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Why do African Migrants with a Tertiary Education do Menial Jobs in Cape Town?

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of 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 attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date

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Abstract

This research considers the reasons for the position of African migrants with a tertiary education in menial jobs in Cape Town. Until recently, mainstream migration literature on South Africa has tended to universalise xenophobia and to treat migrants as innocent people for their situation. To what extent does xenophobia explain the position of skilled migrants in menial work in Cape Town bearing in mind that i) South Africa suffers a shortage of skills needed to spur economic growth and development, ii) xenophilia (love and support for foreigners) is part and parcel of the interactions between South Africans and foreigners?

Using an in-depth, qualitative, face-to-face interview schedule instrument and a convenience sampling method to select twelve skilled migrants from five African countries, this research provides a ‘thick’ and comprehensive understanding of the reasons for the position of African skilled migrants in menial jobs in Cape Town.

It establishes a system of antecedent and immediate reasons which explain this position. The antecedent reasons are deprivation in home countries, reliance on superficial information and/or emotions to find out about opportunities in South Africa, the imperative of survival, reliance on limited social capital to find jobs, limited English skills, low entry requirements characterising menial jobs, and the fact that the migrants saw menial jobs as a temporary measure and exploited this facet of such jobs. Immediate reasons consist of limited knowledge of Xhosa and Afrikaans languages, xenophobia, racism, and the temporary nature of asylum seeker permit identity document. This research challenges the sketchy finding of earlier studies which has implicitly suggested that xenophobia is omnipresent in South Africa. It throws doubt into the extent to which the Government and businesses are informed about and willing to tackle the skills shortage in this country. It shows that the value of education is not forgone even though highly educated migrants do menial jobs. Such migrants are likely to and do secure professional jobs in the long-term.

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I dedicate this dissertation to those who fight for a non-discriminatory, inclusive society in which human development is the yardstick against which individuals and collective actions' success is valued.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Migration research in South Africa has found that migrants with a tertiary education¹ work in menial jobs², taking employment as security guards, cleaners, car guards, informal traders, or barbers (Bernstein, 2003; Amisi, 2006). The literature suggests that the migrants risk losing their accumulated skills and work experience to the detriment of future development endeavours of both their home countries and South Africa, or any other host country (Bloch, 2005). The literature describes migrants in South Africa as ‘highly’ qualified (Mattes, Crush & Richmond, 2000:3); extraordinarily well educated and valuable human capital (UNHCR as cited in Steinberg, 2005:1). In a study of parking lot attendants in Cape Town, Bernstein (2003) found that 41.7% of the participants were migrants with some tertiary education; on the other hand, none of the South African parking lot attendants had tertiary education. Similarly, Bloch’s (2005) survey of five hundred Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa showed that many Zimbabwean graduates were employed in menial jobs that did not utilise their skills and/or expertise. Many of the participants in his survey were agricultural labourers. In a study of Congolese migrants in Durban, Amisi (2006:8) also found that even migrants with ‘scarce skills’ (DoL, 2007) were holding down menial jobs, for example, a teacher was employed as a security guard; an accountant was self-employed as a shoemaker; a nurse as an informal trader, and a social worker as an informal car guard.

In Cape Town the situation of migrants with a tertiary education who are holding down menial jobs deserves further investigation for two major reasons, first, because education is generally viewed as a means of improving access to better employment conditions and higher income. According to Checchi (2006:7-19) education is not simply being able to read or to check a bill at McDonalds, or use a cellphone; that is, it is more than

¹ Migrant with a tertiary education and skilled migrants are used interchangeably in this study.

² I use the concept ‘menial jobs’ to refer to low-wage, low-skill service sector occupations requiring an education equivalent to or below grade 12. My antonym concept for this is ‘professional’ jobs.

being functionally literate and numerate. Education, he says, can be thought of as an individual's decision to sacrifice current opportunities in exchange for the prospect of a better income in the future. The incentive behind investing time and resources in acquiring education is based on the expectation that more education will result in better employment opportunities and a higher income during the course of one's working life. In situations where migrants with tertiary qualifications hold menial jobs, doubt arises about the value of higher education as the key to better employment opportunities and higher income careers.

The second reason relates to the theorised positive link between migration and development. Migration constitutes the dominant livelihood strategy for many poor households in Africa; household members migrate to escape poverty and/or diversify their sources of income (Black, 2004:5). Sichone's (2006:130) research suggests that Southern Africans across all skill levels migrate to South Africa in an attempt to escape poverty in their home countries. Furthermore, studies have also shown that migration does alleviate poverty and reduce social exclusion (Crush, Williams & Peberdy, 2005:17). International experience suggests that in addition to improving their own life conditions migrants can make a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of both the home country as well as in the receiving country (Mattes, Crush & Richmond, 2000:1; UN, 2006:23-24).

Migrants can contribute to socio-economic development of the home country by means of remittances and the transfer of innovation. Remittances are goods and/or cash which migrants send to their home countries. Various studies have established that remittances help families meet their subsistence needs, such as buy food, pay medical bills and school fees; thus reducing poverty. Remittances have also provided savings or investment opportunities for new (small) businesses, and have also boosted existing entrepreneurial activities (DFID, 2007:15; UN, 2006:23-24; Crush, Williams, & Peberdy 2005:17). Quantitative studies have shown that in 2005 remittances from high-income

countries to low-income countries reached \$ 232 billion; that is, twice the level of official development assistance from all sources (Ellerman as cited in Kok et. al. 2006:5). In devising strategies to meet the Millennium Development Goals (e.g. poverty alleviation), the international community has to consider ways of making remittances work more effectively for the poor, for example, by providing tax breaks which will encourage citizens abroad to remit more to their home countries in poor regions (UN, 2006:24; DFID, 2007:2; Crush, Williams & Peberdy, 2005).

Migrants can also make important contributions to their home country's economy by means of innovation, for they bring back new skills and/or work experience from abroad. A recent study on industrial policy has suggested that governments in poor countries should not look at their expatriate workers solely as a source of income, that is, through their remittances from abroad; such workers have also acquired entrepreneurial and other skills as a result of exposure to the business life of the receiving country; and they are willing to return to their home countries. Governments should therefore encourage their return so they can employ them to improve domestic economic activities (Rodrik, 2004:28).

It is not only worker-exporting countries that benefit from migrants. Worker receiving countries also benefit from the presence of migrants, for indeed, migrants bring skills, innovation, and knowledge that may boost economic growth in the receiving country. Migrants with tertiary education and/or work experience can fill the gaps created by the emigration of the receiving country's own citizens who have desirable skills, or the inadequacies of the education and training system of a receiving country (Mattes, Crush, & Richmond, 2000:1). They can be of great help to employers who cannot meet their needs for specific skills from within the local labour market; skilled migrants can meet employers' labour demand in a shorter lead-time (Cohen, 2006; UN, 2006:23-24).

South Africa's economy is said to suffer a shortage of human skills. Finance Minister Trevor Manuel has warned that South Africa's lack of human skills 'acts as a barrier to social and economic development and will do so for a long time' (Preece, 2004:10). There is controversy around the meaning and scale of the skill shortage in South Africa (Daniels, 2007:1); yet the shortage becomes difficult to comprehend when African migrants with a tertiary education are doing menial work in Cape Town. A comprehensive strategy to deal with the skill shortage has to include an understanding of why people with 'scarce' skills are in such jobs. Not only does this situation prevent them from fulfilling their dreams; it also limits the effectiveness of policies aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals, in both the sending and the receiving countries in Africa. As shown above migration has potential benefits - both for migrants themselves, for their countries of origin and their destination countries (Kok, 2006:4).

Before going any further, it is important to understand why migrants with a tertiary education had chosen to migrate to South Africa. There is more than one explanation. My focus is on 'globalisation' as the main cause. For a long time, Africans have been migrating around their home continent; however, with 'globalisation' the pace of international migration has increased. A recent study suggests that the number of foreigners who are travelling to South Africa, for various reasons, from other Southern African countries has increased from 1,000,000 in the early 1990s to 5,000,000 in 2005 (Crush, Williams & Peberdy, 2005:6).

But what do I mean by 'globalisation'? There are so many definitions of globalisation that the precise meaning of this concept is unclear. These definitions depend on whether one views globalisation as purely an 'economic' phenomenon, a 'socio-cultural' process or as 'political change'. In this study, globalisation refers to both 'a series of objective, external elements that are profoundly changing our world, and a subjective and

reflexive awareness of these changes' (Cohen & Kennedy, 2000:38). The Internet, for example, constitutes a major change in the history of humankind. It affects the ways people run businesses (e.g. Internet banking) but also their perceptions, relationships and decisions of how and when to invest in a specific market. People seeking to improve their earning power no longer rely exclusively on local opportunities because they can easily find better opportunities without having to pay any travelling costs thanks to the Internet. As Cohen & Kennedy (2000:38) have put it 'the local ceases to be sufficient as a resource in enabling us to make decisions about our lives and where we belong'. Globalisation has to do with the idea that we (shall) now live together in one world (Giddens, 2000). It is about connecting and integrating societies to create a 'global village', of a world without frontiers, where people are aware that many problems are common and join together to address them.

A key feature of globalisation is the removal of trade barriers and the curtailing of the state's intervention in the local economy (Cameron & Stein, 2000:16). Advocates of globalisation have preached the idea that free movement of goods, services, and people around the globe would lead to an improved quality of life for all. Globalisation would be a win-win situation for those countries that embrace it. African countries that would remove trade barriers would attract foreign investment needed to create jobs for the millions of unemployed. The removal or reduction of barriers to trade and mobility has brought about a decrease in the cost of travelling; and the technological advances such as the Internet have made migrants more aware of job opportunities available outside their home country (DFID, 2007:8; Cohen & Kennedy, 2000:34). Countries that have embraced globalisation have undergone structural changes in accordance with the 'structural adjustment programmes' of the WTO and the IMF. These adjustments were seen as a cure for socio-economic malaise. The programmes entailed, among other things, a decrease in public spending and the privatisation of state owned industries (Cooper, 2002:87). The adjustments have not borne

the expected fruit. Many critics believe that these programmes have compounded the impoverishment of African countries. Until the late nineties statistics on Sub-Saharan Africa show that the region had the highest level of unemployment in the world, ranging from 10 to 50% according to the broad definition of unemployment (Akokpari, 2001:7). Giddens (2000:35) provides alarming statistics on inequality. He writes that from 1989 to 1998, 'the share of the poorest fifth of the world's population has dropped from 2.3% to 1.4%. The proportion taken by the richest fifth, on the other hand, has risen'. In Africa, 20 Sub-Saharan countries have a lower income per capita, in real terms, compared to what they had in the late 1970s. On reading the Human Development Report in 2006, one realises that the situation has not improved at all. The report highlights the fact that the poorest fifth of the world's population earn only 1.5% of the world's income (UNDP, 2006:269).

Globalisation has weakened African states because they cannot protect their farmers; farming is the main occupation of many Africans, and they face the unhealthy competition of trans-national corporations. African farmers do not have the technology and resources to compete with imported agricultural products; and they cannot expect support from their governments because the latter cannot regulate the global economy. Those who lose jobs or livelihoods as a result of economic restructuring or unregulated trade do not disappear; some change jobs, for example, teachers become traders within the local economy; while others migrate to 'greener' pastures where they expect to find opportunities to earn more money and achieve greater job security (Wrench & Modood, 2001).

South Africa is the most favoured destination for many African migrants because of its industrialised economy, a shortage in human capital required to sustain the targeted economic growth, as well as a democratic regime and economic prospects. A UNDP study in 1997 showed that South Africa alone received a net foreign direct investment (FDI) of U.S. \$ 1 705 million; this amounted to 54% of total FDI to Eastern and Southern Africa

(Akokpari, 2001:4). Although absorbing only between 20% and 30% of the 500,000 to 600,000 job seekers who are added to the labour force each year; South Africa's economy generated 115,000 jobs each year between 1996 and 2002. This rate is far higher than that generated in other countries in the region (Altman, 2005:449).

According to the South African Department of Labour the country suffered a scarcity of human skills that amounted to 938,275 jobs across various occupational categories in 2007 (DoL, 2007). Recognition of the scarcity of human capital necessary to sustain economic growth has led the Department of Home Affairs to relax visa requirements so as to attract people with 'needed' skills³. For many migrants, the above statistics indicate that job opportunities are abundant and easily accessible in South Africa. One study of migrants in Cape Town found that before leaving their homeland African migrants dreamt of South Africa as a land of opportunity. Many have been disillusioned with what South Africa had to offer to them. A respondent in the study recalled, *'if you watch on TV, you can see South Africa is the better country; but when the people come here, they can see...it is not'* (Warner & Finschilescu, 2003). This statement points out the influence of satellite T.V. that is one manifestation of globalisation in shaping people's choice.

Clearly, globalisation has played a significant role in drawing African migrants to South Africa, but this does not explain why in Cape Town African skilled migrants hold menial jobs despite South Africa's lack of human skills. The next paragraph reviews some literature on this question.

This question has received very little attention in the literature. Only a broad and rather sketchy explanation emerges. One reason offered is xenophobia, which is far too common in South Africa (Warner & Finschilescu, 2003; Bernstein, 2003). Xenophobia is the dislike, fear, or hatred of strangers or foreigners (Nyamnjoh, 2006:5). The dislike may be

³ www.dha.co.za accessed 30th April 2008

based on socio-cultural (e.g. dressing style and language), and biological (skin colour) differences or be due to competition between local citizens and foreign nationals over access to economic resources (Erasmus, 2005:16; Harris, 2002). The view that South Africans are intolerant of African migrants is well established in the literature. Research has pointed out that South Africans accuse African migrants of exacerbating poverty, and representing a threat to the country's development agendas (Crush, 2008; Akokpari, 2000:10). One very recent example of xenophobia was the attacks on foreigners in Alexandra, Ramaphosa, and some Townships in the Western Cape. The attacks left more than 42 people dead and thousands displaced. Foreigners' shops were burned, and their possessions looted by locals. Locals forced foreigners to go back to their home countries; they said foreigners were taking possession of RDP houses, stealing jobs from South Africans citizens, and increasing the crime rate (Mail & Guardian, 2008:4). Comments in the South African media, as well as statements by certain political leaders and civil society organisations have exerted pressure on the Government to take strong action against migrants⁴.

