk. Then I can forget all my problems and at the same time people will respect me because when I have money I will buy the ladies and my friends beers. (Trust)

'Networking workers' distinction between drinking in a public space such as a bar and drinking 'outside' reflected a distinction between social drinking and alcoholism. Although I observed 'networking workers' drinking excessively on a regular basis in a bar, and spending their entire weekly wage in one night, they did not consider themselves alcoholics. At midnight one Wednesday night at the bar, a somewhat tipsy Dean explained:

Yes, I bought a lot of beers tonight. For you and our friends, and for the ladies [smiles]. But I don't always do it that way. This was to relax after the job. And whenever one of my friends has money, he will buy drinks that night. So we share. Alcoholics don't do that. They drink alone. (Dean)

5.7 Drinking partners versus solo drinking

Drinking alone was considered by 'networking workers' to signify alcoholism, showing that they emphasised the sociality of drinking in imagining what constituted appropriate alcohol consumption. It became clear that for roadside workseekers what mattered was whom one drinks with rather than the amount consumed. In general, drinks were shared with fellow workers or other roadside workseekers and with people who were considered to have access to jobs – to sustain networks.

One night at the bar, Dean introduced me to Matthew,⁴⁹ a labour recruiter who regularly collected Dean and his fellow roadside work-seeking friends at the WCP. Matthew worked

49 Matthew, a 30-year-old South African (coloured), was working for his brother's construction company. He lived in the suburb where the WCP is situated and came to the roadside to select workers whenever they were needed for contracts he and his brother secured. Matthew's brother, Andrew, spent most of his time securing jobs through his website and various contacts he had with big construction contractors and house owners. He had assigned Matthew to select workers at the roadside, taking the role of a day labour recruiter. Matthew accompanied Andrew to jobs and helped to assess the costs and time frame of the job, and then selected workers at the roadside. He worked mostly with Promise, Dean, Tendai and Tapiwa, and regularly met up with them at the roadside and in the bar. At the bar he discussed jobs with them over a beer. He explained what the job entailed, what kind of workers he wanted, for how many days the job would last for and how much they would be paid. After an agreement was reached, Matthew met up with them at the roadside the following day and Andrew picked them up in his bakkie and dropped them at the worksite. Matthew worked together with the selected workers and made sure that the job was done properly. Jobs took between one day and a week to be finished. After a day of work, Matthew and the selected roadside workseekers went to the bar and enjoyed a few beers paid for by Matthew. Each day, Matthew gave them money for transport home. On the last day of the job, Matthew paid them their salary after deducting an amount for the drinks and transport money. Promise, Dean, Tendai and Tapiwa agreed that the beers were part of their payment for the job. When Matthew did not need workers, he would still meet up with these 'networking workers' at the bar and share a beer. I observed several occasions on which these 'networking workers' met up with Matthew at the bar and asked if there were any jobs

for a construction company owned by his brother-in-law and regularly needed general labourers and sometimes skilled workers. In the bar, Matthew and Dean played a game of pool and shared drinks. Later that night, Dean explained:

Matthew has become a friend, you see. He always needs workers, so I help him out. He calls me and picks me or my friends up on the roadside. It works like that. He knows us, so he always picks up. That is how we do it. We make connections with employers and that is how you get jobs. After work we go to the bar or we meet here. And when I have no job, I can ask him here for jobs.
(Dean)

In turn, Matthew himself said:

Ja, I meet the guys here. You know, these Zimbabwean guys like to have a drink after work. So after work I buy them a drink here. When there is no work, I will find them here as well. You know, we just have a chat and that is how we stay in contact. They know that whenever there is a job, I will just call them or pick them up on the road. They are good workers, very friendly, and work hard.
(Matthew)

‘Networking workers’ actively tried to create networks with employers and fellow workers, and drinking at the bar together after a day’s work or seeking work was considered a way to do this. By meeting previous and potential employers in the bar, they maintained contact.⁵⁰ The social networks they thus created, they said, provided them with the means to survive and to access jobs as they became available.

Sharing drinks at the bar after an unsuccessful day’s work-seeking was also a way for ‘networking workers’ to maintain contact with regularly employed men. For example, for a week during my fieldwork, Trust failed to secure any jobs. He thus had no money other than for basic food. Shadowing him one day, I observed him and Admire, also then unemployed, meet Courage at the bar. Courage had managed to secure a job that week, as a painter and through a previous employer. Although neither Trust nor Admire had money on them, they went to the bar with Courage, who had earned R160 that day. Courage bought a quart of Castle beer and asked for three glasses. They shared that and three more beers that night, all

available. They greeted Matthew, who was sitting at the bar, by shaking his hand. Matthew bought them a beer and they stood together and watched the TV or engaged in a conversation over jobs.

purchased by Courage. Thereafter they walked together to the railway station and took the same train home. One week later, when Courage's job was over and he had no money left, I observed Admire giving him R30 at the roadside, money that he used to get a haircut. Such sharing of resources was common among 'networking workers'. Indeed, sharing was considered necessary to succeed and a way to help one another out in tough times.

I met just three 'networking workers' who claimed they did not consume alcohol at all, who explained that this was because of their religious convictions:

I am a church goer, and church goers don't drink. I sometimes go with the guys to the bar, just to chat with them, you know. Then I just drink a coke. Drinking is a big problem for these guys. They drink all their money [away] and that is why they are still struggling. (Comfort)

In this case and much as Pattman (2001) has described for Zimbabwean men, social identities were formed around the binary of whether men were 'drinkers' or 'church goers'. Even for the non-drinking church-goers, however, regular visits to bars, and participation there in activities with alcohol-consuming friends as they enjoyed themselves and relaxed after work, were important means to maintain the kinds of social networks needed to secure some sense of employment durability.⁵¹

Comfort, an active member of one of Khayelitsha's Apostolic Churches, adhered to the taboos that his religious group held against drunkenness. He also explained that he feared that, once he had had one drink, he would not be able to control himself, as his fellow roadside work-seeking friends would encourage him to "enjoy a little more". Like his two abstemious fellows, Comfort regularly distinguished himself from those they referred to as 'drinkers' – whichever of the three broader social categories they placed those others into. That said, however, they were less disparaging of the drinkers amongst those they regarded as 'networking workers' than those they described as 'locals' – precisely because they did not see 'networking workers' alcohol consumption to have a direct negative impact on their regular access to jobs. Although their drinking fellow 'networking workers' did sometimes have a drink or two too many, they still had regular access to jobs. As Comfort explained:

51 All 'networking workers' shared the costs of drinks by buying rounds of drinks for one another. This meant that non-drinkers paid for the drinks of the drinkers even though the alcoholic drinks were slightly more expensive (R10 for a coke, as opposed to R14 for a large beer). This was done to ensure they remained within the networks of reciprocity that underpinned the convivial sociality of bar-side drinking.

- Comfort: Some of us ['networking workers'] enjoy a little more than what is good for them.
- Hanne: How does that affect job opportunities? I mean, what if Tendai drank too much and the next day he has to work?
- Comfort: When there is a job the following day, they are okay. They don't lose jobs. Don't worry, that day, the job is done.

Indeed, 'networking workers' had strategies to get the job done. When I shadowed Comfort, he was called by Tendai who said he was unable to make it to a job. Comfort, who had not managed to secure a job that day, was waiting at the roadside. When the employer pulled over, Comfort explained to him that Tendai had problems with transport and that he (Comfort) would go instead. The employer had previously employed Comfort and did not hesitate in picking him up. After finishing the job, Comfort went home with his cash wage. Yet when he and Tendai met up at the roadside the next day, Tendai asked Comfort for money to buy airtime, knowing that Comfort had been paid the previous day for a job he had arranged, and received R20.

Incidents such as these, in which jobs and money were shared amongst 'networking workers', were common. They indicated that 'networking workers' managed to maintain their access to resources such as money, jobs, beers and food through their networks with other 'networking workers'. It also indicated that excessive drinking by 'networking workers' did not mean that jobs were lost, as they were able to cover for one another.

'Locals' were, however, unable to cover for one another when drinking excessively, for two reasons. Firstly, they had not established regular contact with employers who permitted such covering for one another. They did not drink with employers and therefore did not manage to secure jobs in ways that 'networking workers' were able to. Secondly, they commonly combined alcohol consumption with drug use, which resulted in their inability to work the next morning. On mornings after consuming alcohol and drugs, 'locals' often arrived late at the roadside or did not show up at all. They said they needed to sleep.