By way of comparison, studies of migrants in France also highlight the fact that well skilled Africans could not secure jobs equal to their level of expertise. Xenophobia has pushed educated Africans out of the formal job market in France. Some of them turned to unskilled jobs, some to street trading; and others became involved in illegal businesses (MacGaffey & Ganga, 2000:43). Several studies conducted among Mexicans and African migrants in the United States of America also suggest that xenophobia could account for the discrimination against migrants in the United States labour market (Portes & Zhou, 1996; Portes & Jensen, 1989:930; Sanders & Nee, 1996:232).

Though xenophobia is widespread in South Africa, it cannot fully explain the situation of highly educated African migrants who can only get menial jobs for two reasons.

⁴ www.hrw.org/reports98/sareport/adv5a.htm accessed 26th August 2008

Firstly, generally speaking migrants across all skill levels are more likely to accept lower remuneration than local citizens (Evans, 1989). This means that businesses prefer to employ migrants to optimise profit (Cohen, 2006).

Second, Sichone's (2006) study of migrants in Cape Town (Mowbray) reveals the existence of a less explored phenomenon that characterises interactions between migrants and South Africans. He refers to this phenomenon as xenophilia. Unlike xenophobia that involves fear and discrimination of migrants, xenophilia entails love and support for migrants. Sichone (2006) argues that xenophobia and xenophilia co-exist and both shape the interactions between locals and foreigners. The reality of xenophilia suggests that xenophobia alone cannot fully explain the lowly position of highly educated migrants in Cape Town's labour market.

The study by Sanders and Nee (1996) as well as Carliner's (2000), both conducted in the United States, provide alternative explanations why skilled migrants are in menial jobs.

The first explanation relates to a lack of adequate communication skills; that is, no knowledge or poor command of English. Mexican and Chinese migrants in the United States of America experienced major difficulties in securing decent employment because of their limited knowledge of the English language (Sanders & Nee, 1987; Carliner, 2000: 158). Bloch also stresses the importance of the English language for the integration of migrants into the receiving country's labour market. She notes that 'being fluent in the language of the country of migration has an important effect on access to jobs, and is an important factor that, in the UK, has resulted in refugees carrying out jobs that are not commensurate with pre-emigration skills and qualifications' (Bloch, 2005:35).

The second explanation centres on migrants' educational background or work experience. Sanders and Nee (1987:232) found that most American employers were ill

prepared to value foreign-earned human capital. They only recognised qualifications and work experience acquired in the United States of America.

Bourgois' (1995) study of Puerto-Rican and Mexican migrants in New York offers a cultural explanation for the marginalisation of migrants and their exclusion from professional jobs in the receiving country's labour market. Cultural capital can significantly explain the success or failure of migrants in the receiving country labour market, because, as Bourgois (1995) points out, the migrants were not familiar with American office culture. The migrants' 'inadequate' social skills were important in explaining their marginalisation from service sector employment. One example of 'inadequate' social skills was Puerto Rican men's inability to be subordinate to women. The migrants' culture did not allow males to be subordinate across gender lines. Puerto-Rican men were frustrated and were very likely to quit rather than to compromise their cultural identity or to become bicultural. Puerto-Rican women, if educated, fared better (Bourgois, 1995:130).

Whether these explanations apply to African migrants with a tertiary education living in Cape Town has not yet been investigated. This research attempts to complement the existing literature. It is mainly qualitative; it draws on the opinions of the migrants themselves, rather than on the author's personal view. Quantitative data is used where necessary to support claims or describe the context of the study.

The remainder of this dissertation is organised as follows. The second chapter introduces the research problem, the aim, and the objectives of the study. The third chapter explains the methodology used to collect and analyse the data, and the ethical considerations that guided the research process. The fourth chapter presents and discusses the findings. The research ends with a conclusion in chapter five.

Chapter 2: The Research Problem, Aim, Objectives

The research question is directed at examining why in Cape Town migrants with a tertiary education are holding down menial jobs. Why is this treated as a ‘problem’? This chapter offers three main reasons. The first focuses on the value of ‘education’ as a means of improving one’s income and enjoying a better quality of life. The second examines the positive link between globalisation, migration, and development. The third pertains to the ‘skills shortage’ in South Africa. This chapter also draws attention to the research aim and objectives.

2.1. Conceptualising the Research Problem

2.1.1. The Value of Acquiring Education

Why do people go to school, college, or university? The human capital theory offers a basis for us to unpack the socio-economic motivation behind the demand for education. According to this theory people pursue education because it constitutes an investment whereby their greater knowledge, and their enhanced problem-solving and decision-making skills increase their employability, and thereby their productivity, and their income generating prospects (Hartog & Brink, 2007:23). Human capital theory is founded on the idea that investment in human resource boosts productivity, induce higher earnings for the employee and profits for employers. Highly educated workers tend to displace less skilled or unskilled workers (Moleke, 2005:15). The more education and training a prospective employee has, the greater the confidence in him or herself; and the greater likelihood that a prospective employer will hire him or her.

A South African study conducted by SALDRU (cited in Standing, Sender & Weeks, 1996:149) found that level of schooling strongly influenced the probability of

finding a job. The more schooling an individual has, the greater he or she sees his or her earning potential. The more years of schooling, the higher the probability of entering the labour force and staying in employment. Similarly, in his survey of studies of Italy, France, the United States and Germany Checchi (2006:1-7) found that increased participation in the labour market correlated positively with level of schooling; education enhances an individual's employability. In his survey he established that earnings of a university graduate are double, in some cases triple, the earnings of a person who has not attended secondary school.

In Cape Town, we find African migrants with tertiary qualifications working as unskilled labourers and receiving very low wages. Why are not these migrants enjoying the benefits a tertiary qualification brings, for example, better employment opportunities and a higher income? Do they take such menial jobs by choice, or necessity, or both? If it is by choice, what are the reasons behind this choice? If it is by necessity, what is preventing them from getting better jobs? If it is by choice and necessity, how do these two operate in the lives of the migrants?

The existing literature has little to say that provides answers to such questions. This study attempts to fill in the lacunae in the literature by investigating what these migrants have to say.

2.1.2. Globalisation, Migration and Development

As I explained in the previous chapter, globalisation is a multifaceted process that can be characterised by the dismantling of certain barriers to the cross-national flow of goods, services, capital and people, and also the human capital that goes with them (Kaplinsky, 2001:45). Advocates of globalisation link the weakening of barriers to trade and migration as a remedy for poverty and socio-economic malaise. Although migration is as old

as humankind, globalisation has accelerated and magnified the movement of people across and between continents. Migration has become a significant strategy used by the poor to escape from poverty (DFID, 2007); international migration represents a 'race to the top' for people with professional skills, an effort to realise their potential and increase their income. By pursuing ever-greater opportunities to use their skills, they can improve their standard of living and add to the knowledge they have already gained (Crush, Williams & Peberdy, 2005:24). There is knock-on effect of benefits for many migrants; their families left at home, their home countries, as well as the receiving countries. The benefits include remittances that migrants send home, the new skills and training that they learn in the receiving country; and the skills gaps that they fill in the receiving countries (DFID, 2007).

How, if at all, has migration helped these highly educated migrants in lowly jobs improve their quality of life, increase their earnings, acquire new knowledge, and apply their skills, since they arrived in South Africa? Are the migrants planning to move out of menial jobs? What is the exit point from menial jobs? Here again, I have found very little in the existing literature that provides answers to these questions. This study grapples with these unanswered questions.

2.1.3. The Skills Shortage in South Africa

Although unemployment is high in South Africa (23.1% in the second quarter of 2008 following the strict definition of unemployment)⁵, this cannot on its own explain why highly educated migrants are not in professional, managerial or executive positions, given the fact that South Africa suffers a shortage of highly skilled persons (Landau, 2007; Stern and Szolantai, 2006). Last year, the Department of Labour released the National Scarce Skills List. The document gave a comprehensive account of the skills that lie at the heart of

⁵ <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/statskeyfindings.asp?PPN=P0211&SCH=4222> accessed 31st September 2008.

the ‘binding constraint’ on economic growth and development; the skills that are most needed and which South Africa must acquire if it is to develop.

Below I present a summary of the required skills by occupational category. This will help the reader to understand my interest in the anomalous position of migrants with tertiary education.

Table n°1: Magnitude of Scarce Skills by Occupational Category in 2007

Occupational Category	Magnitude of Scarcity
Managers	322,690
Professionals	159,380
Technicians and Trade Workers	92,590
Community and Personal Service Workers	37,890
Clerical and Administrative Workers	40,435
Sales Workers	4,905
Machine Operators and Drivers	19,170
Elementary Workers	261,215
Total Skills Shortage in 2007	938,275

Source: DoL’s scarce skills list 2007 (My own format and calculations).

For further details about job descriptions please refer to the full National Scarce Skills List document. Drawing on my definitions of skilled migrant, menial and professional jobs and the tasks assigned to the above occupational categories, I divide the table in two groups. The first group consists of the three first occupational categories (managers, professionals, technicians and trade workers) which I consider as professional jobs. The second group refers to the five last occupational categories (community and

personal service workers, clerical and administrative workers, sales workers, machine operators and drivers, elementary workers) which I regard as menial jobs. The above table illustrates an interesting point. The scarcity in menial jobs (363,615) is less than for 'professional' jobs (574,660). The former category represents less than half (40%) of total scarce skill jobs, while the latter represents more than half (60%) of total scarce skill jobs.

Why do highly educated migrants not fill the shortage but rather prefer to do menial jobs? South Africa's continued shortage of human skills is difficult to explain given the presence of migrants with tertiary qualifications who are in menial jobs. Once more, the existing literature fails to address this question. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature.

2.2. Research Aim and Objectives

In order to provide a greater understanding of the reasons behind the apparently anomalous situation of African skilled migrants in menial jobs, the views of the migrants themselves are examined. With this in mind, I have set myself four main objectives: i) to identify the main barriers that prevent migrants from getting jobs that match their qualifications; ii) to generate knowledge about skills shortage in South Africa; iii) to assess the value of education as a means for accessing better working conditions and higher earnings; iv) to generate knowledge about migration and development.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the process I followed in order to answer the central research question: why do migrants with a tertiary education, who have found work in Cape Town, hold down menial jobs? The research was mainly qualitative. I followed Wengraf (2001), who sees qualitative research as seeking to understand a social phenomenon from the perspective of the people studied. The focus is on the insider's (i.e. the interviewee's) perspective, rather than on that of an outsider (i.e. the researcher) (Miles & Huberman, 1996). The chapter has four objectives: to explain the selection of participants, to describe the process of data collection, to clarify the process of data analysis, and to highlight some ethical considerations.

3.1. Selection of Cases

I selected the participants following a purposive (judgemental) sampling method (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:166). In other words, I drew on i) the existing literature, ii) informal conversations with migrants, and iii) the research aim and objectives to decide whom I should include in the sample and whom I should not. Purposive sampling is not a probabilistic sampling method, thus my findings cannot be generalised to the entire population of African skilled migrants in Cape Town. However, they offer a thick description, that is, an ethnography of the work experiences of the migrants in Cape Town. The study involved 12 participants whose tertiary qualifications covered a wide range of disciplines including Economics, Accounting, Law, Engineering, Agricultural Science, and Education. The participants also differed in terms of their nationality and country of origin. Five were from the Democratic Republic of Congo, two were from Zambia, three were

Zimbabweans, one was from Burundi, and one from Cameroon. Four participants had succeeded in exiting menial jobs.

Migrants who were employed in professional positions were included in the sample to assist in gaining a fuller understanding of the situation of migrants who are in menial jobs. As Babbie & Mouton (2001:167) put it ‘the understanding of fairly regular patterns is further improved by examining those cases that do not (any longer) fit into the regular pattern’.

Almost all (11/12) respondents were selected on the basis of the following criteria i) they had a post-secondary qualification, ii) they had been in a job defined ‘menial’ or ‘professional’ as specified above, iii) they were from an African country, iv) they had legal residence in the Republic of South Africa, v) they had a work permit or had been permitted to take-up employment in South Africa, and vi) they had been in South Africa for at least six months. These criteria were set, firstly, because the nature of the study required them; secondly, because the study dealt with access to employment, it made very little sense to include migrants who were illegal or did not have legal permission to work; and thirdly, it seemed to me reasonable to allow a minimum of six months before a newcomer could find employment. According to a recent survey about 90% of South Africans find employment within six months of graduation (Moleke, 2005). The remaining respondent met all the above criteria except the first one. He replaced a Zambian graduate who could not make it on the day of interview.

3.2. Data Collection Methods

I collected the data using an in-depth, qualitative, face-to-face interview schedule instrument. I added questions about the socio-economic and demographic

information of the respondents to help me make sense of the qualitative information I received.

I was quite familiar with some of the issues related to the research topic for two reasons. First, I worship with many African skilled migrants who had done menial jobs, with whom I have had informal discussions around employment matters.

Second, I did research on quite a similar topic as part of a course assignment. The research provided me with an opportunity to engage with the literature. Study of the literature helped me construct probing questions because it gave me preliminary information as to the factors that had influenced skilled migrants' access to, or exclusion from professional jobs. The research also helped me to rephrase my questions. Initially, I tended to ask direct questions such as 'in your opinion why do migrants with a tertiary education do menial jobs in Cape Town's labour market'? I learnt that direct questions were inappropriate because they obscured the main reasons why African skilled migrants were in menial jobs. Respondents tended to talk about superficial experiences of fellow migrants; they were quite silent about their own experiences. After sharing this concern with my supervisor, I decided to adopt a 'historical' perspective in the design of the interview schedule instrument so that I could get respondents to talk about their personal experiences.

I ran a focus group interview prior to conducting face-to-face interviews to ascertain whether I had left out some aspects of the study, and to assess the validity of issues that some migrants had individually brought to my attention. The group interview lasted about one hour; it involved five of the twelve migrants who participated in this study. It proved very useful for it shed light on some aspects of my study that I was, until then, uncertain about, and which were not mentioned in the literature. For example, prior to leaving their home country migrants did not use official sources of information, like embassies, to find out what job opportunities were available at their destination; rather they

relied on their personal networks and information circulating on the streets. The lack of accurate information was a topic revisited in the course of the focus group discussion; and the participants agreed that this was one of the reasons why they took on or had been in menial jobs. This prompted me to include questions like ‘what information did you have about South Africa prior to leaving your country?’ ‘Where did you get the information?’ ‘How did that information influence your decision to come to South Africa?’ The revised interview schedule instrument was then tested and approved.

I conducted the interviews in English and in French⁶ for two participants (Mr. G and Mr. D). I recorded all the interviews on tapes, and also took field notes in order to capture observations that would complement information gathered in the interviews. The interview generally lasted about one hour and fifteen minutes per respondent. I arranged follow up interviews with three participants to elucidate issues which I could not clearly make sense of at a later stage.

3.3. Data Analysis Methods

My analysis was guided by Miles and Huberman’s (1994) approach to qualitative data analysis. This approach is drawn upon ‘grounded theory’, which emphasises an ‘emic’ approach, that is, understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the people studied. Miles and Huberman (1994) establish two phases in analysing qualitative data. The first phase has two steps.

The first step entails a close reading of the transcripts and other data. Erasmus and De Wet (2005:6-7) illustrate the benefits of this first step. They argue that close reading

⁶ I translated the interviews from French to English. I am very fluent in French and was therefore able to engage reasonably and meaningfully with the respondents’ thoughts.

of transcripts gives the researcher an initial sense of issues arising from the data, a sense of the 'spirit of the text' before imposing meaning on it.

The second step is called 'first level coding' to use Miles and Huberman's (1994) terminology. They define coding as a process of 'assigning unique labels to text passages that contain references to particular categories of information'. First level coding constitutes a device for summarising segments of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994:70). Segments of data are assigned names and placed within broad categories. This breaking down of the transcripts and reducing the data to fit within broad themes aids description (Erasmus & De Wet, 2005:9).

The second phase is called 'second level coding'; and it complements first level coding. By making links between the themes, second level coding guides the researcher in working out his or her findings. Miles & Huberman (1994) argue that researchers must code data a second time, as this helps them become deeply acquainted with it. Second level coding is different from first level coding; the former is more explanatory than the latter, it entails looking for patterns, establishing relationships between identified segments of text and the central research question.

The method of data analysis described above was used to understand why migrants with a tertiary education in Cape Town were doing menial jobs.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

This study could not have been carried out successfully without the co-operation of migrants who would freely agree to share their life and employment experiences with me. Initially, prospective participants were reluctant to share their experiences for two major reasons.

First of all, they thought that the study would expose their private lives, and thereby foster discrimination against them.

Secondly, participants wondered if they could profit in any way from their involvement in the study. To reassure prospective participants and to gain their co-operation, my supervisor provided me with a letter of introduction on a University of Cape Town letterhead. The letter clearly stated that the study was carried out solely for academic purposes. To ensure that the research would take place in a climate of mutual trust, I told the participants what the aim of my study was, and that I would respect their privacy and would not use their real names in the final report. I would use pseudonyms. The participants voluntarily agreed to be interviewed.

Though I clearly explained the aim of the study and its academic character, some participants still asked me about the purpose of the research at the end of the interview. It seemed to me that they were hoping I would bring about some change for the better in their situation. I opted to be honest and reiterated that I could not promise anything since policy makers and employers have their own agendas.

I ended the interviews by thanking the participants, and sharing with them experiences of migrants who have succeeded in securing professional jobs or improved their socio-economic status.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the findings. I ran twelve individual face-to-face interviews. The respondents shared certain characteristics but there were differences as well. They were all males⁷; they all had held menial jobs. They were nationals of different countries and had different status in South Africa. One respondent was from Cameroon, one was from Burundi, two were from Zambia, three were from Zimbabwe, and five were from the Democratic Republic of Congo. One respondent had permanent residence, one a work-permit; three had refugee status and seven held asylum seeker permits. Differences were also reflected in their educational qualifications, ranging from commercial subjects to the social and the natural sciences. Four of the twelve respondents had succeeded in leaving menial jobs.

The central research question sought to establish why African migrants with a tertiary education held menial jobs in Cape Town despite South Africa's shortage of human skills. This chapter draws on the stories of the migrants in an attempt to answer this question. I argue that the reasons for the situation of African skilled migrants in menial jobs in Cape Town are multiple and interrelated. To make these reasons understandable I have grouped them into two categories.

The first category is that of antecedent reasons. Antecedent reasons were those which forced the migrants to leave their home countries and raised the expectation of finding 'professional jobs' in South Africa; they were also those which undermined initiatives to apply for 'professional' jobs, and/or forced the migrants to take up menial jobs.

⁷ Interviewing males only was not a deliberate aspect of the research design. The interviewees were selected from within a particular social network and according to criteria listed on p.17; they were not required or expected to be males. My study did not seek to compare the experiences of male and female migrants.

The second category designates immediate reasons. These were very real barriers that respondents encountered, directly or indirectly when interacting with employers in the professional job market.

This chapter is structured as follows: the first section focuses on antecedent reasons; the second section looks at immediate reasons; the third section considers the future of African skilled migrants involved in menial jobs. Where necessary I use respondents' experiences to discuss 'skills shortage' in South Africa, the theorised positive link between migration, globalisation and development, and the value of education as a means for securing better employment conditions and a higher income. Given the University's restriction on the length of the Masters of Philosophy dissertation (25,000 words), I cannot give comprehensive details of each respondent. I have chosen to focus on typical cases and, where required, use other respondents' reports to reinforce my arguments.

4.1. Antecedent Reasons

'If you have to look at the reasons why people left the country, you may discover that it is in fact those reasons that have brought them to do menial jobs' (Mr. M: a Congolese respondent, see below for additional details).

The above quote links the position of African skilled migrants in menial jobs in Cape Town with certain antecedent reasons. To make sense of these reasons I examine the processes by which these migrants came to hold such menial jobs in Cape Town. I argue that the position of the respondents cannot be understood unless I provide the reader with 'the why' they came to South Africa. This section considers the reasons for the migration of the respondents to South Africa and why they ended up in menial jobs. These reasons were i) deprivation in the home country, ii) reliance on superficial information and/or emotions, iii)

the imperative of survival, iv) reliance on limited social capital in South Africa, v) limited English skills, vi) low entry requirements characterizing menial jobs, vii) menial jobs as a temporary measure.

4.1.1. Deprivation in Home Countries

In this section, I demonstrate that the respondents left their home countries to escape unemployment, political violence and lack of opportunities for self-improvement. There was a strong link between the socio-economic conditions and political situation of the respondents' countries and the decision to migrate. For this reason, I have grouped the experiences of the respondents according to their countries of origin.

The first group of respondents that I would like to look at are the Congolese. Here I focus on two typical stories. The main story is that of Mr. G, a 27 year old married man. Mr. G. was the first born of a family of eight children. His parents were unemployed and depended on small-scale food gardening for survival. They expected Mr. G. to work hard to pay for the education of his younger brothers and sisters. Mr. G held a bachelors degree in Electronics and Mechanical Engineering. He reported that he left Congo because of joblessness and poor living conditions.

'I left my country and came here in 2006. I left because there was no job and living conditions were unpleasant. When you complete your degree, you cannot find a job'.

Mr. G's first job in South Africa was that of general labourer, his duties included cleaning and sweeping. He also worked as a security guard. He was employed as a mechanic at the time of the interview.

Mr. G was supported by Mr. M, who was thirty-four years old. Mr. M came to South Africa in 2002. He was single when he arrived in South Africa; in 2005 he got married to his Congolese fiancé whom he had left in the Congo. They lived together and had one

child. In Congo, he studied Business Science and Economics. He completed an honours degree in Accounting in Financial Management. He worked as a financial and administrative assistant in a business consulting company for two years in Kinshasa. After that, he worked as a store manager for a printing company for three years, thus totalling five years of work experience after he had obtained his honours degree. Mr. M had many financial family responsibilities. His father was unemployed and had two wives and many children. Mr. M had to bear the financial burden of supporting his brothers and sisters. All this time, he wanted to further his studies. His future looked uncertain given his responsibilities and his meagre salary. Poverty and lack of opportunities were serious obstacles in the way of satisfying his family needs and/or his own goals. Like Mr. G, he came to South Africa in search of opportunities to make a decent life. Mr. M said, *'I came to South Africa to search for a better life. The situation in Congo is really terrible. You can't live decently even if you are working'*. Mr. M first worked as a car guard, and later as a security guard. He worked as a portfolio administrator for an asset management company at the time of the interview. One wonders how he succeeded to take such a significant socio-economic step. The structure and the sub-topic under discussion do not allow me to explain how this happened. I shall deal with this question in the section on the future of African skilled migrants who are doing menial jobs.

The second group of respondents that I consider are the Zimbabweans. A typical example is Mr. Y. Mr. Y was twenty-five years old and single. He came from a relatively poor family which relied on remittances from a family member living abroad. Mr. Y completed a three-year degree in English and Communication in 2006 in Zimbabwe. He spent a year teaching English, Geography, and Mathematics as part of the requirements for the completion of the degree. He lost his father, the family's main breadwinner a year before he completed his degree. This loss made him more conscious of the challenges he had to

face. He realised that he had to take on providing financially for his family. Zimbabwe's economic and political situation offered little hope of finding a job despite his qualifications. He came to South Africa in 2006 in an attempt to find a job so that he could support his family.

'My family background was what pushed me to come here. My father passed away. I could see that my mom could not sustain the family on her own. I had to find some ways and help my mom financially to uplift my family. I left Zimbabwe in 2006. The main reason why I left Zimbabwe was that there was no work. The economy is facing down; the economy is shrinking and there are no companies, companies are closing down. When you graduate, you become jobless. I just came here to find a job'. He started his career as a waiter. Later, someone hired him to sell spring water. He was employed as an administrative assistant in an English teaching school at the time of the interview.

Mr. R expressed similar views, *'I arrived here in 2007. I left my country mainly for economic reasons; everyone knows what is happening in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe's economy is on the downturn'*. Mr. R was twenty-nine years old and single. His family were largely dependent on remittances from a relative who lived in U.K. Mr. R completed his honours degree in Economics in 2005 and obtained a diploma in Banking in 2006. He seemed to be a very entrepreneurial person as he resigned from three 'professional' jobs in Zimbabwe before coming to South Africa. He first worked as a teacher; teaching Economics and Accounting to senior school learners for about seven months. He was not satisfied with the salary. He resigned and was employed as a business consultant for a year. Again he resigned because the salary did not cover his expenses and also because he found a job that could utilise the research skills that he learnt as a student of Economics. This time he got a job at the Zimbabwe Presidency Economic Research Centre as an economic researcher. He resigned from this position because of the meagre salary, clientelism, and lack of freedom of

expression. He recalled that the Centre was ‘politicised’ in that one had to do research that served the interests of the ruling party ZANU-PF, and promotion depended on being a member of the ruling party. Because of lack of freedom of expression and poor living conditions Mr. R decided to leave Zimbabwe. He had done various menial jobs since arriving in South Africa. These included being a wheelbarrow/shovel boy in the construction industry and cleaner. He was employed as a clerk (data capturer) at the time of the interview.

The third national group is the Burundian one. Mr. J was my Burundian respondent. He was twenty-eight years old and single. He left Burundi in 2001 primarily to escape the war, but also to further his studies. Since 1994, political violence by state forces and guerrillas has killed more than 200,000 people in Burundi (Moorehead, 2003)⁸. During the time of political upheaval, Mr. J got a bursary from his church to study Agricultural Science at the University of Zimbabwe. He completed a bachelors degree in Agricultural Science in 2006. He had intended to return home after he had completed his studies, but the continuing instability in Burundi deterred him from doing so. He came to South Africa in 2006 as he could not find a job in Zimbabwe.

‘The economy of Zimbabwe was collapsing and employment was not there. The unemployment rate was 80%. It was very difficult to get a job. My expectation here was to find a job in my field’. Mr. J first worked as a car guard and was employed as a security guard at the time of the interview.

The fourth group are the Zambians. Mr. O, a twenty-four year old man studied Marketing at the Evelyn Horn College in Zambia. He got his certificate in 2002. He worked as a store manager in a factory shop in Zambia for two years. In 2004 he came to South Africa to look for better opportunities.

⁸ http://www.opendemocracy.net/people-migrationeurope/article_1524.jsp accessed 6th August 2008

'I came here in 2004, basically to look for greener pastures, something better'.

Mr. O worked as an informal advertiser for a salon and as a clerk for the security company ADT. At the time of the interview he was employed as marketer (salesperson) for a magazine publishing company.

The second Zambian respondent was Mr. T. He was twenty-seven years old and married. Unlike the other respondents, he only had a high school certificate (grade 12). I interviewed him as another Zambian graduate could not make the interview. Mr. T worked as a driver in Zambia. He reported that in 2006 he migrated to South Africa to find better opportunities.

'The main reason for leaving my country was that the job does not pay well, I came here to find greener pastures'.

My fifth national group is Cameroonian. This respondent, Mr. L, was twenty-six years old. Mr. L came from a middle class family whose members lived in France, U.K, Germany, and Congo. He completed high school in Cameroon in 2001. He came to South Africa to pursue a football career. He stated that Cameroonian football clubs were not of international standard. He came to South Africa in order to pursue a career with what he described as a 'world class' club.

'I decided to come here to pursue, my career in a world class football club'. He arrived in South Africa in 2004. He studied Industrial Engineering at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town and graduated in 2007. He had held menial jobs, for example, doorman and parking attendant. He was working as a street trader at the time of the interview.

The above cases clearly show that the socio-economic situation and political oppression influenced the respondents' decision to leave their home countries. Congolese

and Zimbabweans were the two nationalities that seemed to be much concerned about unemployment compared to other nationalities.

Despite immense reserves of minerals and natural resources, Congo has not had a government able to manage its wealth responsibly and meet its people's needs so they are willing to make a life there. As a result of misgovernment, the DRC is one of Africa's poorest countries. Recent estimates suggest that about 80% of Congolese live on less than USD \$ 1 a day⁹, data on unemployment is not updated regularly but the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimated that it is very high. It notes that according to the 'unofficial' definition of unemployment (all job seekers are considered including the discouraged ones) only 4% of the total working population had jobs in 2002¹⁰. This lack of opportunity at home has forced Congolese to look elsewhere. The traditional route had been Europe, and to a lesser extent to America (MacGaffey, 2000); but recent restrictive migration policies in western countries, coupled with the opening of South Africa to the world economy, as well as South Africa's advanced infrastructure have resulted in Africans moving to South Africa in an attempt to find greener pastures (Akokpari, 2001; Sichone, 2002).