On my second day of shadowing Thando, for example, I did not find him at the roadside at 8am as we had agreed the previous afternoon. At 9am Thando and Dumisani came to the roadside, visibly drunk and picking a fight with Bob, another 'local', accusing him of stealing Thando's clothes which had disappeared from the wire fence where he had left them hanging

in the bush. Around 11am both Thando and Dumisani were sleeping against a tree at the roadside. When Dumisani woke up, he explained:

It is the drugs [tik]. He [Thando] can't wake up. The drugs keep you awake for days, but then you have to sleep afterwards. First you can't sleep, and you are very active so you can work very well. You have a lot of energy. But now he is very tired. It is the drugs. He can't work today.

That day Thando and Dumisani left the roadside at 3pm and walked into the suburb to beg for food and money. By their own account, tiredness caused by drinking that morning and after using drugs the previous night meant they were unable to work.

5.8 Crossing boundaries

Although 'networking workers' condemned 'locals' for their excessive alcohol use and for being 'out of control', some did acknowledge that they too sometimes drank excessively. As Dean said:

Sometimes I drink too much. I spend all the money at the bar and then my wife is left with nothing. I spend it all. She and the children are suffering because of my alcohol. But it is not easy to stop drinking, you see. It is the only way to forget my problems, and sometimes it just gets out of control. (Dean)

Boundaries between 'networking workers' and 'locals' in terms of alcohol abuse were thus not as strict as 'networking workers' portrayed them to be in their comments.

Unlike some 'struggling foreigners' who, like Gift who tried to befriend Promise (see chapter 4), other did sometimes manage to befriend a 'networking worker' by greeting him and accompanying him to and on a train, (albeit without a ticket). They did so in order to access the jobs that were shared amongst 'networking workers'. In some such instances, they were allowed to participate in social drinking sessions too. During my fourth fieldwork week, for example, Justice, a Zimbabwean who had been in Cape Town for four months but had not yet managed to find more than five days occasional day labour employment, was invited to join Dean and the others at the bar. As Dean said:

I know he [Justice] is struggling. We always see him in the train and on the road. He never finds work, because he is not connected, you see. Sometimes we talk,

so it is like we are becoming friends. So today I got some cash left so I asked him to join us for a drink. (Dean)

The significant question of course is why Dean should take such an interest in Justice, and what Justice might have done that had led Dean to befriend him. Part of the answer came the next day when I spoke to Justice who explained:

I stay close to Dean's house [in Philippi] so I try to get the same train as him. Then we walk from the station to the road together, because I know he is connected to jobs. ... Now I know [after the drinking session] we are friends, so I can drink with them and discuss jobs. (Justice)

However, that was not the only reason Dean had befriended Justice. Although they came from different areas in Zimbabwe, did not know each other from 'back home' and shared no common kin links, their relationship benefitted both of them: Justice wanted jobs to make some money and was willing to take any job, and Dean sometimes received requests from employers for general labourers – for jobs he was unwilling to perform himself or where he needed an assistant. Like several 'networking workers' in a similar predicament, Dean gave these jobs to other 'networking workers'. But, when none were available, they handed them to particular 'struggling foreigners' whom they had effectively taken under their wing and for whom the opportunity was useful, both in order to earn a little and to become connected amongst the 'networking workers'. In situations like these, then, Dean and other 'networking workers' acted as labour brokers between the employer and their 'struggling foreigner' clients.

It was whilst at the bar that Dean had offered Justice such a job as his assistant when he, Dean, was picked up by a known employer to do a tiling job. The employer, however, paid Dean only (R560 for the two-day job) and left it to him to pay Justice who received R120 for his two work days. Yet Justice said he was satisfied with this amount, suggesting that had he had been picked up randomly, without Dean's involvement, he would have received only R40–R50 a day.

5.9 Conclusion

Alcohol consumption was viewed by roadside workseekers not just as another aspect of masculinity but in terms of its relation to work – something that was commonly said, at least by 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners', to be an activity that ended a day's hard

work. In contrast, the current situation of ‘locals’ without work meant that alcohol consumption had, as was the case for ‘*skarrelaars*’ Ross (2010) has described, become a way to forget or deal with life’s hardships. ‘Networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ often condemned ‘locals’ for what they saw as inappropriate alcohol consumption. Nonetheless, they commonly expressed the view that ‘work’ and ‘alcohol consumption’ had to be connected. This meant that the social aspects of drinking in a public bar with fellow ‘networking workers’ and employers were emphasized and considered to reflect appropriate alcohol consumption. ‘Struggling foreigners’ often complained that they missed out on jobs, however, because they could not afford to consume alcohol in public spaces.

The next chapter considers living spaces and how they were constructed as appropriate or not in roadside workseekers’ moral and symbolic boundary work.

SIX: LIVING SPACES, WORK-SEEKING SPACES

6.1 Introduction

As already indicated in previous chapters, space is more than just a geographic area. Rather it comprises and can be studied as consisting of socially conceived spaces that cannot be “inured from the social, political, and economic hierarchies of the wider society” (Cleveland & Kelly, 2009:51). Cleveland and Kelly (2009:52) further argue that “the question of who can utilize such spaces, and how, is largely determined by the will of the dominant classes. Marginalized individuals typically develop strategies of survival, including identifying and abiding by norms defined by those in more privileged positions”. Because of Cleveland and Kelly’s (2009) focus on the division between dominant and marginalized people, in their case respectively white North-American residents and Mexican day labourers in New Jersey, they do not address how marginalized individuals attempt to construct boundaries for and amongst themselves, nor how they do that based on ideas about, as Lim (2004:1764) puts it, “[w]ho gets to ‘represent’ space and what is spatially (un)desirable”.

The roadside workers with whom I worked used ideas about appropriate masculine work-seeking behaviour, alcohol consumption and living spaces to construct moral and symbolic boundaries between themselves, boundaries that became spatially visible in terms of how they occupied different places alongside the road.

In what follows, I show how they attempted to negotiate the social roadside space as their work-seeking space. I also document their views about appropriate living spaces and how these were used to negotiate the social spaces comprising the work-seeking roadside. I argue that this too can be seen as one of various ways in which they undertook boundary work by using symbolic and moral markers to do so.

6.2 Close work-seeking spaces

Claiming jobs based on the distance between working spaces and living spaces was a strategy ‘locals’ used to create a boundary between themselves and other roadside workseekers. The five ‘locals’ with whom I interacted most closely all lived in what was referred to as the ‘bush’ behind the neighbouring municipal dump site, and often stayed over at the informal settlement next to it. The ‘bush’ was an open space where, at the time of my research, approximately eight men slept and lived in shelters comprising a large sheet of plastic hanging over a barbed wire fence. During an afternoon visit to the ‘bush’, I observed the

remains of a cooking fire from the previous cold winter night. Blankets were folded into large bags placed alongside a nearby fence on which clothes were hanging, and empty tins and beer bottles were scattered on the ground. Nobody was there, however, the 'local' roadside workseekers explaining that, during the day, they left either to seek jobs or to *skarrel*.⁵² Around 5pm, those who had been seeking work on the roadside went to the local homeless people's shelter to receive a meal and afterwards walked around the suburb *skarreling*. At night they join others who slept in the bush, or lived in the informal settlement, sharing stories, alcohol and drugs before they slept. For them, living and work-seeking spaces were very close, only a few metres' walking distance.

They regarded this proximity as providing a sense of their belonging in the WCP's work-seeking space and of their proprietary right over that space. Several times they complained about 'foreigners' who came to seek work at what they called 'our road'.

I belong here. You see, now there are people from other places that try to find work here. It is not right. The people in the back here should be working here. We are the ones that can work for MSR and at the dump. But see all these people from nowhere – they come here, but they do not belong here. But there is also ... work there. They should work there, not here. This is our place. (Mike)

Mike's references to 'here' and 'there' were to the living space of local roadside workseekers and its close proximity to the roadside work-seeking space where MSR had placed its WCP. For him, because he lived 'here' close to the road, jobs that became available at that roadside site should be his and his peers', not for others. He considered other roadside workseekers who lived in townships and were non-South Africans as not belonging 'here'. For Mike, 'here' also referred to South Africa in general, his usage reflecting a xenophobic attitude that has been an increasingly marked characteristic of contemporary South Africa, even though 'locals' said they understood that 'foreigners' came here because of 'the situation in the own countries' (c.f. Adepoju, 2003; Crush & Pendleton, 2004; Van Wyk, 2002).

Although 'locals' said they understood the reasons foreigners sought work in South Africa, they also blamed them for their own current situation by suggesting that 'foreigners' had 'stolen' their jobs: "I want work; I want to get a job. But now the foreigners and MSR⁵³ are

52 See below.

53 'Locals' saw MSR as a threat to their own ability to find work rather than a help, as MSR seemed to perceive itself. 'Locals' did not receive jobs via the organization as the PC selected several 'networking workers' to work at the available opportunities. I elaborate more on this in chapter 7.

taking all our jobs. We are suffering because of that. I am just struggling, so the only way is to *skarrel*” (Bob).