The recession of the Zimbabwean economy is well documented. This has been characterised by incredible inflation in the price of basic commodities such as bread and sugar. The country's inflation rate is more than four digits, and is the highest in the world. In 2006 the unemployment rate was estimated to be 80%¹¹. Because of such difficult conditions Zimbabweans are migrating to neighbouring South Africa to find a better life. Besides economic recession, there is the lack of political freedom and impartial justice system in

⁹ http://www.afdb.org/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ADB_ADMIN_PG/DOCUMENTS/ECONOMICSANDRESEARCH/CONGODR_AEO2008_EN.PDF accessed on 9th July 2008

¹⁰ http://www.yearofmicrocredit.org/docs/countryprofiles/Democratic_Republic_ofthe_Congo.doc accessed on 9th July 2008.

Zimbabwe as exemplified in the story of Mr. R. President Mugabe's regime is notorious for its curtailing of political and civil rights, and reliance on corruption, clientelism, and 'ethnicism' (Cooper, 2002:138). Mr. R's case suggests that those who fail to identify themselves as pro-Mugabe stand little chance of accessing what they deserve.

Such discrimination can only create frustration, and thereby encourage going to exile.

The example of Mr. J suggests that political instability is a major obstacle to Burundi attracting those citizens who are abroad and have acquired further skills to return home.

The reasons the Cameroonian and Zambian respondents gave for leaving their countries were primarily the pursuit of a better life and not precisely unemployment or lack of political freedom or stability. It is clear that a stable political situation is not in itself sufficient to keep Africans within their national boundaries. Africans migrate to South Africa because they perceive a better life here compared to their home countries.

But how did this perception arise? The next section considers the various ways in which the respondents came to realise that South Africa was the right place.

4.1.2. Reliance on Superficial Information and Emotions

None of the respondents had visited or lived in South Africa before they emigrated. They had no personal experience of what life was like in South Africa. What they knew of South Africa they often received from informal sources. The respondents received information from general conversations in the street, citizens of the same or other countries who had lived in or visited South Africa, and the media (T.V.). The failure to engage critically with the information about opportunities in South Africa influenced the

¹¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6354783.stm> accessed on 26th May 2008

respondents' decision to come to South Africa. The majority (10/12) of the respondents expected to find jobs that matched their qualifications and/or level of education shortly after they landed in South Africa. Below I show how reliance on superficial information and emotions resulted in respondents ending up in menial jobs in South Africa.

I begin with the Congolese respondents. My main story is that of Mr. M.

'Before I left the country the basic information that I had from friends and people in my environment was that in South Africa there are lot of opportunities in terms of jobs and studies. From South Africa you can easily go to Europe or America'.

Mr. M was prompted to come to South Africa after listening to conversations in the street in the Congo. This source portrayed South Africa as a good place to live, providing jobs and other opportunities.

Another source of information about opportunities in South Africa was human trafficking businessmen also called 'tindikeur'. The word 'tindikeur' is derived from the Lingala (a local language of the DRC) verb 'tindika' which is translated as 'push' in the English language. Tindikeurs are Congolese businessmen who travel to South Africa regularly by both illegal and legal means. They have mastered the route from Lubumbashi (southern province of the DRC) through Zambia, Zimbabwe, to Johannesburg. Their business mainly consists of 'pushing' people to South Africa by facilitating their travel irrespective of whether they had proper documentation (passport and visa) to enter the Republic of South Africa or not. They charge between \$ U.S. 350 and \$ U.S. 400 per person per trip. The sustainability of 'tindikeurs' business depends on people wanting to migrate to South Africa. In the absence of self-motivated customers, 'tindikeurs' devise marketing strategies aimed at persuading people that life improves very shortly once in South Africa. Their marketing speech usually emphasised things such as the abundance of jobs and the shortage of human skills in South Africa, as reflected in the following quote:

'They say that South Africa is organising the World Cup, there are jobs there. They are building stadiums; they are looking for people, any qualifications are welcome' (Mr. M).

Knowing that the availability of accommodation in the country of destination is one of the things that a migrant is likely to worry about, 'tindikeurs' lie and say that they can provide accommodation along the way and in South Africa. Mr. M explained the sophisticated lies of a 'tindikeur' whom he happened to know. This 'tindikeur' had a number of business cards with contact details in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. The cards displayed his presumed residential addresses in the various countries. The 'tindikeur' used these addresses to convince his clients they were guaranteed free accommodation until they could find their feet in South Africa.

'He will tell you that in Johannesburg I live in such area, in Cape Town I live in Observatory, things like that. When somebody shows you a business card like that it is easy to trust him and emigrate'.

It was on the basis of such unreliable information that Mr. M decided to come to South Africa; *'when I received the information I said this is the opportunity I have to jump on that and go forward'*. He had great expectations that he would find a job commensurate with his qualifications; *'I expected to work in a structured company where I could apply what I learnt at university'*. Mr. M got into South Africa illegally with the help of a 'tindikeur'. He was disappointed when he arrived because he could not meet his work expectations; *'when you arrive here you realise that you were told lies, there are no jobs, empty promises'*. The first opportunity he got was that of parking attendant or car guard. The section on reliance on limited social capital further explains why and how respondents like Mr. M ended up in menial jobs.

Mr. M was supported by Mr. V and Mr. G below. Mr. V was 38 years old, married. He held an honours degree in International Law but did not have any professional work experience. He had a small shoe repair business while he was in Congo. At the time of the interview he was employed as a security guard. Mr. V emphasised the influence of informal and unverified information in luring Congolese to other countries.

'You get your information by talking to people in the street. You just hear, for example, that Congolese are offered jobs in Algeria and you do your best to arrive in Algeria'.

Mr. G's decision to emigrate to South Africa was based on conversations with fellow Congolese who had visited South Africa. Fellow Congolese consistently alluded to the sophisticated infrastructure of the country and linked this with the availability of and accessibility to jobs.

'The people that used to come here were telling us that South Africa is an advanced country, a developed country; if you go there you will get a job. There are jobs'.

Mr. G's work expectation was to find a 'professional' job in his field of study.

'In my mind I thought I would find a job where I can apply what I learnt at university'.

Like Mr. M he did not get the expected job. The only work opportunities were for essentially menial jobs. His first job was that of a general labourer.

The second national group is that of the Zimbabweans. Here I mainly focus on the story of Mr. Y.

'I have an uncle who has been here for fifteen years. He is the one who told me that you are going to start from the bottom. It will be a long process, but you will pass through the process. Therefore, for me I knew that things were not going to be easy for me. Of course, I had an expectation that I was going to breakthrough. What influenced my

decision to come here was the fact that he constantly told me that in due time things will be o.k.'

Before coming to South Africa Mr. Y first went to Malawi, Namibia, and Botswana to look for a job, but was unsuccessful. Mr. Y believed that he could get a 'professional' job in South Africa after he had talked to his uncle. The uncle, who held a diploma in Accounting did menial jobs for five years, but had succeeded in getting a permanent position as an accountant with a financial services company in Cape Town. The uncle advised Mr. Y to come to South Africa to look for a job. He warned him that it could take some time before he found a job that matched his qualifications. Despite the warning, Mr. Y was unrealistic and emotional; he believed that he would get a 'professional' job shortly after he settled in South Africa.

'When you come from Zimbabwe, you think that you are going to become a marketing manager in South Africa from the click of a finger' (Mr. Y).

He ended up being a waiter, a job that he would have never accepted in his own country.

'I started as a waiter. When you go back home these are low-class jobs, when you go back home people will laugh at you'.

Mr. R reported quite a similar experience. He chose to migrate to South Africa because his friend, who lived in Cape Town, had told him that he could secure a 'professional' job given his skills. The friend held a diploma in Accounting. He was also a street trader and later on got a job as an accountant. He recalled that the friend once brought him a newspaper and he saw advert for jobs which required his qualifications. These adverts gave him true confidence to believe that he could definitively get a 'professional' job if he relocated to South Africa.

'My friend who was here, informed me about my opportunity here, seeing my qualifications and what I could get if I shifted here. He came with a newspaper and I found that I could take up this job; I can fit into this job. It actually influenced me to come here. When I got here, well things changed, really things changed. The opportunities are there, but I believe the jobs are only there in the newspapers. But for one to actually get yourself employed on it is tantamount to great things. I was the wheelbarrow boy and shovel boy, just casual work'.

He was too naïve to believe that his academic skills and/or work experience would automatically, and quickly get him a suitable office job in South Africa. He failed to recognise that though his friend held a diploma, he started as a street trader. Once in South Africa, he realised that things were not as easy as he thought. The first job opportunity that he got was that of a general labourer in the construction industry.

The third national group that I look at is the Burundian one. Mr. J foresaw a brilliant future in South Africa following conversations with acquaintances who had visited or lived in South Africa. The positive message was that the South African economy was growing and it was possible to find a 'professional' job.

'I got the information from people from my country, Congo, and Zimbabwe, who came to visit in Zimbabwe. The information was like South Africa's economy is growing, there is a high chance that you can find a job in South Africa'.

Mr. J relied on the informal information he received. He travelled to South Africa and expected to find a job in his field. This did not materialise.

'It was like a disappointment because what I was expecting is not what I got'.

Mr. J became a parking lot attendant.

The fourth group of respondents are Zambians. Mr. O is typical. His decision to migrate to South Africa was motivated by the conversations with fellow Zambians who lived

in South Africa. These fellows informed him that they were working in a better environment, earning higher salaries and bonuses compared to what he was earning in Zambia. Unlike him they could afford to buy cars. Mr. O believed that he would find greater opportunities shortly and enjoy life if he migrated to South Africa.

‘They could talk more about excitement of getting money. When they were talking about the environment in which they were working and how they were getting bonuses, money, buying a car. It gave me so much confidence that if they are doing it why not me also. It moved me so quickly’.

This belief was further supported by images of the sophisticated infrastructure of South African cities on television during international games and competitions taking place there. For example when looking at a South African television show, Kora, he saw the sophisticated architecture of cities such as Durban, Sun City. He associated skyscrapers with the availability of and access to ‘professional’ jobs in South Africa.

‘I also got information from the media, televisions, newspapers, and radios. I watch music like Kora, sport like soccer, and also when they talk about Sun City, Johannesburg, and Durban, when you look at the skyscrapers, to me it looked like America. Comparing South Africa to Zambia, it is much ahead’.

Despite his expectations he could not find a job that matched his qualifications or level of education when he arrived in South Africa. The first job he got was in the informal sector. He walked door-to-door seeking to convince women to buy services from a salon.

The last national group that I discuss in this section is the Cameroonian. Mr. L’s decision to migrate to South Africa was based on the superficial information that he received from Cameroonians who had visited and/or lived in South Africa. This presented South Africa as an advanced country compared to other African countries, a place where one

can make a lot of money. It was on the basis of such superficial information that Mr. L chose to come to South Africa.

'I knew South Africa via friends, businessmen who came here in South Africa. They told us that South Africa was amazing in terms of infrastructure; it was far ahead compared to the rest of the continent. They will say I do a job and I get so much money. The information really motivated me. I started saying why not go in there and see what is happening. So I decided to come here'.

Mr. L's expectations were not met. He was very dissatisfied with the actual work opportunities in Cape Town. His first job consisted of street trading.

'I was very disappointed, instead of achieving what I wanted I could only take what was available there. I started with self-employment, buying things and selling them'.

Mr. L blamed fellow Cameroonians who lived in South Africa as the reason for skilled Cameroonians holding down menial jobs. He argued that most Cameroonians were unlikely to tell the truth about their experiences in South Africa. They generally gave a positive picture by overstating their socio-economic status, yet they will not say exactly what kind of work they do.

'If you ask them what they do in South Africa, they cannot tell you exactly what they are doing. They say I do a job and I get so much money'.

Although they did not have the money to rent a single bedroom, they intentionally impressed fellows at home by telling them that they led good lives in South Africa. But when their friends arrived in South Africa, they avoided them because they could not offer them accommodation.

'I have witnessed some people on the phones they are saying like everything is fine; we are making a lot of money here. When their friends come here and they phone them

at the stations or at the airport, they will just switch off their phones because they can't help them with accommodation'.

One wonders why presumably many Cameroonians in South Africa hid their real situation and whether this was characteristic of other nationalities besides the Cameroonian. It seemed to be customary for Cameroonian migrants to hide truth about their lowly jobs in South Africa. The customary view associated living abroad with leading a good life materially. It did not arise out of a vacuum. It must have been founded on some migrants who had succeeded to secure a good life and who exhibited symbols of wealth when they returned home; by buying fancy cars and clothes. Some success stories have led people in Cameroon to spread the myth about the golden future for those who go abroad. This has created a 'social psychology of compliance' among Cameroonian migrants. Those who failed to secure a good life in South Africa overstated their social position to meet their home communities' expectations.

'Some people come here and they make it. They drive nice cars and buy expensive clothes. When people see that they just generalise that everyone who comes to South Africa would also make it. When you face the reality of life in South Africa you have to hide the truth to your people because you left the country with full confidence that you will succeed. When they ask you "are you fine", it is like a reflex "yes". We get such amount of money' (Mr. L).

A similar practice also emerged in the story of one Zimbabwean respondent. Mr. R reported that living in South Africa was synonymous with success for many Zimbabweans at home. Some Zimbabweans have succeeded in securing a good life in South Africa. Those who have failed exaggerate their socio-economic position to avoid being mocked by fellows in Zimbabwe. Mr. R reported that if given a choice between telling the

truth or lying about his menial jobs in South Africa, he would rather lie about being a successful man to his community in Zimbabwe.

'No one would like to tell you "I am surviving my brother", people have pride. Reality is seen when you find yourself within. That is when you start wondering, if I go back home and I have failed and there is someone who is next to me and he has achieved, would you believe that me in my sense I would tell you that South Africa is bad my brother? Who would they blame? They would blame me, "no", he is the one who is being lazy, he does not know what to do'.