6.3 Separating working spaces and living spaces

‘Networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ used a different understanding of the relationship between working and living spaces. They drew a distinction for themselves between living spaces and working spaces based on their geographical distance from each other and their different purposes. Indeed, they criticized ‘locals’ for blurring the distinction between working and living spaces, suggesting that it represented a moral laxity on the ‘locals’ part: “Most people [‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’] here are from Khayelitsha, Philippi, and Nyanga. Those are places to stay. Here [the suburb] it is a town. The industries are here and the people with money. That is why we wait here for work” (Dean).

Town, in this case referring to the Cape Town suburb where the WCP was situated, was considered a working space – one with ‘industries’ such as construction sites, factories and shops where people might be employed. Dean also spoke about ‘people with money’ for whom suburbs were living spaces. These ‘people with money’ were often referred to as ‘white’ people, implying that Cape Town, despite post-apartheid change, was seen clearly by foreigners to have remained a segregated city based on class structures reflected in racial distinctions (Besteman, 2008). The social space of the roadside working space thus included ‘people with money’ or ‘white people’ – potential employers who, ‘networking workers’ such as Dean believed, could readily afford to hire workers as gardeners or domestic workers. ‘Networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ believed they had to enter those suburbs and establish contacts there that might lead them to jobs – and therefore to leave their township living spaces to do so.

For them, therefore, townships were just places to live in – dormitory spaces rather than places of income-generating work. ‘Networking workers’ thus rented shacks or rooms in townships, for which they paid rent. But they did not try to generate income there. Indeed, their need to pay rent was often mentioned as one of the reasons they had actively and regularly to job search in the suburbs.

I visited five ‘networking workers’ at their homes in Khayelitsa and Philippi. Two stayed with their wives and children; the other three shared with friends or relatives. The geographical distance between their township living spaces and their suburban work-seeking (and sometimes working) spaces, and their lack of access to affordable transport, were repeatedly mentioned as constraining their ability to find jobs. Most commonly they commuted by train, but those were often overcrowded or did not arrive on time, and many lacked money to buy a ticket so that some reported having to ‘steal a train’ (ride without a ticket) early in the morning when security was not yet present.

Although many ‘networking workers’ said they were dissatisfied with living in a shack in a distant township, they took pride in having a place to stay and affording their rent. They used this fact to distinguish themselves from ‘locals’ who slept ‘outside’ in ‘the bush’ behind the neighbouring dump site or in the informal settlement alongside – men whom they regarded as ‘homeless bergies’ – a perspective reinforced by their knowing that some ‘locals’ ate a meal each day at the local shelter.

6.4 *Skarreling* and working

What the above indicates is that living spaces were considered to have both negative and positive aspects by those who inhabited them. Moreover, based on symbolic understandings of these living spaces, roadside workseekers constructed boundaries between those who ‘*skarrelled*’ and those who ‘worked’, boundaries they used to negotiate their own particular work-seeking spaces along the roadside.

Similar to what Ross (2010:108) describes for residents of the areas she calls ‘The Park’ and ‘The Village’ – the latter a new formal settlement where residents of the former had been resettled – the ‘locals’ amongst my sample distinguished between ‘decent’ work and its opposite, *skarreling*. Ross documents how people in The Park/Village “‘just got by’ ... through a mix of different kinds of work (formal and informal), loans, sharing and borrowing goods, and ‘making a plan’ – that is, improvising [through activities they] referred to as ‘skarreling for a living’”. As she points out (ibid):

The verb ‘to *skarrel*’ means to rummage, scramble, scuttle or scurry. It suggests a frantic search for life’s basic necessities, the use of many tactics, and a sense of haste and trickery. It involves living by one’s wits. Its emotional and psychological consequences are that one becomes ‘*senuweeagtig*’ (nervous) and experiences short-lived euphoria when one is successful in making money by

skarreling. Some may take pride in *skarreling*, but for others it is merely what must be done to survive. It is low in the ‘hierarchy of dignity’ (Lovell, 2007:324) of work and the lowest of all forms of *skarreling* is to be without regular shelter, making a living by begging at a place like Busy Corner⁵⁴ or rummaging through rubbish bins.

‘Locals’ too used the word ‘*skarreling*’ when describing their ways of living. For them *skarreling* was usually used to describe a combination of begging for money and food; going through rubbish bins and items discarded at the dump for anything useful or edible; and, for some, stealing from shops, from people walking the streets and from people’s homes.

‘Locals’ drew a distinction between those who *skarrel* only and those who attempted to work and *skarrelled* only when jobs were unavailable. Working was considered to be better than *skarreling*, as they believed there was no future in *skarreling*. Work could provide an income and win respect from others, because it made it possible to buy things, to be productive, and to provide for oneself and others. Thus, jobs could provide a future. ‘Locals’ therefore attempted to find work at the roadside. But most days they were not picked up for work and therefore, they explained, they were forced to ‘*skarrel*’ anyway in order to survive. When Thando and I sat on the corner together, he explained to me:

Skarrel is what we do now. Work is much better; that is why we are looking for work. When you have work, you can buy everything you want to buy. You don’t have to worry too much. If you are not working, you can’t buy, so you must go and ask. For example, we are smoking, but we cannot pay for the cigarettes, so we must ask for [them]. You must give me one. So we *skarrel*. That is to *skarrel* – to find ways to survive and to get things. But we don’t *skarrel* too much, because we are looking for a job. You see, you also have people that don’t have a job and don’t want to look for a job. They just *skarrel*, but are not looking for a job. To just *skarrel* is not good, because you have no future. You just wake up and sleep. There is no future in that, sister. But when there is no work, you have no choice. (Thando)

Although I never heard any ‘networking worker’ use the word *skarrel* to describe ‘locals’ activities, they did express a disparaging attitude towards ‘locals’ ways of living. Frequently

54 A place where residents in Ross’s (2010) research went to beg, which is part of *skarreling*.

they compared them with their own and, in the process, created moral boundaries. Promise explained it as follows:

Promise: I want to stay here [in a suburb] as well. But now I can't stay in the suburbs, because I am not rich. You can't stay in the suburbs if you don't have enough money. You must have a good job first. I only get [a] little money from the jobs, so that I can just rent a shack in the townships, because the jobs are few, you see. I struggle to pay the rent. A shack is only 200 rand [rent per month], so that is okay. I can manage that. I work hard for two days and then I have the money, you see, but those locals they don't have a place to stay. They sleep outside, so they don't really want to work. They don't pay rent.

Hanne: They sleep outside?

Promise: Yes, they stay in the bush behind the road. They are homeless. They don't have a house or even a shack. They just sleep outside. I think maybe that is why they are so rough. They do whatever [they need to do] to get by – they go through the rubbish; and they steal. I live in a shack, yes, but at least it is a place to stay. I wash myself; I wear clean clothes; I make sure I look fresh every day.

Hanne: And these guys ['locals'] don't?

Promise: I am not saying that they don't want to, but I think it is impossible for them. Because where are they going to wash themselves? You see, many times, these guys are fighting and they harass the employers, you see. They are just rude and rough.

Hanne: Why do you think they are like that?

Promise: Because of how they live, of course! If you stay outside, you become like that.

Hanne: And they don't pay rent, you said?

Promise: No, they don't want to. That is why they stay like that. They just want to live for free – everything for free.

Hanne: And you?

Promise: No, sister. I can't live for free. Everything is money. That is why I need to work – to pay the rent; to pay for food. Everything is money.

All roadside workseekers often mentioned the importance of work as a means to get money. Money was considered necessary – as Promise put it, “everything is money”, by which he referred to the fact that he was obliged to pay rent, buy food, etc. ‘Networking workers’ judged ‘locals’ for what they saw as the ‘locals’ attempts to “live for free”, referring to the fact that they did not pay rent, and often begged for food or went through rubbish bins to find food. ‘Networking workers’ said they needed money to pay rent, and needed to pay rent so that they could be respectable. They thus also claimed that they deserved the work more than ‘locals’, who were considered not to have any financial obligations such as rent and the need to help out relatives and friends financially.

One can see here resonances with ‘networking workers’ earlier quoted comments on alcohol consumption. There too the importance of being able to afford to buy things and of having the financial means to do so were stressed, as was the significance of doing so in order to demonstrate a kind of propriety or respectability.

‘Networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ also judged ‘locals’ for their appearances, which they described as dirty, improper and rough. They understood living spaces such as the ‘bush’ to be dirty, improper and rough and therefore to make people dirty, improper and rough too. Similar to the Mexican day labourers in New Jersey described by Cleveland and Kelly (2009), ‘networking workers’ agreed that, when soliciting for a job, even at the roadside, one needs to look tidy and clean, as this was considered a characteristic that attracted employers. For that reason they had to negotiate between the need to present themselves as proper and visible roadside workseekers in the social space on the roadside while simultaneously avoiding provoking residents and employers in ways they believed ‘locals’ did. Most ‘networking workers’ with whom I interacted said that residents and potential employers were scared off by ‘locals’ ‘rough’ behaviour and appearance. Through presenting themselves as tidy and clean – what they referred to as “looking decent” which they said showed one to be trustworthy – they believed that employers would be more likely to choose them: “When you look proper and clean, the employer will pick you – because you look decent and so he [the employer] knows he can trust you. If you look dirty and rough, he [the employer] will be scared that you are going to steal” (Gift).

At stake here is the perceived importance of demonstrating status. Drinking in a public drinking space rather than just anywhere was one way to do this. Looking ‘proper’ and clean was another that enabled ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ to visibly distinguish themselves from ‘locals’ on whom they looked down.

6.5 Rough living spaces, rough people

The living spaces of the ‘locals’ were described as ‘rough’ not only by the other roadside workseekers but also by and of themselves. Both sets also agreed that ‘locals’ had become rough as a result of their being limited to the kinds of living spaces in which they presently found themselves, although ‘locals’ themselves always expressed a wish to ‘improve’ themselves by getting a job that might enable them to abandon being rough. Bob, for example, said:

It is because of this place [the ‘bush’], you see. I have been sleeping outside for many years now. But I need a better place to sleep, [as] it brings a lot of problems. There are also fires, then the forest is burning and it burns all my clothes and my blankets. And when it rains, everything gets wet. It is very easy to get ill in the bush. People here have many diseases, because of the dump and the way we live. [This] is not a hygienic way [to live], you see. It makes you rough as well. (Bob)

Although ‘locals’ expressed a view that life was rough within the informal settlement or the ‘bush’, they also spoke about a sense of communal living through the sharing of substances. Similar to what Ross (2010:92–93) describes for people in ‘The Park/Village’, ‘locals’ amongst the roadside workers with whom I interacted did, in times of need, approach one another for assistance. That they did that demonstrates that:

[p]eople seek novel ways to generate social links that can be activated both to meet their needs in the absence of basic material requirements and to attain socially sanctioned goals over time. As a result, social relations, both positive and negative, are deep and networks of mutual obligation in the settlement were (and remain) wide-ranging (Ross 2010:92–93).

I observed several incidents in the informal settlement and the bush when people shared food, cigarettes, newspapers, clothes, alcohol and drugs. Moreover, various ‘locals’ said that, getting a job meant that they would earn both money and respect from their peers through

providing them opportunity to buy (and receive) food and drinks to share: “When you have a job, you get respect. You can buy drinks, and people will give you drinks too. But when you have no job or money, nobody likes to share with you” (Dumisani).

Having work, and in a sense even seeking work, was viewed as a marker of social prestige. Work-seeking on the roadside was thus considered a good thing. ‘Locals’ said they felt themselves appreciated by their informal settlement and ‘bush’ co-residents when they willingly sought work and, if successful, earned money. As Mike’s wife, Shelley, who lived in the informal settlement while Mike slept in the bush, said: “My husband is a good man. He goes to look for work every day. Life is not easy, but when he finds work, we will have money and things will get better”.

6.6 Boundary permeability

Although my conversations with and observations of roadside workseekers revealed clear social boundaries between ‘locals’ who stayed in the ‘bush’ and those who stayed in the townships, they were not always that strict. When I asked Bob who all stayed in the bush, he said:

Some stay in the bush for different reasons – not always because of problems in the location, but also to be close to the work. You see, many of us have done bad things in the past, but not all [of us]. So the guys, even the foreigners you see every day on the road, they sleep sometimes in the bush, so they don’t have to get transport. For example, when the robber is busy [i.e. when workseekers are robbed], the people from the location come here to sleep. They don’t have money for transport, you see. They [i.e. the robbers] take their money away so they must sleep here. (Bob)

Although most of those who called themselves ‘networking workers’ judged ‘locals’ to be homeless, several admitted in private conversations that they too had slept outside on occasion:

When I [had] just come to South Africa and I had nowhere to go, I had to sleep outside too. It is bad, but when you have no choice, you have no choice. Yes, I know that some of the guys here, those who are really struggling, will sometimes sleep outside too. Look, if you don’t know the employers, you will get used. They pick you up and you work the whole day and he tells you that he

will pay you tomorrow. But then he just disappears. Then you have no money to go home. So you don't really have a choice. So that is why those 'struggling foreigners' sleep in the bush for those reasons. But I [have] never been to the bush [here]. I would never do that again [i.e. sleep outside]! If I find work, I will use some of the money to take a taxi to go home. I would never sleep outside again. Because that is bad, you know. (Dean)

Although several others also privately acknowledged that they had previously slept outside under similar circumstances, 'networking workers' said that only those who were desperate, i.e. 'struggling foreigners', slept outside sometimes. 'Struggling foreigners' who were not connected to the networks of 'networking workers' with employers mentioned, in our conversations, that employers regularly took advantage of their desperation and left them without money and stranded on the roadside after work. Because they had no access to transport (no money for minibus taxis, and when trains were no longer running), they were forced either to walk home, considered dangerous, or to sleep outside:

One day I was dropped off here [at the roadside] after work. There were no trains and I did not have money for the taxi. So I had to walk to Philippi, but the criminals were out on the streets, so they tried to stab me. So I came back here and slept at the roadside. But I prefer to walk, because I am not like those local guys. It is not good to sleep outside. (Justin)

Boundaries were thus created between 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners' in which those said to be of the second category were thought to sleep outside sometimes because of desperation and those said to be of the first were considered never to sleep outside.

However, as became clear over time, the boundary work in which roadside workseekers engaged was not so strong that it manifested in the absolutely rigidly separated and distinguished living spaces that 'networking workers' and 'locals' often described. Although both 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners' rented rooms in townships, especially the latter experienced difficulties in earning sufficient money to pay the rent each month.

During my fieldwork, for example, Justice spent four days approaching friends and relatives in Cape Town to borrow money to pay his rent. Nobody was willing or able to help, and his landlord removed his belongings from his room. Already three months behind with the rent, he said he feared he would be evicted and forced to live outside as 'locals' did. Luckily, an

uncle in Cape Town gave him R200, which he gave to his landlord who allowed him to reoccupy his room. Justice, obviously relieved, commented: “I feared that I had to live outside. I mean, it can happen in case of emergency [e.g. sleeping outside due to being unable to get transport back home after a job opportunity], but I can’t live outside.” Justice said he had slept outside one night during the previous week. His employer had dropped him at the roadside around 8pm after finishing work on the first day of a two-day job. He had no money for transport and knew that the employer was collecting him at 7am the following day. So Justice decided to sleep outside, close to the roadside. Although afraid of being harassed by locals and criminals, Justice said, he had no contact with anyone overnight and next morning was collected from the roadside by the employer, for another long day of work.

‘Struggling foreigners’ often differentiated between ‘sleeping outside’ in cases of emergency, such as not having transport money or having to be at the roadside early next morning for a job opportunity, and ‘living outside’ like locals who had no place to stay anywhere else. In that respect, as in many others, ‘struggling foreigners’ thus constituted a middle ground between ‘networking workers’ and ‘locals’. Their position in terms of living spaces showed the permeability of boundaries. In roadside workseekers’ boundary work based on living spaces especially, ‘struggling foreigners’ shifted across boundaries based on definitions of living spaces set by ‘networking workers’, and on occasions by ‘locals’.

6.7 Conclusion

Through examining roadside workseekers’ ideas about proper living spaces, this chapter has demonstrated how notions of living space constituted symbolic boundaries that roadside workseekers used to categorize themselves and the roadside space where they hung out. Through this kind of boundary work, roadside workseekers attempted to “acquire status and monopolize resources” (Lamont & Molnar, 2002:168), in this case a space on the roadside where they could search for jobs.

SEVEN: BOUNDARY WORK AND MSR

7.1 Introduction

I now move beyond describing the symbolic and moral boundary work of roadside workseekers to show how it comes to be understood as a means of controlling access to roadside jobs with the MSR project reinforcing those controls. I show too that the use of social boundaries constitutes an informal method whereby MSR's agents connect those it refers to as its members to jobs.