It is clear from Mr. R's statement that the fear of losing face, and of being treated as 'indolent' by fellow Zimbabweans had led some Zimbabwean migrants to hide the truth about their menial jobs and to give only a positive picture of their experiences in South Africa.

But how did such migrants back up their claims? It was probably by sending remittances. Remittances seemed to carry the power of obligation between the sender and the receiver. Indeed, when asked whether he received money from his family in Zimbabwe Mr. R laughed and replied, *'no, I am the one who must send money to them'*. Reporting on the migration experience of Zimbabweans from the Matabeleland province in southern Zimbabwe, Maphosa (2007:125-127) came up with quite similar findings. He wrote that remittances seemed to be an expression of *enforceable contract* between the provider (the migrant) and the recipient (fellows in the home country). He found that the Matabeleland people used various derogatory terms to describe migrants who did not send remittances, for example, *umadliwa* and *umgwewu* which implied these migrants had been devoured by the pleasures of South Africa, spending all their money on beer and women, forgetting those at home. Matabeleland people assume that people in South Africa make a lot of money and, therefore, should send money back home.

The above stories confirm that reliance on superficial information and emotions contributed to these migrants ending up in menial jobs in Cape Town. What can one make of these stories? What implications do they have for migration, globalisation, and development?

Starting with migration, over the last few years there has been increasing concern amongst the South African public about the 'flood' or 'influx' of immigrants. South Africans perceive immigrants as a threat to their chance of employment (Crush, 2008; Akokpari, 2000:10). In response to such allegations the government of South Africa has implemented various strategies, including the tightening of immigration policies, deportations, and withdrawal of temporary residence permits. Foreigner investors wanting to set up a business in South Africa had often failed to do so because the Department of Home Affairs seldom allowed them to transfer an employee from outside the country (Bhorat, 2002:23). It is estimated that the Department of Home Affairs deported about 151,653 non-citizens in 2002 (Nyamnjoh, 2006:33). In terms of the agreement between South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (previously known as Zaire), Zairians could obtain a two-week visa and a three-month temporary residence permit. They were allowed to apply for permanent residence if they secured a job. In recent years there have been dramatic changes in the way Zairians (now Congolese) gain entry (MacGaffey, 2000:48). The use of a 'tindikeur' to enter the Republic of South Africa illegally suggests that impoverished people would try other means to achieve their goal when 'legal' means act against their interests. Hungry stomachs are deaf, and it is not deportation or fenced borders, even electrical ones that could prevent them from migrating. The South African government efforts to keep 'unwanted' immigrants out of the country is likely to be a losing battle in view of the socio-economic and political pressure which fuel human trafficking.

That the migrants chose South Africa is not unexpected, because of the evident and visible economic gap between South Africa and other African countries (Akokpari,

2001). South Africa is a magnet for the rest of Africa. It will continue to attract legal as well as illegal African migrants whether South Africans like it or not (Ramphela, 2008)¹².

Looking at the story of Mr. M one can argue that migration is not just a survival strategy for those who leave their home countries (Black, 2004:5); it is also an income generating opportunity for human traffickers.

A commonly believed gain of globalisation is the shrinking of space thanks to modern satellite communications technology and the Internet (Hafez, 2007:58.). Last year Britain's Department for International Development released a report entitled 'Making Migration Work for the Poor'. The report pointed out that global technology such as the Internet has helped prospective migrants identify jobs in the country of destination (DFID, 2007). The above stories suggest that despite the abundant flow of information and the variety of applications on the Internet that globalisation has been praised for, African highly educated migrants still rely on old age sources of information such as people in the street and travellers. This situation seems to substantiate the finding of a recent survey that there is limited access to the Internet in many African countries (Hafez, 2007:105).

Advocates of globalisation see the international movement of human, physical, and financial capital as the solution to the problem of poverty; they believe that a borderless world would be a win-win situation for all (Milanovic, 2003: 667-668). Such a win-win situation is difficult to achieve without a global policy of fair and equitable distribution of the world's wealth (Sichone, 2002:36). The above findings suggest that the effectiveness of 'openness' is jeopardised in the absence of a comprehensive strategy that tackles the real causes of migration. Africans migrate to South Africa because they foresee better living and working conditions compared to their own countries.

¹² http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/migrant_voices/mamphela_ramphela accessed 6th August 2008

This section has shown that reliance on superficial information or emotions contributed to the position of skilled migrants in menial jobs in Cape Town. Some respondents failed to check out the informal and superficial information they received about opportunities in South Africa. Others ignored some of the information they received about opportunities in South Africa. They were rather emotional and unrealistically believed that unlike their predecessors, they would find professional jobs soon after they arrived in South Africa. Some respondents saw the sophisticated infrastructures of South Africa as a sign of the availability of 'professional' jobs. The respondents' expectations were unrealistic as none of them found a job commensurate with his qualifications soon after they arrived in South Africa. One wonders why the respondents accepted such menial jobs. The next section presents a preliminary answer to this question.

4.1.3. The Imperative of Survival

Some skilled migrants reported that they turned to menial jobs because they could not find 'professional' employment. It seemed to me that this answer was just too simplistic. According to a recent survey, not all South Africans find jobs soon after they graduate. The survey found that 28% of South African graduates spent one to two years in the labour market before they got jobs that were commensurate with their qualifications (Moleke, 2005:2). Yet we seldom find South African graduates doing menial jobs. Why was this the case for some skilled migrants who participated in this study? In this section I show that unlike local graduates, some skilled migrants turned to menial jobs because they lacked the resources to meet basic needs. Here I will be looking at respondents not as nationals of a specific country because this finding applied to the migrants in general. I begin with the story of Mr. M to illustrate the manner in which the lack of an income drove some respondents to taking menial jobs.

'When I arrived in Cape Town I found that there were no jobs. I did not have any money at that time. I was living desperately. I went for any opportunity because I had to survive. I went to work first as a parking lot attendant or car guard, I also tried working as a security guard'.

Mr. M turned to menial jobs as a survival strategy. As mentioned above, the section on social capital will further explain how Mr. M and other respondents got the menial jobs. Other respondents who took on menial jobs as a means to meet basic needs were Mr. G and Mr. R. Mr. G's case is particularly interesting because he was one of a group of migrants who were penniless when they arrived in South Africa. They were prepared to take up any job in order to survive.

'We arrived here with no money; we could not do anything. We were just looking for anything whereby we could be able to buy bread'.

Similarly, Mr. R reported that he woke up early every morning to look for casual work because he needed money to survive.

'I went to stand by the road, just to sustain myself. So when I stand by the road and if someone comes and picks me up and I make some money'.

Speaking about Zimbabwean skilled migrants in South Africa, Mr. O (a Zambian respondent) reported that although they possess the appropriate academic qualifications, Zimbabwean graduates often take menial jobs because they desperately need to earn money soon after they land in South Africa. They cannot afford to spend their last few Rands to buy a newspaper, in which they could find 'professional' jobs. They prefer to use their limited budget to buy food and take menial jobs until they find better opportunities.

'Zimbabweans are so desperate that they will just take anything. They can't spend the last ten Rand to buy newspaper to search for a job. They will rather go door to door asking for work until they stabilise themselves'.

Often people rely on the kinship connections in difficult times. One wonders why the migrants did not seek financial assistance from home to survive until they found better opportunities? My answer to this question is not a definitive one because I did not investigate this issue very specifically. But drawing on my arguments in the previous sections, I would suggest that the respondents did not do so partly because they came from relatively poor families. Furthermore, they wanted to avoid being treated as ‘lazy’ or ‘losers’, migrants were expected to succeed and those who did not were stigmatised.

Clearly, the lack of resources to meet basic needs resulted in some of these African skilled migrants involved in this study taking up menial jobs as a survival strategy. They came from relatively poor families who could not afford to send them money until they found ‘professional’ employment. The migrants chose not to ask for help from home probably to comply with the expectation that defined migrants as givers rather than receivers of family assistance.

4.1.4. Limited English Skills

‘We had some difficulties related to the language. I did not apply the time I was not speaking good English. I said before I apply I have to complete some requirements because here in South Africa you cannot work in any company if you cannot communicate in English’ (Mr. M).

This finding applied to some Congolese respondents who arrived in South Africa with a very limited command of English. Recalling an experience common to most Congolese migrants including himself, Mr M suggested that Congolese migrants’ inability to express their ideas clearly in English undermined their efforts to exploit job offers. They believed that good English was compulsory to secure any ‘professional’ job in South Africa. They felt they lacked the necessary language skills to function in a predominantly English-

speaking environment. They excluded themselves from the labour market because of this preconception. Following the example of fellow Congolese, Mr. M justified his not applying for 'professional' jobs until he was able to communicate in English properly saying that he knew many Congolese who had been denied 'professional' jobs because they could not communicate in English.

'I know many Congolese...one lady who had started working as a sales assistant; she was denied the job because she was not able to communicate with the clients. Her boss told her she must go and study English first and then come back for the job'.

Mr. V also reported that he experienced similar difficulties because of his limited English skills.

'I could not meet my expectations at the beginning when I came here in South Africa because I had some difficulties related to the language, I could not speak English'.

Mr. O said of Congolese migrants that although they possess high educational qualifications, they do menial jobs because they cannot operate in the South African workplace that is a predominantly English-speaking environment.

'For Congolese it is mainly a language barrier. They come here with great qualifications but they cannot communicate in English. My brother told me that is why they do security jobs'.

The above quotations support my argument that the lack of adequate English skills leads some Congolese skilled migrants to defer finding jobs matching their qualifications. This finding confirms those of studies of migrants elsewhere. Sanders and Nee (1987) and Carliner (2000) in their studies of immigrants in the United States, suggested that Chinese and Mexican migrants had failed to secure decent employment because of their limited English. Similarly, Bloch (2005) found that in the U.K. many migrants carried out

low-level jobs (cleaners, labourers) that were not commensurate with their pre-emigration experience and qualifications.

So far I have dealt mainly with the personal constraints that respondents experienced which influenced their decisions to take on menial jobs. But why did they find menial jobs first? The next section grapples with this question.

4.1.5. Reliance on Limited Social Capital in South Africa

In this section, I argue that notwithstanding the reasons given above, respondents landed in menial jobs primarily because they relied on limited social capital to find opportunities. I shall first clarify the meaning of the concept 'limited social capital'. Next, I shall illustrate ways in which the limited social capital accounted for the menial position of some skilled migrants.

The word 'limited' needs no special clarification; it denotes the idea of something that is restricted to a certain degree. According to the World Bank, 'social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's societal interactions'¹³. This concept draws on the theory of social capital. This theory shows that human relationships matter in the effort to achieve individual or common goals (Field, 2003:1). The quality and quantity of relationships that an individual possesses may enhance, delay or impede his/her likelihood of achieving certain things in life. Social capital theorists argue that whom one knows is a significant means of finding a good job (Mouw, 2003:868).

¹³<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTTSOCIALCAPITAL/0,,contentMDK:20185164~menuPK:418217~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:401015,00.html> accessed 16th August 2008

Social capital, therefore, offers a good starting point for understanding why skilled migrants get jobs that do not reflect their qualifications or competencies.

Drawing on this theory, I sought to know something of the people that the respondents associated with. I found that the respondents' social network was limited to the African migrant community. Implicit evidence of this is the fact that none of the respondents lived with a South African citizen or a non-African migrant. Mr. L lived with a Cameroonian and both were street traders. Mr. M lived with Angolan and Congolese nationals who were parking attendants. The fact that they lived among African migrants had something to do with their position in menial jobs. Mr. V articulated the relationship very well.

'Imagine that you arrive in South Africa and you are given accommodation by somebody who is working as a security guard. He can only guide you to a security job or another menial job'.

The above quotation omits one aspect of the relationship. What is unsaid, and which justifies Mr. V's comment is that respondents relied exclusively on the African migrant community with whom they lived to find jobs. This community knew little about job opportunities in South Africa except when it came to menial jobs. This becomes more evident on looking at the ways in which respondents got their first jobs in Cape Town. To mention only a few cases; Mr. J started as a car guard. He got the job with the help of a Rwandan friend with whom he lived.

'I was taken by a friend to work in a parking lot in Town. He was from Rwanda'.

Mr. M also started as a car guard. When asked how he got the job he replied, *'I got the opportunity in the Congolese and Angolan community where I used to live. A friend from Angola took me to the site in Seapoint and I started working there'.*

Exclusive reliance on the migrant community was not limited to directing them to menial jobs. It also negatively affected some respondents' efforts to see alternative opportunities. Some respondents seemed to consider fellow migrants who had lived for some time in South Africa as their role models. They followed their guidance without question.

Mr. G reported that fellow Congolese who had lived in South Africa longer than he had told him that he should rather look for a menial job.

'Those who came before us told us they will never accept your qualifications from Congo. As a newcomer, you have to follow whatever they tell you because they know the city and everything'.

Similarly, Mr. L reported that he started as a street trader. He considered this as usual because Cameroonian migrants who had come to South Africa before him started off as street vendors.

'My first job consisted of buying and selling good...because most of the Cameroonians started in that area'.

Mr. J started out as a car guard. When asked why he answered, *'when you are in a new environment you have to know how to survive. I copied from other people who were here before me'.*

It is clear from the above that because the respondents failed to extend their circle of relationships beyond the migrant community their chances of finding better employment opportunities were limited. Exclusive reliance on the migrant community was detrimental for some migrants because it limited their vision of what was possible, they saw only what the others had pointed out to them. The following quote speaks for itself.

'When you are still new there are people that advise you. You are quite blind. You discover things after time' (Mr. L).

The African migrant community in Cape Town seems to represent a proletarian social class whose members are concentrated in low-level jobs (Sichone, 2006:138). I shall show later on that some African migrants had managed to leave menial jobs and had become successful. As a result, one would expect future generations of African migrants to have enhanced social capital and be able to find better opportunities than their present day counterparts.

4.1.6. Flexible or Low Entry Requirement in Menial Jobs

Modern organisations such as public and private companies are governed by rules (Field, 2003:2). For example, to become an employee in a company one needs to meet some requirements: have relevant qualifications or experience, and pass the prescribed assessments. In return the company offers remuneration under specific conditions stipulated in the employment contract that binds the two parties, the employer and the employee. Such requirements seemed to be violated in some menial jobs. This made it easier for some skilled migrants to get such jobs. Here are three examples.