7.2 'Best fit' policy

In their study of temporary labour agencies in America, Wacker and Bills (2000) document how job allocation methods privileged some workers and disadvantaged others. Following this finding, Peck and Theodore (2001) and Bartley and Roberts (2004) document how informal heuristics for assigning jobs to day labourers⁵⁵ can have discriminatory effects. Such scholars argue that, in job distribution, day labour agency's dispatchers give jobs to those they consider to be "reliably contingent; those who display the right attitude and who are deemed loyal and reliable by showing up to the agency each and every day" (Purser, 2006:9; see also Bartley & Roberts, 2004; Peck & Theodore, 2001; Roberts & Bartley, 2002).

In the case of American day labour agencies, Purser (2006:9) explains, "[T]here are no 'objective' indicators whereby one might reasonably determine the 'best fit' between a worker, his or her skills and the requirements of the job Decisions about what kind of match constitutes the 'best fit,' therefore, must be based on criteria other than skills" (ibid). Accordingly, those seeking work through day labour agencies "engage in a variety of strategies for combating anonymity and forging short-term relationships with dispatchers" (Bartley & Roberts, 2004:48) – something that we have seen above to be most successfully done by 'networking workers' and that I reflect on further here.

In order to consider how boundary work influenced the outcomes of MSR's projects, I explore MSR's informal order in ways similar to those used by Bartley and Roberts (2004) in their study of the organizational dynamics of an American day labour agency. Attempting to uncover the informal order of a day-labour hall, as experienced by homeless workers, they document how the organizational dynamics of day-labour agencies are informally produced

⁵⁵ As I explained earlier, these authors refer to 'day labourers', whereas I prefer to use the more accurate term 'roadside workseekers'.

and reproduced by the agency in its modus operandi. Bartley and Roberts (2004:41) argue that:

In comparison with many other industries, day labour is a highly impersonal, fluid, and exploitative employment scenario and therefore roadside workseekers adopt several strategies to combat anonymity as dispatchers' perceptions of workers' loyalty and reliability shape the allocation of rewards, thus inserting a small measure of stability into this highly contingent form of work.

Bartley and Roberts's attempt to tease out the complex relationships between loyalty, reliability and favouritism is exploratory; yet it provides interesting insights that are useful for my exploration of the relationship between roadside workseekers and MSR; and I will show that ideas about loyalty and favouritism play an important part in interactions among roadside workseekers themselves and between them and MSR personnel.

7.3 Connecting roadside workseekers to MSR work opportunities

Each MSR WCP has a designated PC who acts as a coordinator/organizer at the site. The PC is encouraged by MSR to register roadside workseekers as MSR members. Once they are registered, MSR attempts to verify their skills through an assessment or via references from three previous employers. Based on this, they receive a skills rating, which is entered into the MSR database.

This evaluation process enables us to get to know our members and establishes the member's true skills. It builds credibility with potential employers and improves the employability of the member as we are providing independent confirmation of his details and skills, as well as references. The process also helps us to channel training resources to the most appropriate members. Preference is given to members with verified skills and the highest ratings received from employers (MSR, 2009).

After an MSR-provided job opportunity is filled, the MSR call centre follows up with the employer and obtains a rating for each member placed. The rating takes into account the employer's evaluation of the member's skills and his/her work ethic. MSR requires members to maintain a minimum performance rating, and failing to fulfil it means they may be excluded from future MSR-provided jobs (MSR, 2010). In this way, MSR attempts to create a database of skilled and reliable workers who can be hired by employers. As the MSR

director said during an interview:

I think the most important [thing] for customers [i.e. employers who hire workers through MSR] are workers with verified skills and that they can trust. ... You know, if you bring someone into your home, first of all you want to know that they can do the job that they say they can do, but also that you can rely on them to be trustworthy and have some sort of track record and integrity.

7.4 The informal order of MSR

When I looked at the placement list in the MSR office, showing previous months' placements for the WCP where I worked, only certain names appeared, all of 'networking workers' who regularly interacted with the PC, thus indicating a preference. At the WCP, I saw John (PC) interact regularly with only Promise, Dean, Trust, Tendai and Courage – all five 'networking workers'. They were men who actively attempted to secure jobs through MSR, using tactics that connected them to John. For example, Tendai and Promise regularly accompanied John in the train to the WCP and, if they had not been placed, also to the railway station when he left after 11am. Dean and Courage regularly helped John set up the MSR gazebo in the morning, also dismantling it later. Promise, Dean, Trust, Tendai and Courage and their fellow 'networking workers', some who had not registered with MSR, often stood with John under the gazebo, talking about work opportunities. They also exchanged numbers with John and called him to ask for jobs.

After leaving the WCP, John normally went to the MSR office to check for new placement offers. If there were any, he called those roadside workseekers that had regular contact with him to inform them of those jobs. This indicates that, like the American day labour agency workers studied by Bartley and Roberts (2004:48) some 'networking workers' did indeed engage "in a variety of strategies for combating anonymity and forging short-term relationships with dispatchers". It also shows that MSR was complicit in that exercise.

'Networking workers' viewed and treated MSR and its PC as a node in a network that might provide them with jobs. They actively connected with John by talking to him, commuting with him on the train and following him to the MSR office. Dean and Courage also met him at religious gatherings in Khayelitsha. In their conversations with him, these 'networking workers' sought ways to relate ever more intensely with John, a point they emphasized during conversations and interviews with me. For example, those who attended church services with John a called him 'Madzibaba' (a respectful name for a man who attends an Apostolic

church).

Others reported various connections with John: based on religion (“he is a fellow Christian”, Comfort), on common living space (“he is also stays in Khayelitsha”, Trust), on common home region (“he is from the same place in Zimbabwe”, Promise), and on family relations and claims of friendship (“he is like an uncle to me”, Tendai; “my family and his family know each other very well”, Dean; “he is my friend”, Courage). By acknowledging connections with these ‘networking workers’, John reciprocally created relationships with them and accepted them as meeting MSR’s standards. According to both John and these registered ‘networking workers’, their relationship and interactions enabled them to trust each other. Their creation of this kind of relationship was not a product of a single act; rather, the connections were built over time and through a series of reciprocal interactions.

When I asked John which workers usually got the jobs on offer, he explained how he selected workers who were reliable and trustworthy:

John So customers, whenever they want a worker, they will ask me, “Is it safe?”

Hanne And how do you find out if a worker is safe?

John Now it depends ... if [they are] people that we have worked with before. Like I told you, I don’t just send a person to work on his own. I have to check where [he is] going to work – [if it’s] a private house or if he’s ... at a construction site. I know the owner of the site will be in charge. But once it’s a private house, maybe there is a pensioner woman who is staying there, or an old man, then ... you have to use someone who has worked for us maybe two, three years, working [in] such an environment. So you have to weigh.

And you see, sometimes, you don’t tell the member that this customer wants a person, and this worker [is] not a suitable person to go. You see, you cannot say “because I don’t trust the worker”, so the worker can just say, you take the decision without explaining why I’m sending A, not C. But you see ... now ... there’s a lot of hatred and tension there in the site because ... it’s like they accuse me of ... favouring someone or maybe I’m biased towards a certain group of people. But the truth is, these are things that we consider when ... sending someone.

You see, I talk to them [‘locals’] every morning; they come there; they smell [of] beer; or they smell [of] alcohol. A customer comes [and] even if he [a roadside workseeker] comes to me and say[s], “I can do the job”, but he is smelling of alcohol, I cannot tell him that, because of this, you are not going to work, I will just take a decision. I send the person who I think is in the right mood to go and ... work. But now this one, he will not understand that it is because of smelling [of] alcohol that he has been side-lined. That way I create tension. So, at the site, every decision that you take, you create enemies, because there are always many people and very few jobs, and everyone wants to go. So it’s difficult. So ... you hear many stories ... saying, “Oh no, he favours Zimbabweans” or may be “There [are] only people who go to jobs several times and others who don’t go”. To them, they think it is just a person who’s saying, “Today it’s you. Today it’s you.” But here I have a ... I have a modus operandi; it says how ... you send people to work; it’s not just: a customer comes, “Hanne take this one”, tomorrow, “Take this one”, no, no. We look at things; we also try to make things safe for the customers. We also try to protect the image of the project, but to the members, they don’t mind, they want it to be a routine that if A goes, tomorrow it’s X, tomorrow it’s Y, but it’s not always like that.