The first example is that of a security guard's job. To be a security guard in South Africa requires that one does a specific training course and is registered with the Security Officers' Board (SOB) (Bernstein, 2003), but these requirements seem to exist on paper only as some respondents worked as security guards though they did not comply with the legal requirements.

'There was no requirement. I just went there and I did not have the papers; they (the employers) just said, "you can work because security is not all about going to school. You can work without papers". I did not sign a contract' (Mr. T).

'We used to work under supervision of one of the security companies. We used to work like full-time employees of the company but we did not sign any contract. It was just some kind of cover to be protected from the security board' (Mr. M).

The example of Mr. T shows that the employer underplayed the necessity of following the prescribed legal regulation before employing a security guard. The employer was very flexible and employed Mr. T though he did not have the relevant papers. The second quotation shows that in Mr. M's case the employer deliberately put in place a system to bypass the law.

One wonders why some employers in the menial job sector were prepared to flout the law? Why did they employ foreign guards who did not have any formal security training course, and why did they not get the migrants to sign a contract with them? Sichone's (2006:133) study of refugees in Mowbray (Cape Town) and surrounding areas provides some useful information that can answer these questions. The study suggests that many South Africans, particularly men who are employed in the security industry often take sick leave or disappear for a whole weekend after being paid. They only come back to work after they run out of money. This undermines the ability of some security companies to provide a service to their customers because they run short of guards. To avoid losing their customers some security companies have turned to foreigners who seem to be more disciplined and committed to work.

While employers are keen to employ foreigners, they face a great difficulty as the Security Industry Regulation Authority (SIRA) has refused to register as fully trained foreigners who are not permanent residents in South Africa (Bernstein, 2003). Some foreigners who are willing to work as security guards are discouraged from taking the security-training course because they cannot obtain accreditation from the Security Board.

The impossibility of complying with the legal requirements has driven some foreigners and employers to negotiate their own terrain where they can meet each others' needs.

Irrespective of the motivations behind SIRA's policy, this does not help any of the parties in the security business. The first loser is SIRA itself because it cannot determine the total number of people employed in the security industry in South Africa. Because of this, taxes that security companies pay to the government are likely to be inaccurate and understated. The second group of losers are the security companies. Employers seeking to comply with the SIRA's policy may end up losing their customers. The third group are the foreigners. Such employees do not have the necessary power to negotiate working conditions and earnings when dealing with employers who are greedy for money. They are at the mercy of the employer because of their illegal stands and so cannot be unionised. Instead of helping the government in the fight against crime, robberies and illegal activities, SIRA has created an environment that is conducive for human exploitation through its exclusionary policy. I shall revisit this issue in my section on xenophobia.

My second example is that of car guards. Let me distinguish between car guards (parking lot attendants) who work for the City Council and those who work for themselves or other individuals (restaurant owners or managers). My focus is on the latter group. From what I have observed and from what I have deduced from listening to the stories of the respondents, there are no specific requirements to become a car guard. It suffices to locate a site (e.g. restaurant parking bay, public library parking bay) where cars are parked, wear a traffic officer's lime top, be physically strong and show some courage to run up and down, be able to say a word of thanks to car drivers and one can make oneself some money. To illustrate this, I use the story of Mr. J who was employed as a car guard with the help of his Rwandan friend. The friend took him to a presumed employer.

'A guy from Rwanda took me to the site. He introduced me to the one who signed the contract with the mall. He showed me you have to do like this [he raised his right hand up and down]. There was no requirement. The requirement was like you have to be strong because you have to stand and watch cars. There was no kind of signing a contract. It was either you do the job nicely or you do it wrong and you are fired. There was no salary, only tips'.

The above quotation reinforces my argument that such flexible entry requirements have benefited the employer at the expense of the employee. The lack of an employment contract allowed the employer to exercise excessive power. He could quite easily and arbitrarily fire an employee or prohibit him from working. In the absence of a legal framework regulating menial jobs such as car guards, employees who are defenceless and are manipulated by their employers.

The third example to illustrate easy access to menial jobs is that of general casual labourer. Mr. R. is representative of this group. Mr. R worked as a casual wheelbarrow boy. When asked how he got employed, he replied, *'there was no requirement, you just have to wake up early go and stand by the road. Then someone comes, picks you up and you are employed. After a week or so you are unemployed. You go back [to the road side] again'.*

The experience of Mr. R once more highlights the distress and uncertainty that characterises menial jobs. While he depended on the wheelbarrow boy job for survival, he did not have any guarantee of employment.

I shall conclude this section by re-stating that respondents were desperate for any job in order to survive. They started in menial jobs because the requirements were flexible and very low. While menial jobs seem easily accessible, the working conditions are mostly disadvantageous to the employee. This is due to the absence of a legal framework to

clarify the rights and obligations of the employee and the employer. The situation is particularly bad in the security industry where SIRA's policy of exclusion throws into doubt the extent to which it actually can ensure safety of its customers. The flexible and/or low requirements means that it is the most vulnerable, least skilled locals who are more likely to compete with African migrants for jobs. This explains why poor, often black South Africans are intolerant of migrants compared to middle and upper class citizens.

4.1.7. Menial Jobs as a Temporary Measure

Economic theory suggests that human beings are rational decision-makers. They consistently make choices or decisions to maximise their own profit (Sen, 1994:385), for example, the respondents' decision to emigrate could be regarded as a 'rational choice' because it was based on the expectation of a better life abroad, in South Africa in particular. To what extent do African skilled migrants holding menial jobs reflect a rational choice? Notwithstanding the need to survive, why did the respondents take menial jobs with the poor working conditions and uncertain income?

A close look at the respondents' stories reveals that they took these menial jobs because they offered some economic gain. These gains emerge when one understands the meaning that African skilled migrants attached to the menial jobs. They looked at menial jobs as a temporary measure, which was indeed a rational choice.

First, I show that the migrants did not intend to make a career of such menial work. They understood such a job as a short term, transitory step. Mr. J and Mr. O are typical examples. Both respondents reported that they took menial jobs until they could find better opportunities as exemplified below.

'I did not like the informal advertiser job. I just did it whilst I was waiting on my applications that I placed with other companies' (Mr. O).

'I did car guard job; it is not something that I liked. I did it while I was also trying to find another job that goes along with my education, which I have not found yet' (Mr. J).

I now go to the second part of my argument. Here I need to demonstrate that notwithstanding the need to survive, these jobs constituted a mean that helped the migrants to achieve higher goals. In other words, a menial job offered some economic gain.

Some of the respondents came to South Africa to provide financial support to their impoverished families in the home country. Menial jobs provided them with an opportunity to do so. Mr. Y and Mr. R. illustrated this. Mr. Y reported that he came to South Africa to make money so that he could help his mother who was a widow to cope with the demands of the family. The job as a waiter allowed him to remit about R 700 every month to his family. Mr. R reported that he did not like working as a data capturer; he did this job to keep his family from starving. He was able to send home R 800 every month.

The benefits of menial jobs were not limited to providing remittances. Respondents who were planning to study or open their own business relied on money they earned to pursue these goals, but they could only do so by saving a significant portion of their income. Mr. G worked as a mechanic and earned between R 2,000 and R 3,000 per month. He reported that he saved between R 1,000 and R1,500 every month. He intended to use these savings to go back to university.

'I am trying to go to university next year. I am saving like between R 1,000 and R 1,500 every month to cover for academic fees. According to my estimates it is possible within a year'.

Mr. J was working as a security guard. He earned between R 1,800 and R 2,300 per month. He saved R 750 every month, as he wanted to open his own business.

'I am trying not to spend much. I try to save as much as possible because I know one day I must start my own business'.

Finally, most respondents generally believed that although these jobs were demeaning, they still earned more money compared to what they made or could have made if they were in professional employment in their home countries. Overall, they felt that they were better off financially in a menial job in South Africa. Mr. D and Mr. R illustrated this. Mr. D held a degree in Electronic Engineering. He worked in the Department of Public Health in Kinshasa in the DRC as an assistant electronic maintenance engineer. He earned the equivalent of 50 U.S. dollars per month. Converted into the South African Rand, this amounted to about R 400/month¹⁴. As a security guard in South Africa Mr. D earned R 2,000 per month, five times what he earned in the DRC.

Mr. Y worked as an economic researcher in Zimbabwe. He did not say what his earnings were like; but when asked whether he made more money in South Africa he replied, *'Yes, I have actually tripled my salary compared to Zimbabwe'.*

The above stories demonstrate positive links between migration and development. As many studies have already suggested, remittances help families to meet their subsistence needs; pay medical bills and school fees; thus reducing poverty. (DFID, 2007:15; UN, 2006:23-24). Through remittances respondents such as Mr. Y and Mr. R were able to alleviate poverty in Zimbabwe. This is one of the grounds that advocates of globalisation use to argue that a borderless world would be the solution to widespread poverty. This argument is superficial. The beauty of the tomb does not mean that cemetery is a good place to live. One cannot dispute the fact that remittances sent by migrants do help alleviate poverty. However, in judging globalisation, one needs to consider the many needs of the migrant workers. This is reasonable because globalisation is seen to imply

¹⁴ <http://www.reservebank.co.za/> accessed 19th August 2008

development. The Indian Nobel Prize winner Sen argues that development is about expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. These include economic, political, social, and cultural freedoms (Sen, 2001). To what extent do migrant workers enjoy multifaceted freedom in a 'borderless' world? The findings of this research are clear. Migrants in menial jobs are at the mercy of employers; they work in poor conditions, and are uncertain when they can afford their next meal. This kind of analysis needs to be integrated in the 'economistic' calculation of the gains and losses of a borderless world.

4.2. Immediate Reasons

It is widely believed that African skilled migrants hold down menial jobs because they are excluded from the professional job market. What evidence, if any at all supports this generally held belief? To this end, I investigated whether the respondents had sought professional jobs and if so, what was the result of their efforts.

In this section, I look at the interactions between African skilled migrants and employers who advertised professional positions. I consider how the behaviour of the employers and employees (the migrants), and/or certain procedures and policies have disadvantaged migrants who seek professional employment. I argue that one or more of the following reasons have contributed to migrants being handicapped when they pursue professional employment: i) lack of adequate Xhosa and Afrikaans skills; ii) xenophobia, iii) racism; iv) questionable identity document.

4.2.1 Lack of Adequate Xhosa and Afrikaans Skills

The home languages of the African skilled migrants who participated in this study are not spoken in South Africa. These home languages were Lingala and Tshiluba (DRC), Ndebele (Zimbabwe), Kibemba (Zambia), Swahili (Burundi), Bamilèke (Cameroon).

Despite the fact that English remains the main business language in South Africa (Preece, 2004:10), some jobs seem to require a knowledge of a South African language. I did not get a comprehensive list of such jobs. From listening to the stories of some respondents, it appears that some employers required job applicants to be fluent in Xhosa or Afrikaans because customers or the majority of their employees were unable to communicate in English. In such cases, respondents felt that they were at a disadvantage and unable to compete with locals even though they had the knowledge and expertise required for the job. I shall show how this requirement partly explained the position of some respondents in menial jobs.

The first illustration focuses on the reaction of respondents to job adverts that required a knowledge of Xhosa and English. A number of respondents reported that they understood such jobs to be the domain of locals and therefore did not bother to apply. Below are typical responses.

'When I was doing my job search I could see in some adverts they say they need somebody who is bilingual, like English and Afrikaans or Xhosa. So, meaning that we (foreigners) cannot get the job' (Mr. Y).

'I try to avoid such jobs. Well, if I see a job advertisement that specifically says bilingual or Afrikaans, that is not a job for me. To avoid the disappointment I try to avoid this kind of job' (Mr. R).

Mr. R and Mr. Y seemed not to envisage that they could learn a South African language. Mr. Y assumed that jobs that required the knowledge of a South African language were automatically reserved for locals. Mr. R proudly confessed that he intentionally avoided such jobs. Underlying the thinking of Mr. R and Mr. Y is that foreigners cannot or should not learn a South African language. Yet, some migrants (e.g. Mr. M, Mr. G) learnt to speak English which they did not know before they arrived in South Africa. If Mr. M and Mr. G

learnt English, a foreign language, why should not Mr. Y and Mr. R learn Afrikaans or Xhosa? Mr. R and Mr. Y unconsciously and artificially created a division of labour based on linguistic differences which resulted in their self-exclusion from the professional job market.

My second illustration of the lack of Xhosa and/or Afrikaans skills as a reason for the position of African skilled migrants in menial jobs is based on the experience of the Burundian respondent. Mr. J came across an advert for a position of farm manager in a local newspaper. He read through the requirements and judged himself as eligible. He applied for the job and was granted an interview which he passed. The prospective employer asked him if he could speak Afrikaans or Xhosa; he honestly answered that he could not. The employer confirmed that he was qualified for the job, but some logistical problems had to be solved before he could start the job. The employer told him that he would phone and confirm the date on which he would start. Mr. J waited for the call, and was surprised to receive a letter starting that his application had been rejected because he could not communicate in Afrikaans or Xhosa.

'First they said "we will call you; you qualify to do this job". But the letter they sent me says 'no, we were looking for people who speak Afrikaans and Xhosa'; which I do not know much'.

Since he was desperate for the job, Mr. J went to see the employer to find out why the knowledge of Afrikaans and Xhosa suddenly became a requirement to get the job. The employer told Mr. J that workers on the farm could not speak much English. They could only communicate in Xhosa and/or Afrikaans. He said he turned down Mr. J's application because the latter could not speak any of the languages that the workers spoke. Mr. J was very frustrated and felt hopeless.

'To me I can say that I have got tired because I think if I was a South African I could have been employed straightaway'.

He continued to work as a security guard despite having a degree in Agricultural Sciences. As evidence that employers used the lack of knowledge of Xhosa or Afrikaans as an excuse to disqualify qualified foreigners, Mr. J recounted what happened to his friend from Rwanda. This friend held an appropriate qualification and spoke Xhosa. But he was denied a farm project manager's position in Khayelitsha (predominantly Xhosa speaking community) because the employer felt that he could not speak the 'proper' Xhosa.