I observed that John did indeed speak to the “‘locals’ once in a while when they came to the WCP and asked if there were any jobs available. Usually he said simply that no jobs were available. When I spoke to ‘locals’ about this, they usually commented that John favoured ‘foreigners’ who, they believed, were related to him: “Here, you see, it is dominated by the Zimbabweans. So they [MSR] only take them. We are left outside. ... They favour each other.” (Thando)

When I discussed locals’ comments with John he responded:

Well, some of the customers, they give negative feedback about these workers [i.e. ‘locals’]. And some of them they even threaten customers – insult customers. And then the reports, they come in at the office. So when things are like that, we stop using the man Let’s say perennial job seekers [referring to ‘locals’], the whole year they are looking for jobs; they also refuse jobs. It’s like

that's their lifestyle – even if they are offered good jobs, they don't want to go. Those guys there, the South Africans who stay there, they are not serious in terms of ... their lives; they are used to it; and there are also guys who sleep outside – have you seen that in Cape Town? – There are people who sleep outside, who don't stay in houses; they sleep outside. They consume alcohol, and then in the morning they come here. So we have a group of those people – these are the main locals. You see, it all depends, and there are times that you want to help them [i.e. by linking them to jobs]. But now other factors might make it difficult to help them, you see. Sometimes you find I get jobs from another [part of] Cape Town. You tell them, we have got a job – the job is, let's said, in Observatory. Do you have a train ticket to go to this customer? They will tell you no, they don't have a ticket; they don't have a cell phone number to be contacted by the customer; they can't read the map. So they are out, even if you want to help.

John's comments reveal many similarities to those of 'networking workers': about 'locals' being lazy, displaying inappropriate alcohol consumption patterns and living in inappropriate living spaces. Furthermore, John's dismissal of 'locals' negative ideas about 'foreigners' (i.e. 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners') was much the same as their denigration by 'networking workers'. He too disregarded the locals' claims to special rights based on the desperation of their work-seeking behaviour and their belief that, because they lived close to the road, the roadside jobs should be theirs. His own assumptions about and observations of 'locals', and the MSR ratings by employers for jobs they obtained – which, according to the database, were indeed regularly negative in terms of skills and work ethic – all contributed to John's practice of effectively excluding most if not all 'locals' from obtaining jobs via MSR.⁵⁶ John did not limit his comments about the difficulties he experienced in attempting to place 'locals'; he also expressed concerns about some foreign roadside workseekers, thus revealing that he was attempting to uphold the principles behind MSR's rating system and

56 However, John highlighted the negative ratings received by 'locals' and that they did not show up at work opportunities, but never mentioned that some 'networking workers' too received negative ratings, although not on a regular basis, and did not always show up at jobs. When discussing this with me, John linked the failure of 'locals' to meet the standards or show up for work to his assumption that they were lazy and not really willing to work. The failure of 'networking workers' to meet the standards was often blamed on difficulties with transport to get to a work opportunity. In my report for MSR I argued, based on my observations, that 'networking workers' commonly did not show up after heavy drinking sessions the previous night (just as was the case with 'locals'), when they were unable to get transport to go to the job, and/or when more than one work opportunity was available on the same day and the other jobs were considered to be better (based on salary, hours and/or the amount of physical hard work).

also that he was not simply prejudiced in favour of all foreigners, and was also constrained by immigration laws:

But also among foreigners there [are] also quite a number of people who are illegal; they don't have papers to stay in South Africa and to work in South Africa. They have nothing. So even if this worker might say I [should] register him, they can't be registered because they don't have the required documentation.

To register with MSR, roadside workseekers had to complete a form the content of which MSR personnel believed was necessary for roadside workseekers to get access to MSR work opportunities. Its purpose was not, however, always understood that way by roadside workseekers. Many of those I worked with, whether 'locals', 'networking workers' or 'struggling foreigners', said they had failed to meet most MSR requirements even though, in previous years, they had been allowed to register with the information they did have.⁵⁷ Moreover, a new registration process, which started directly after I completed fieldwork, required MSR members to have bank accounts into which MSR deposited wages, instead of employers paying them cash. Gift and Justin, for example ('struggling foreigners'), visited the PC at the WCP several times during my fieldwork and asked about the requirements. After visiting the WCP one explained:

The results of that visit to MSR are not what I wanted. I did not [get] good results. They need the ID, the CV, and the phone number. Okay, I say I got a temporary work permit, but it is expired. But now they want the account number. How can you have an account when you have no job? An account costs, so first you need a job. It [is] supposed to be possible to register. I just want to work to earn some money to pay for the rent and for the food. I do not want to rely on other people, but I want to work so that I can support myself and my relatives and family in Zimbabwe. (Gift)

⁵⁷ For registration MSR required information which many roadside workseekers failed to provide to MSR. Many had no identity document. Most foreign roadside workseekers had refugee status that had expired, and feared that they would be kicked out of the country if they applied for a renewal. The South African day labourers I spoke to lacked documents too. They told me they did not want to apply for an identity document, because it would show their criminal records). Most told me they did not actually have certified skills training, because they had learned their skills on the job or from friends). Moreover, they were loath to provide information about previous employers — even though some did have phone numbers or first names — because, they said, they were afraid MSR would take the job away and thus destroy strands in their hard-earned networks.

Like Gift, many men considered MSR to be incapable of helping them and said they felt no connection to the organization. Those unconnected to others that had access to networks thus had actively to try to establish such connections – especially to ‘networking workers’. As PC John said, he was unable to register these roadside workseekers (‘struggling foreigners’ but including some ‘networking workers’), because they were unable to provide the documentation MSR required. Yet that did not prevent many continuing to try to register. I observed many ‘struggling foreigners’ and some ‘networking workers’ who had befriended registered ‘networking workers’ and accompanied them to talk to the PC in the hope of registering, only to be told why he was unable to do so.

However, as became clear, failing to provide him with the required documentation did not completely exclude them from linking into MSR’s work opportunities. I observed, for example, that registered ‘networking workers’ sometimes accepted jobs via the PC and then handed them on to unregistered fellow ‘networking workers’. In one example, Promise was offered a painting job for three workers through the PC. He then selected two fellow ‘networking workers’, only one of them registered with MSR, to accompany him on the job.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have documented ways in which boundary work influenced the outcomes of MSR’s work opportunities project. I have shown how the PC informally connected MSR members to jobs. I have shown too how roadside workseekers attempted to negotiate between MSR’s requirements, its organizational structure and the on-the ground-realities they faced. To do this I have considered how roadside workseekers’ categorizations were understood, negotiated and used by the PC and why he did so in those ways. I have thus demonstrated that, as a result of the PC’s interpretations and use of the roadside workseekers’ labels and social networks, and of the ways in which roadside workseekers interacted with him, both at the roadside and beyond, some roadside workseekers came to be excluded while others were able to get MSR jobs.

Undoubtedly, similarities in ideas about ‘struggling foreigners’ and ‘locals’ held by both ‘networking workers’ and the PC existed because they needed one another. The PC needed the registered ‘networking workers’ as capable of meeting employers’ requirements; the registered ‘networking workers’ needed their connection to PC to access jobs. Based on their common attitudes towards ‘struggling foreigners’ and ‘locals’, and why they were excluded from MSR job opportunities, and on the links that some roadside workseekers had established

with the PC, it was clear that loyalty and favouritism did indeed play an important part in who was getting jobs via MSR.

EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Drawing on interviews and ethnographic data gathered at the MSR, the WCP in a Cape Town suburb, various drinking spaces and living spaces of roadside workseekers, I have found that roadside workseekers engaged in a process of “boundary work” (Lamont, 2000) whereby they constructed social boundaries between, and thereby social categories amongst themselves, and they did that in order to claim particular arenas and employment opportunities/resources for members of specific categories, and in turn to exclude those of other categories.

I have focused in particular on ‘boundary work’, rather than just on the symbolic and moral boundaries in and of themselves, because doing so has allowed me to understand and explain the ways “boundaries are conditions not only for separation and exclusion, but also for communication, exchange, bridging, and inclusion” (Lamont & Molnar, 2002: 181).

In chapter three I demonstrated that roadside workseekers amongst whom I conducted my research distinguished and labelled themselves using three labelled categories: ‘locals’, ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’. Alongside these categories they sometimes formed groups and networks.

Through a discussion of roadside workseekers’ assumptions about appropriate masculine work-seeking behaviour in chapter four, I demonstrated that while less active soliciting for work on the roadside – by sitting and waving an index finger in the air when cars passed by – was constructed as appropriate ‘masculine’ work-seeking behaviour by ‘locals’, it was viewed by ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ as an indication of laziness. Similarly, while the active roadside work seeking of ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ was constructed as appropriate ‘masculine’ work-seeking behaviour by themselves, it was viewed as a sign of desperation by ‘locals’. ‘Networking workers’ distinguished themselves from the category of ‘struggling foreigners’ (who ran towards any car that pulled over to demonstrate determination to get jobs) by displaying their ability to create connections with employers through greeting them as they passed and, when they had previously arranged a job, simply climbing into the back of an employer’s bakkie.