'He had that potential of speaking Xhosa and had the experience. But he was denied the job because he could not speak proper Xhosa'.

Stories like those of Mr. J and his friend could suggest that some employers used the lack of knowledge of Afrikaans or Xhosa as an excuse to exclude skilled foreigners from jobs. If the knowledge of Xhosa or Afrikaans was a key requirement why did the employer not list this in the advert? What does 'proper Xhosa' mean, that he has a foreign accent? But do all English-speaking people have the British accents? Is Mandela's English accent identical to that of Tony Blair? Stories like these make one wonder whether South Africa truly suffers a shortage of human skills. The National Scarce Skills list suggests that South Africa lacks 252,770 farm managers (DoL, 2007). Yet here we see migrants with the relevant qualifications being denied positions because of their limited or lack of knowledge of local languages. Now that the Government is looking at importing skills, one wonders whether the expatriate workers would be taught local languages before they took up their posts.

The above cases suggest that certain employment criteria (e.g. knowledge of local languages) create or worsen skills shortages in South Africa. Thus, one way of addressing the shortage would be to review such criteria so that those with training and experience can be integrated into the economy (Daniels, 2007). Only an irresponsible government would import human skills to cope with 'skills shortage' before it has identified

and drawn on persons with these skills who are available locally. Many African migrants possess the skills that South Africa needs to spur growth and improve the quality of life of all, but the Government has made little effort to audit the skills of these migrants (Ramphele, 2008)¹⁵. South Africa has to welcome people with the relevant education and experience if it is to achieve a higher growth rate. Sadly this is not always the case.

In the next section I show how skilled migrants are being driven out of the formal labour market in this country because they are seen as ‘outsiders’ or ‘foreigners’.

4.2.2. Xenophobia

Xenophobia is the dislike, fear, or hatred of strangers or foreigners (Nyamnjoh, 2006:5). The dislike may be based on socio-cultural (e.g. dressing style and language), and biological (skin colour) differences or arise from competition for access to economic resources between citizens and foreign nationals (Erasmus, 2005:16; Harris, 2002). The stories that follow do not include accounts of racially based discrimination; this will be dealt with in the next section on racism.

Some respondents felt discriminated against by employers in the professional job market because of their foreignness. I give three typical examples.

Respondents felt that job adverts that specifically pointed out that only South African citizens were eligible were xenophobic. Mr. M had been looking for a professional position in the financial field. He reported that he did not apply for a job advert which stated that only South African citizens need to apply.

‘When I was applying there were some offers where you find that only S.A. citizens can apply...I never tried when I found that in the requirements, there is no need for

¹⁵ http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/migrant_voices/mamphela_ramphela accessed 6th August 08

me to apply. If I apply they will deny me'. When asked to elaborate on what type of jobs these were he said, *'like financial advisor in a bank or asset management company'*.

Mr. M's case is an example of how some employers are not ashamed to advertise their avoidance of foreigners. In a normal setting, employers welcome applications irrespective of nationality. The fact that some employers excluded non-nationals suggests that xenophobia partly explains the exclusion of skilled migrants from 'professional' jobs. The behaviour of employers could also be the result of the discriminatory policies with such cosmetic labels as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), Employment Equity (EE) or Affirmative Action policies endorsed by the dreadfully incompetent Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Labour (Daniels, 2007:2). Although belonging to a racial group labelled 'black' and predominantly poor (Sichone, 2006:138), African skilled migrants are sometimes 'legally' discriminated against through selective job adverts because employers have to comply with 'nationalistic' policies.

In the second example of 'xenophobia' was the sudden indifference of the employer when he met a respondent. Mr. N was a thirty-two year old respondent from DRC. He had studied theology in the Republic of Congo and then worked for two years as store manager in Brazzaville. He had been in South Africa for three years. Mr. N felt that one of reasons why he did not get a professional job in South Africa was xenophobia. He said he had applied for a marketer position, and the employment agency shortlisted him to be interviewed. He felt that the employer's agent was displeased when he realised that he was a foreigner.

'When I reached there I just saw that when he realized that I was a foreigner he just said thank you. He said he would get back to me; he never called me. I just realized that it was related to my nationality'.

Mr. N's statement is a bit unclear. Mr. N seemed to assume that he was denied the job because he was a foreigner. What led Mr. N to conclude that he was excluded because he was not a South African? I refer to the existing literature to clarify his remarks and to suggest that xenophobia could have been the reason.

Xenophobia does not always manifest openly because it is not officially sanctioned, nor do all South Africans approve of it. Xenophobic employers may deliberately hide their dislike of foreigners to look 'humanistic' to the public. According to the bio-cultural hypothesis of xenophobia South Africans use visible differences such as bearing, clothing style, vaccination marks, local language proficiency, and skin pigmentation, to identify foreigners (Harris, 2002). This is borne out by an exchange between a South African and a Tanzanian who passed for a South African described in a study by Sichone (2002:37). The Tanzanian asked the South African to deconstruct the concept 'kwerekwere' (a derogatory term that some black South Africans use to describe foreigners), *'the South African looked at him and said, your appearance is not like a Kwerekwere. When asked why, he replied, because you are not so black'*. Bearing in mind the above hypothesis and illustration, one can make sense of Mr. N's statement. It is not unlikely that the employer realised that Mr. N was a foreigner using one of the above-mentioned traits.

My third example shows that it is also possible that some companies disqualified foreigners irrespective of the qualifications in order to be politically correct or patriotic. What happened to Mr. M's friend is a typical case. Mr. M reported that his friend was denied a professional job because he was a foreigner. Mr. M's friend was from DRC; he held a three-year degree in Cost Accounting from the Cape Technikon. He applied for the position of accountant with a company in Cape Town and passed all the required assessments. On the day the employment contract was to be signed the human resource manager asked him his identity number. The friend had a refugee status; he handed this over

to the manager who looked at it and said *'sorry, we did not know that you are a foreigner; we only employ people who are South African citizens'*. Despite his Accountant degree, Mr. M's friend continued to work as a waiter.

It is clear from the above that skilled migrants with relevant qualifications are denied professional jobs because they are foreigners. Clearly, skills alone are not always the main determinant for securing (professional) employment in this country. For some employers 'identity' and 'belonging' to South Africa are as important as technical or professional qualifications. The skills shortage list reflects a deficit of 3,655 accountants (DoL, 2007). Here we see that an employer failed to appoint a graduate accountant simply because he was not a South African citizen. This again illustrates that there is need for a rational and integrated policy to tackle the skills shortage.

One wonders why some employers were so unwilling to employ foreign workers. Were such employers really so xenophobic? A glance at South African immigration policy could be helpful in answering this question. The policy is nationalistic to such an extent that it asphyxiates companies that are willing to employ foreigners. The New Immigration Act of 2002 which was revised in 2004 requires that employers do not hire foreigners unless they can prove to the Department of Labour that the employment is intended for a foreigner. In other words, the company has to demonstrate that no South African citizen can do the job (Stern & Szolantai, 2006: 137). Implicitly the Government is saying do not employ foreigners. The same 'nationalistic' xenophobia is also apparent in the security industry where refugees and asylum seekers are denied SOB certificates because they are not permanent residents in South Africa. Mr. U, a Congolese respondent with a three-year degree in education who clandestinely worked as a security guard voiced the sentiment that Government policy is implicitly xenophobic.

'Even in menial jobs the Government has put in place policies to exclude foreigners. You will see that even for the security guard, they do not give SOB to refugees and asylum seekers. This is a policy that the Government has created to exclude us'.

Such implicit policies are not the only tools that the Government of South Africa uses to exclude non-nationals from employment. Respondents expressed concern also about the identity document that the Department of Home Affairs issued to asylum seekers. I discuss this in the next section.

4.2.3. Questionable Identity Document

The identity document that I am referring to is often called the section-22 'asylum seeker permit'. It is issued to foreigners who apply for asylum at the Department of Home Affairs. The document is generally valid for a three-month period, after which it must be renewed. It guarantees the right to employment including self-employment.

While the right to work was legally granted, some respondents reported that they failed to secure professional jobs because they had temporary asylum seeker permits. Mr. S and Mr. R's experiences offered helpful illustrations of the way in which asylum seeker permits negatively affected the respondents' likelihood of securing 'professional' jobs.

Mr. S applied for a sales executive job. The employment agency called him for an interview. He passed all the assessments and the agency told him that he had the right qualifications but could not be employed because he had a three-month asylum seeker permit.

'That was a sales executive; they said I had the right qualities. They looked at the papers and they said that the paper is only for three months. I tried to explain to them I

will go for extension until I get a permanent document like a refugee status. But they said “No”; they wanted somebody with permanent residence’.

Mr. R applied for a financial planner position with a leading bank. He went through the prescribed assessments and passed them all. The employer informed him that he would be working at the bank’s branch in Claremont. Mr. R was waiting on his staff number from the head office in Johannesburg before he could start his new job. Mr. R was excited because he finally had a breakthrough, an exit from menial jobs. Unfortunately, the human resource manager in the head office rejected his application. This manager told the Cape Town branch that it could not employ Mr. R because he was not a permanent resident; he only had a three-month asylum permit.

‘In December I got employed by a leading bank as a financial planner. I did the interviews they contacted my references in Zimbabwe, everything was ok. While I was now waiting for my employment number from their head office from JHB; the HR in Johannesburg told the HR in Cape Town that “no, you cannot employ this person because he is not a permanent resident”. They told me we have your papers, signed papers, what we are waiting for you is just to get a permanent residence or a temporary permanent residence which I do not know how I am supposed to get that or the hell they think I can get that anytime soon’.

Stories like these demonstrate that employers are not necessarily xenophobic. They show that official or legal documents issued by Government Departments do not always prevent discrimination against foreigners. On the contrary, they invite exclusion of foreign nationals (Landau, 2007:65). The temporary nature of the asylum seeker permit is obviously something that any employer willing to have a long-term relationship with an employee would worry about. The name of the identity document (asylum seeker permit) itself betrays its holder. It conveys the idea that the person is not stable, he is still looking for

a place to live. Unfortunately permit holders have no control over the processing of their files by the Department of Home Affairs. They live with uncertainty as to whether they will be granted asylum or not. Even the most skilled asylum seeker has nothing that will convince an employer that he will be granted asylum. The decision lies with the Department of Home Affairs. Employers' unwillingness to employ asylum seeker permit holders is justified by the fact that recruiting a new person entails sacrificing time and resources for training purposes. It seems irrational to invest in an employee for an important position if he/she only has three months confirmed legal residence. Mr. S expressed this view when he said, *'most of the companies deny saying how do we know that you are going to stay permanently because we may invest in you and your human capital. After investing they reject the person they tell him to go back to his country'*.

People like Mr. R and Mr. S are likely to miss 'professional' jobs although they have the right skills unless they can get temporary or permanent residence. According to the Refugee Act that governs matters related to asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa *'an asylum application should be adjudicated within 180 days or six months including the appeal'*¹⁶. Mr. R and Mr. S had been in South Africa for one year and one month but they are still asylum seekers. Mr. U had been in South Africa for two years but still had an asylum seeker permit. Clearly, there is a significant gap between what the Government preaches through its Refugee Act and what it does. The Government appears to engage in rolling back xenophobia, yet it is this very Government that stands accused of fostering xenophobia by issuing asylum applicants with a confusing identity document. The new Immigration Act in 2002 that was further amended in 2004 aims to promote economic growth by enabling businesses to employ needed foreigners (Stern & Szalontai, 2006:137). The example above suggests that an asylum seeker permit does just the opposite. Yet, both the new Immigration

¹⁶ <http://www.dha.gov.za/faq.asp> accessed on the 31st May 2008

Act and the asylum seeker permit emanate from the same Home Affairs Department. To what extent does the Government actually help South Africa to meet its shortage of human skills? It is easy for the Government to justify its failure to deliver services timeously on the grounds of bureaucratic and logistic constraints such as shortage of adequate personnel. Yet the question remains as to who would compensate people like Mr. R and Mr. S whose attainment of future goals has been delayed as a result of Government's inability to process refugee applications on time.

Bureaucratic constraints are not the only challenge that the Department of Home Affairs may be experiencing with regard to the delay in processing applications for refuge. The Department is known to be riddled with corruption. Referring to his experience with the Department, Mr. R described the Home Affairs Department as one of the most corrupt entities of the South African Government.

'My honest opinion is that the Department of Home Affairs is the most corrupt that has been established in South Africa'.

Home Affairs officials are greedy for money and have the expertise of creating unnecessary delays in order to receive bribes from refugee applicants. According to Mr. S, some of his fellow Zimbabweans had to pay about R 700 to get an asylum paper.

'There was some little of bribery there, like people are now paying to get that asylum, people paid R 700. I know two people who paid R 700 to get their asylums'.

Even after paying for an asylum seeker identity document, asylum seekers still struggle to convince employers that their documents are legal.

'One thing that I have also realised is that even if you have got a masters degree, you come here you get these asylum papers, most of the employers and business people look down upon them; they do not really value them. May be they do not know them'

(Mr. Y).

The physical form of the asylum seeker permit does not have the appearance of a legal document. It is printed on a fragile A4 paper, often with computer and handwritten conditions and amendments. It takes some patience for one to read through all the conditions of issuance. Landau (2007:66) writes that ‘few employers or government agents including the police and many health-care workers’ value these documents.

It is clear that temporary asylum seeker permits are questionable, and this partly explains the difficulty that migrants with tertiary education have in securing ‘professional’ jobs in Cape Town.

Some respondents felt that discrimination they have experienced was racism. I illustrate the ways in which the respondents perceived and experienced racial discrimination in the next section.

4.2.4. Racism

I draw on the work of Erasmus (2005:10) on race and racism and argue that race is not biologically constructed; it is not a fixed and tangible thing that we find in human blood or DNA. Race is rather socio-historically and politically constructed. The meaning we attach to ‘race’ shapes our perceptions and actions and has real effects on people’s chances of advancement. Racism refers to the ways in which people interact with race and the implications thereof.

I use two examples to illustrate the manner in which racism was mentioned as a barrier to accessing ‘professional’ jobs. The first example was mainly a perception while the second example was a lived experience. Both examples involved Mr. R.