I demonstrated that the gendered dimensions of the labels these men constructed can be seen in terms of what Purser (2009: 120) refers to as the “struggle for self-worth – the positioning of oneself as privileged on a symbolic hierarchy”. This struggle became visible in roadside

workseekers' boundary work and was intertwined with a "struggle over masculinity" (Connell, 1995). Furthermore, I have shown that the moral boundaries that were used had been constructed via identification with and repudiation of what some roadside workers (and to some extent the MSR coordinator) interpreted as appropriate or inappropriate masculine work-seeking behaviour – and that they saw as exemplified by other roadside workseekers.

In chapter five I discussed roadside workseekers' assumptions about appropriate alcohol consumption. In this chapter I demonstrated that symbolic boundaries were constructed through ideas about appropriate alcohol consumption, generally being treated by roadside workseekers as another signifier of masculinity. 'Locals', who drank at the 'bush' and in the 'informal settlement' on a daily basis, never spoke about the alcohol consumption of 'networking workers' or 'struggling foreigners'. However, 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners' used evidence of 'locals' visible alcohol related-behaviour and their drug use, to mark strict boundaries between 'locals' and themselves. 'Networking workers' emphasized the importance of drinking in a public bar (creating boundaries between themselves and 'locals' who drank outside), drinking with fellow 'networking workers' and employers (highlighting the importance of the social aspect of alcohol consumption and thus denigrating solo drinking as a sign of alcoholism), and the importance of drinking alcohol for enjoyment (creating boundaries between them and 'locals' who were thought to be drinking just for the sake of drinking). 'Struggling foreigners', who could not afford to consume alcohol in public spaces, often complained that they missed out on jobs for that reason. Yet they shared ideas about appropriate alcohol consumption with 'networking workers' and were sometimes allowed to participate in drinking sessions, highlighting their ability, in some cases, to cross symbolic and moral boundaries based on alcohol consumption.

That not all symbolic boundary work is directly intertwined with roadside workseekers' assumptions about appropriate masculine behaviour was shown in chapter six. There I discussed how roadside workseekers create symbolic and moral boundaries based on assumptions about appropriate living spaces that roadside workseekers used to negotiate the social space comprising the side of the road.

'Locals' used the close proximity of their working spaces and living spaces as a means to claim proprietary rights over the former. They then blamed 'networking workers' and 'struggling foreigners' who stayed in townships for their own current situation by suggesting that 'foreigners' were invaders who had 'stolen' their jobs. Although 'locals' described their

current living spaces as rough, which they said in turn made people who inhabited those spaces rough, they attempted to gain some degree of respectability by distinguishing between those who *skarrelled* only and those who attempted to work and *skarrelled* only when jobs were unavailable, thereby placing work higher on a hierarchy of respectability than *skarreling*.

‘Networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ distinguished living spaces from working spaces – as based on their geographical distance from one another – to construct a quite different implication. Suggesting that ‘locals’ blurring of the working-living space distinction represented a moral laxity on the ‘locals’ part they constructed a boundary between ‘locals’ who *skarrelled* and ‘networking workers’ and ‘struggling foreigners’ who ‘worked’, one they then used to justify their own particular work-seeking behaviour in spaces along the roadside.

Yet, despite the extent to which those social boundaries were represented as clear and unambiguous, it is also clear that they were permeable in that ‘struggling foreigners’, who stayed in townships, sometimes also slept outside.

The original fieldwork on which this dissertation was based was completed in order to write a report for MSR, in order to provide an understanding of why some roadside workseekers MSR considered to be its members did not take up MSR job opportunities. For that reason, the original focus was on those particular roadside workseekers. By extending the sample, however, and based on ethnographic data gathered amongst a less restrictive set of roadside workseekers I have been able to show that the MSR’s policy of constructing a set of ‘members’ – and thereby constructing a social boundary amongst roadside workseekers – simply reinforced the kind of boundary work that I have argued was part of the social dynamic between roadside workers themselves as they struggled to carve out niches for themselves in a context of extreme employment insecurity. Significantly, as I have shown, that same boundary work also influenced, and indeed pervaded the activities of MSR’s project and had effects on its outcomes.

APPENDIX I: BRIEF FROM MSR

BRIEF: EVALUATION OF MEMBERS' (MEN ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD) EXPERIENCES OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE WORK OR INCOME EARNING OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY MSR.

The organization MSR would like you to conduct a six week ethnographically based assessment study of members' experiences and attitudes towards the work or income earning opportunities introduced to members of MSR. The overall goal is to assess why a large proportion of the work opportunities introduced to members are not taken up with great enthusiasm.

To do the above will require that you:

1. Establish the social and cultural acceptability of the project amongst the men on the side of the road and then compare what you have found with the aims and goals of MSR's opportunities.
2. Establish the extent to which the opportunities fulfil the members' aspirations for work.
3. Evaluate the members' attitudes towards the way the prospective job or work opportunity was explained to them, the possibilities and outcomes and how they experienced them.
4. Explore possible answers to why some members, after having worked for a short period with an employer, are satisfied with a particular job and why others are not.
5. Are able to suggest to MSR as to how future placement opportunities might be better introduced to members.

APPENDIX II: LIST OF PRIMARY INFORMANTS

	Nat. ⁵⁸	Age	Place of residence	In C.T. ⁵⁹	Mar. status ⁶⁰	No. dep. ⁶¹	Prison exp. ⁶²	Health status	Prev. L.T.E. ⁶³	W.S. ⁶⁴ period	R.W.S. period ⁶⁵	MSR reg. ⁶⁶
'Locals'												
Luyiso	SA ⁶⁷	30+	'bush'	7 yrs.	Single	n.d.	YES	AD ⁶⁸	'01-'03	7 yrs.	7 yrs.	YES
Mike	SA	35	bush/inf. setl. ⁶⁹	10 yrs.	Married	2	YES	AD	'99-'00	10 yrs.	10 yrs.	YES
Bob	SA	55	'bush'	20 yrs.	Married	n.d.	NO	AD, HIV	n.d.	10 yrs.	10 yrs.	YES
Dumisani	SA	40+	'bush'	15 yrs.	n.d. ⁷⁰	n.d.	YES	AD, HIV	'02-'04	8 yrs.	8 yrs.	YES
Thando	SA	40+	bush/inf. setl.	13 yrs.	Engaged	n.d.	YES	AD dep.	n.d.	10 yrs.	10 yrs.	YES
'Networking workers'												
Promise	ZIM ⁷¹	32	Philippi	3 yrs.	Married	4	NO	-	'99-'05	5 yrs.	2,5 yrs.	YES
Trust	ZIM	24	Khayelitsa	2.5 yrs.	Single	1	NO	A. dep. ⁷²	'06	4 yrs.	3.5 yrs.	YES
Dean	ZIM	29	Philippi	4 yrs.	Married	3	NO	A. dep.	'04-'08	2 yrs.	2 yrs.	YES
Comfort	ZIM	23	Nyanga	1 yr.	Single	1	NO	-	NO	2 yrs.	2 yrs.	YES
Admire	ZIM	25	Khayelitsa	1 yr.	Single	2	NO	-	NO	3 yrs.	2 yrs.	YES
Courage	ZIM	22	Philippi	1 yr.	Dating	0	NO	-	NO	n.d.	n.d.	YES
Tendai	ZIM	26	Philippi	2 yrs.	Dating	2	NO	-	'00-'06	3 yrs.	2 yrs.	NO
Tapiwa	ZIM	27	Khayelitsa	5 yrs.	Single	2	NO	-	'99-'04	n.d.	n.d.	NO
'Struggling foreigners'												
Justice	ZIM	23	Philippi	4 mths.	Single	n.d.	NO	-	NO	1 yr.	4 mths.	NO
Justin	ZIM	22	Philippi	2 wks.	Single	n.d.	NO	-	NO	6 mths.	2 wks.	NO
Knowledge	ZIM	17	Khayelitsa	6 mths.	Single	2	NO	-	NO	1 yr.	6 mths.	NO
Gift	ZIM	19	Khayelitsa	2 mths.	Single	2	NO	-	NO	1 yr.	2 mths.	NO

58 Nat. = Nationality

59 In C.T. = Living in Cape Town for n weeks/ months/ years

60 Mar. status = Marital status (single, dating, married)

61 No. dep. = Number of dependents

62 Prison exp. = Prison experience (YES/NO)

63 Prev. L.T.E. = Previous period of long-term employment

64 W.S. period = Work-seeking period (in weeks, months or years)

65 R.W.S. period = Roadside work-seeking period (in weeks, months or years)

66 MSR reg. = Registered with MSR (YES/NO)

67 SA = South African (Xhosa-speaking)

68 AD. = Alcohol and drugs dependent, HIV = HIV-positive

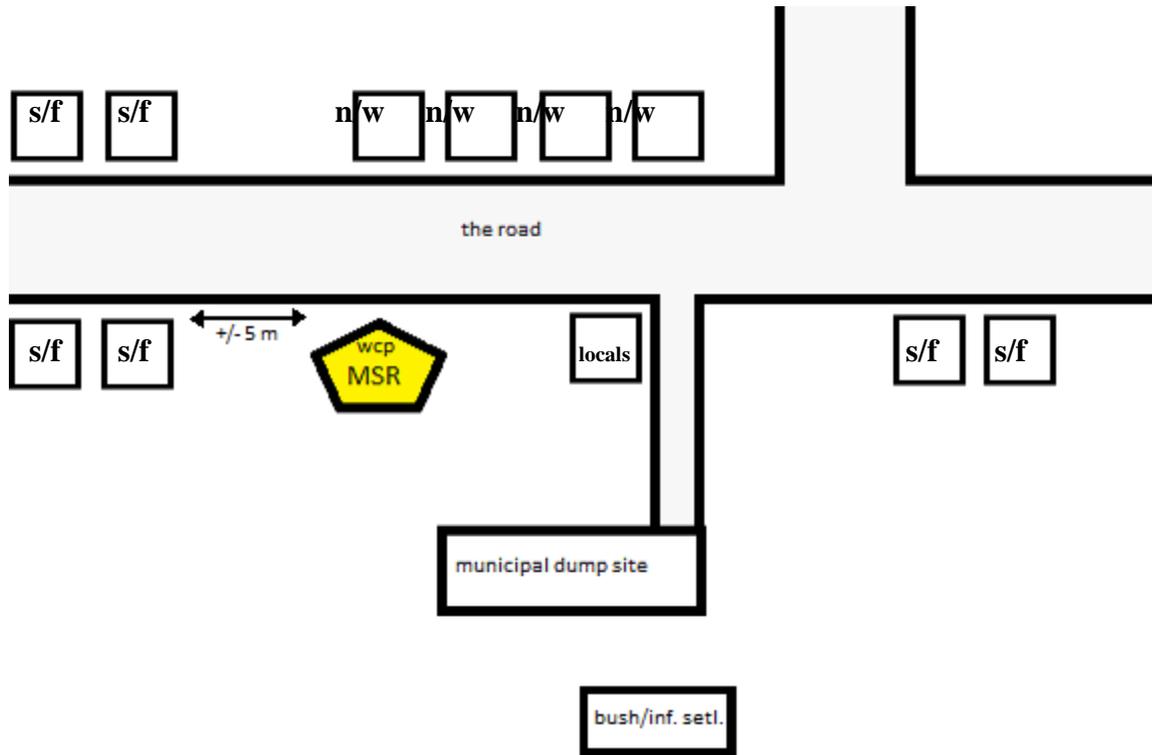
69 Thando and Mike sometimes slept in the informal settlement with their girlfriends, but said they stayed in the 'bush'.

70 N.d. = No data

71 ZIM = Zimbabwean (Shona-speaking)

72 A. dep. = Alcohol dependent

APPENDIX III: MAP OF THE ROADSIDE SPACE



s/f = 'Struggling foreigners'

n/w = 'Networking workers'

WCP MSR = Worker Collection Point Men on the Side of the Road

bush/inf.setl. = The 'bush' and the informal settlement ('locals'' living spaces)

APPENDIX IV: INFORMATION ON WORKSEEKERS AT THE ROADSIDE SPACE

	<i>Arrival time</i>	<i>Leave time</i>	<i>Days at roadside</i>	<i>Freq. n-planned pick-ups /week</i>	<i>Freq. planned pick-ups /week.</i>	<i>Behaviour at roadside</i>	<i>D.W.⁷³ May '10</i>	<i>Income May '10</i>
'Locals'								
Luyiso	7.30am - 8.30am	2pm - 6pm	Mondays - Saturdays	0	0-1	Sitting, sleeping, lifting index finger to indicate willingness to work, and walking towards cars that pull over.	3	R140
Mike	7.00am - 8.30am	2pm - 6.30pm	Mondays - Saturdays	0	1	Sitting, sleeping, lifting index finger to indicate willingness to work, and walking towards cars that pull over.	4	R200
Bob	7.00am - 10am	4pm - 6pm	Mondays - Sundays	1	0	Sitting, sleeping, lifting index finger to indicate willingness to work, and walking towards cars that pull over.	4	R230
Dumisan i	7.30am - 10am	4pm - 5.30pm	Mondays - Saturdays	0	0-1	Sitting, lifting index finger to indicate willingness to work, walking & running towards cars that pull over.	3	R350
Thando	7.30am - 9.30am	2pm - 5pm	Mondays - Saturdays	0-2	0	Sitting, sleeping, lifting index finger to indicate willingness to work, and walking towards cars that pull over.	3	n.d.
'Networking workers'								
Promise	6.30am - 8.30am	10.30am - 11.30am	Mondays - Fridays	0-1	2-3	Standing/sitting, greeting employers, negotiation with employers, walking towards cars that pull over, chatting with other networking workers and MSR PC.	10	R1 500
Trust	6.30am - 7.30am	10.30am - 12.30am	Mondays - Fridays	0	0-4	Standing, negotiation with employers, walking towards cars that pull over, chatting with other networking workers and MSR PC.	6	R600
Dean	6.30am - 8am	10.30am - 12.30am	Mondays - Fridays	0	3-5	Standing/sitting, greeting employers, negotiation with employers, walking towards cars that pull over, chatting with other networking workers and MSR PC.	15	R2 500
Comfort	6.30am - 7.30am	10.30am - 11.30am	Mondays - Fridays	0-1	2-3	Standing, greeting employers, walking towards cars that pull over, chatting with other networking workers and PC.	11	R2 300
Admire	6.30am - 7.30am	10.30am - 11.30am	Mondays - Fridays	0-2	2-3	Standing/sitting, greeting employers, negotiation with employers, walking towards cars that pull over, chatting with other networking workers.	12	R2 000
Courage	6.30am - 8am	10.30am - 12.30am	Mondays - Fridays	0	0-4	Standing/sitting, greeting employers, negotiation with employers, walking towards cars that pull over, chatting with other networking workers and MSR PC.	10	R1 400
Tendai	6.30am - 7.30am	10.30am - 11.30am	Mondays - Fridays	0	0-4	Standing, greeting employers, negotiation with employers, walking towards cars that pull over, chatting with other networking workers and MSR PC.	13	R1500
Tapiwa	6.30am - 8am	10.30am - 12.30am	Mondays - Fridays	0-1	4-5	Standing, greeting employers, negotiation with employers, walking towards cars that pull over, chatting with other networking workers.	19	R2000

73 Amount of days worked in May 2010 according to roadside workseeker.

	<i>Arrival time</i>	<i>Leave time</i>	<i>Days at roadside</i>	<i>Freq. un-planned pick-ups /week⁷⁴</i>	<i>Freq. Planned pick-ups / week.</i>	<i>Behaviour at roadside</i>	<i>D.W. May '10</i>	<i>Income May '10</i>
'Struggling foreigners'								
Justice	5am – 7am	3pm – 6pm	Mondays – Sundays	0–1	0–3	Standing/sitting, running towards cars that pull over and jumping into the bakkie, to indicate a willingness to work.	4	R200
Justin	5am – 8am	4pm – 5pm	Mondays – Sundays	0–2	0	Standing/sitting, running towards cars that pull over and jumping into the bakkie, to indicate a willingness to work, chatting to PC MSR.	6	R400
Gift	5am – 8am	4pm – 5pm	Mondays – Sundays	0	0	Standing/sitting, running towards cars that pull over and jumping into the bakkie, to indicate a willingness to work, chatting to PC MSR.	0	R0
Knowledge	5am – 7am	3pm – 6pm	Mondays – Sundays	0–2	0	Standing/sitting, running towards cars that pull over and jumping into the bakkie, to indicate a willingness to work.	2	R100
MSR WCP⁷⁵								
	7.30am – 8am	11.00am – 11.30am	Mondays – Fridays	0–2	0–4	Standing, sitting, talking to roadside workseekers and employers.	14	n.d.

Average number of roadside workseekers per day at the road:

Between five and 60 roadside workseekers gathered at the roadside each day to search work.

Between three and seven roadside workseekers who referred to themselves as 'locals';

between four and 20 who called themselves 'networking workers', and between five and 20 referred to themselves as 'struggling foreigners'.

74 Arrangements with employer were previously made via MSR PC, or directly with roadside workseekers via personal contact or over the phone. Some jobs were on a regular weekly basis, e.g. Comfort and Admire were picked up each Friday to do a gardening job at the same residence in Constantia on Fridays. However, when Admire found a better paying job (R250 instead of the R150 for the gardening job), he left the roadside, and Dean, who did not secure a job, went to work in his place.

75 Worker Collection Point Men on the Side of the Road

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