In the first example, Mr. R reported that he was offered an interview for the position of sales administrator because the employer did not realise he was a ‘black’ person until the interview. Mr. R reported that his first name starts with A and his surname spells

almost like an English word¹⁷. He said that very often people tended to misread the surname for the English word. He usually spelled out his full surname on his C.V. but used only the initial A for his first name. Mr. R reported that the prospective employer misread the surname and therefore thought that Mr. R was a white person and granted him an interview. Mr. R believed that the employer lost interest in his application when he physically saw him and realised that Mr. R was a black person.

'I went there for the interview. She (the employer) actually thought my surname was an English word. So she thought I was white, when I got there she was practically disappointed, ok, we will contact you we will contact you, and that was that'.

Like xenophobia, racism is not always overt (Erasmus & De Wet, 2002); body language and loss of interest can indeed be signals of racial discrimination. It cannot be excluded that the prospective employer declined Mr. R's application because he was a 'black' person.

In his second experience, Mr. R was taken by a 'coloured' friend to a 'coloured' school principal. The principal needed a teacher for Economics and Accounting (Mr. R has got an honours degree in Economics; he had taught Economics and Accounting to senior school boys in Zimbabwe). Before he met the headmaster Mr. R did not consider that his belonging to a racial group labelled 'black' could be a barrier to getting a job in South Africa. The headmaster asked Mr. R this question, *'do you know the job; you will be teaching coloured children'*? Mr. R was just too naïve, he did not perceive teaching 'coloured' children as an issue, he replied *'I do not mind'*. The headmaster did not bother to find out more about him. He promised that he would call him, but never did.

The headmaster's question clearly indicates that the fact that Mr. R was black meant that he was not the right person to take up the teaching position. The question suggests

¹⁷ For reason of anonymity I have avoided mentioning the surname and the English word.

that ‘race’ still determines access to wealth and the opportunity to better one’s life in the ‘new’, ‘democratic’ South Africa. What is extraordinary if a ‘black’ person teaches a ‘coloured’ child? Is it not an assumption that ‘blackness’ carries less intellectual ability and the power to transmit knowledge to a person of different race? Would the headmaster see it as a problem if a ‘coloured’ person taught a ‘black’ student? Mr. R did not get the job and was still doing the relatively lowly paid job of data capturing. He had to work a lot of overtime to earn enough. I interviewed him on a Saturday, and he told me that the following day (Sunday) he had to be at work at 8h00.

It is very sad that some South Africans are so xenophobic that they sacrifice the education of the youth of this country. Indeed, teaching is among the scarce skills that the Government of this country needs to sustain its economy (DoL, 2007), yet those with these skills are excluded because they are ‘black’. If Mr. R missed the teaching job, I believe that many ‘black’ South Africans are jobless because of racial prejudice; some ‘black’ foreigners are discriminated against in ways a black South African is not.

It follows from the above that racism is one of the reasons why African skilled migrants hold such menial jobs in Cape Town. I have shown various reasons for this. Will these migrants stay in menial jobs permanently? I discuss this question in the next section.

4.3. The Future of African Skilled Migrants doing Menial Jobs

Whether African skilled migrants in menial jobs in Cape Town would find better opportunities for work is the question that I would like to discuss in this section. This question deserves special attention because it is linked to the debate about the contribution of migration to development and the value of education as a means of accessing better employment conditions and higher earnings (DFID, 2007; Crush, Williams & Peberdy 2005; Checchi, 2006; Moleke, 2005).

My understanding of the stories of the participants involved in this study suggests that African skilled migrants eventually do find better job opportunities. That four respondents succeeded in moving out of menial jobs confirms this is possible as they were employed in ‘professional’ jobs at the time of the interview. Mr. M started as a car guard; he depended on tips, he estimated that he got R 90 a good day. Mr. M became a portfolio administrator in an asset management company. His salary in this position was about R 9,000 a month. Mr. S occasionally distributed pamphlets and was earning R 20 per hour. He became a work-study officer in a clothing company and was paid R 7,000 per month. Mr. Y initially worked as a waiter. His remuneration consisted solely of tips. He could get up to R 200 per day in summer and less than R 30 in winter. Mr. Y was later employed as an assistant administrator in an English teaching school where he was paid R 7,200 a month. Mr. O was doing advertising for a woman’s salon. His remuneration was commission based. It seldom rose above R 1,700 a month. He succeeded in securing a position as a sales agent in a magazine publishing company. His remuneration was about R 5,500 per month.

While they initially felt depressed and ashamed because they had to take menial jobs, those respondents who succeeded in securing ‘professional’ jobs expressed greater satisfaction with their improved circumstances. Mr. O’s comment is representative of the respondents.

‘The job is really helping me to reach my goals money wise. Through my work experience I have been exposed to so many discoveries, I have got so much experience compared to when I just held my diploma. There is so much that I have learnt’.

One wonders how these migrants succeeded in making such a significant upward move. There seemed to be no established method that guaranteed access to ‘professional’ jobs. The four successful migrants described above simply continued to apply for ‘professional’ jobs while they were in menial jobs. Mr. M got the portfolio administrator

job after he completed a masters' degree in Accounting, but he did not see this as a guarantee of securing professional employment. Migrants who continued in menial jobs seemed to agree that there was no proven way of finding professional jobs. They reported that they were continuously seeking out better opportunities by various means. In addition to saving money to study or open a business, some migrants consciously understated their qualifications in order to get middle-level jobs that required a lower qualification than that they had. They did so to avoid being rejected, as they were overqualified. Using this strategy, Mr. R succeeded in moving from working as a casual general labourer to becoming a full-time clerk, *'when I applied I just took off some of my qualifications, and then I got the job'*.

The latter position offered him job stability and higher earnings. As a general labourer he earned about R 70 daily if he was lucky enough to be hired. He earned about R 3,500 per month as a clerk.

The experiences of these four respondents have implications for the value of education and the contribution of migration to development, that education is indeed a means of accessing better working conditions and higher earnings (Checchi, 2006; Moleke, 2005). Mr. Y underlined the value of acquiring tertiary education.

'I just believe that when you get educated, you do not lose your education because it will uplift you one day. It may take a long time but one day it will uplift you'.

Migration can be of great benefit to both sending and the receiving countries. A recent study highlighted the fact that in 2003 South Africa required 9,000 professional immigrants across various disciplines if it was to sustain economic growth. It only attracted 5% of what it needed, that is, 500 professional immigrants (Stern & Szolantai, 2006:139). The fact that 27.8% of South African graduates intend to leave the country permanently means that the country's skills shortage is likely to increase (Moleke, 2005:32). The

improved positions of Mr. M, Mr. Y, Mr. O, and Mr. S could be an indication that immigration is helping South Africa to alleviate its skills shortage.

Besides filling skills gaps in South Africa, skilled migrants employed in 'professional' jobs gain experience. This was well illustrated by Mr. O's comment. The expertise gained by migrants abroad could benefit economies of Congo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe if their governments attracted skilled nationals abroad (Rodrik, 2004).

Other participants also suggested that African skilled migrants do find better job opportunities. They reported that they knew other African migrants who had secured 'professional' jobs because they were able to communicate in a foreign language such as French.

'I know someone; he is working in one company which is having some subsidiaries in French speaking countries. It is an administrative position. He is working with the head offices in France and some African countries' (Mr. M).

'I have got a friend...he is from Zimbabwe; it was an advantage when he went for an interview because he could speak French. It was in the hotel industry, so it was an advantage for that hotel since they had some clients that speak French. They just said that he possessed advantages over other people' (Mr. S).

Mr. S's comment suggests that employers cannot automatically disqualify foreigners when the latter possess necessary skills that locals do not have. The contribution of tourism to South Africa's GDP is about 8%; it is expected to rise to 12% by 2014¹⁸. The Western Province contains 9 out of the top 15 tourist attractions in the country. Tourism's contribution to the Western Province economy is already estimated at between 9% and 13%¹⁹. Given that the tourist industry requires scarce skills such as the knowledge of foreign

¹⁸ <http://www.southafrica.info/travel/tourism-140507.htm> accessed 22nd August 2008

¹⁹ http://www.pptpilot.org.za/tourism_in_the_WesternCape.pdf accessed 13th August 2008.

languages; one can argue that the 2014 target is unlikely to be achieved without the contribution of migrants.

The various sections of this chapter have clearly explained and discussed the reasons for the African skilled migrants holding in menial jobs in Cape Town. They have shown how these reasons relate to the skills shortage in South Africa, the importance of acquiring (higher) 'education', and the link between migration and development. The next chapter summarises the findings and points out some policy implications.

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Chapter 5: Conclusion

Why do African skilled migrants in Cape Town hold menial jobs? This question is not absolutely new in the migration literature on South Africa and/or elsewhere. However, until recently the existing literature had not yet examined this question thoroughly. The literature has provided only broad, and sketchy answers. A number of explanations offered include xenophobia (Warner & Finschilescu, 2003; Bersntein, 2003, MacGaffey & Ganga, 2003:43; Portes & Zhou, 1996; Sanders & Nee, 1996:232); lack of adequate English skills (Carliner, 2000; Bloch, 2005); and inadequate cultural capital (Bourgois, 1995). I have argued that for two major reasons the above explanations cannot simply be extended to the South African context.

The first reason relates to the existing skills shortage in South Africa. According to recent literature, the country suffers a shortage of skills that acts as a barrier to targeted economic growth (Dol, 2007; Daniels, 2007; Landau 2007; Stern & Szolantai, 2006). Generally, migrants represent cheap labour that businesses prefer to employ to lower production costs (Cohen, 2006; Nyamnjoh, 2006; Evans, 1986). Many migrants in South Africa are described as 'highly' qualified, extraordinarily well-educated and valuable human capital (Mattes, Crush & Richmond, 2000:3; UNHCR as cited in Steinberg, 2005:1). Given the skills shortage and the fact that many African skilled migrants are well educated, I have argued that the position of African skilled migrants in menial jobs cannot simply be put down to xenophobia, inadequate English skills and/or lack of cultural capital.

The second reason for questioning the extension of generally accepted explanations about employment of migrants in South Africa is that these explanations tend to universalise xenophobia. A recent study by Sichone (2006) suggests that the fear and/or dislike of foreigners (xenophobia) co-exists with the love and support for foreigners (xenophilia). In other words, xenophobia and xenophilia shape the interactions between

South Africans and foreigners. So, xenophobia does not work as a discrete causal factor to keep migrants out of the skilled work in South Africa.

In addition to exploring the apparent contradictory explanations of xenophobia in South Africa, my motivation for undertaking research on this topic was to assess the theorised link between migration and development and the value of education. Some experts portray migration as a response to the problems of poverty, unemployment, and of a skills gap. They seemingly equate migration with development. They argue that remittances sent by migrants contribute to alleviating poverty in the sending countries. Through migration, unemployed people find jobs. Migration also helps to fill skill gaps in receiving countries and may speed up innovation in the sending countries if their governments are able to attract those nationals who have acquired work experience while abroad (Crush, Williams & Peberdy, 2005; UN, 2006; Black, 2004; DFID, 2007).

Labour experts and human capital theorists argue that education constitutes an efficient means for accessing better employment opportunities and enjoying a higher income (Checchi, 2006; Moleke, 2005; Hartog & Brink, 2007). Ascertaining the extent to which education has helped the migrants to move upward in socio-economic terms is crucial in exploring the merits of education.

Drawing on a critical analysis of the existing literature and my central research question, I formulated my objectives as follows: to identify the barriers that African skilled migrants experience when trying to get jobs that match their level of education; to generate knowledge about the skills shortage in South Africa; to assess the value of education as a means for accessing better working conditions and higher incomes; and to explore the relationship between migration and development. To achieve these objectives I used a purposive sampling method and techniques of qualitative data analysis as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994).

Notwithstanding the difficulty that Africans have in obtaining visas for their traditional destinations such as Europe and America (MacGaffey, 2000; Sichone, 2002), why and how did the respondents decide to come to South Africa? To answer this question I investigated how the respondents came to know about South Africa and what they knew about South Africa. These questions were particularly important because what motivates people's decisions is what they know about a matter (Sen, 1994:385).

Unexpectedly, I found that the educated migrants did not use formal sources such as embassies and/or Foreign Affairs Departments to solicit information about the opportunities in South Africa. They relied on information circulating in the streets and/or social networks. The information they received from such sources stimulated their desire to come to South Africa; it portrayed South Africa as a country providing a lot of jobs. They expected to find employment and improve their living conditions and economic prospects soon after they landed in South Africa. The social networks referred to above were nationals who visited or lived in South Africa or were human traffic businessmen ('tindikeurs'). Visitors associated the sophisticated infrastructures of South African cities with an abundance of jobs. Friends, who were leading harsh lives in South Africa were reluctant to tell the truth of their situation. They wished to avoid being mocked by fellows in their home countries and to comply with a presumably *enforceable social psychology* prevailing in their home communities. This psychology predefines 'migrants' as successful people. It entails an implicit division of roles that treats migrants as resource providers to the family that is regarded as a legitimate beneficiary. It seems to carry power of obligation, as migrants have to demonstrate that they have met the standards that their communities expected of them of leading a good life, and sending money back home. In order to show that they have met the standards some migrants exaggerate their living conditions to fellows at home. This encourages further migration by people seeking such niches.

Tindikeurs or human traffickers are Congolese who make money by helping people to come to South Africa irrespective of whether they possess the necessary legal documentations or not. They invent all sorts of good stories about the life of migrants in South Africa in order to attract customers. Their marketing goes beyond that. They use business cards with multiple addresses and contact numbers to guarantee their customers that once in South Africa they would provide them with accommodation until they find their feet.

Because they expect to get employment soon after they arrive in South Africa, these naïve migrants do not bother to have a budget that can cover their expenses for a very long period. They turn to menial jobs as a survival strategy very quickly before they run out of money.

The migrants associate exclusively with other migrants who have limited knowledge and/or experience of the labour market in South Africa. They live together with their fellow countrymen and rely on them to find employment. They regard them as role models and uncritically follow their guidance. As their fellow migrants commonly have taken on menial jobs, because they had failed to secure professional employment, they guide newcomers to the same menial jobs.

Some Congolese migrants who were unable to communicate in English deliberately chose not to apply for any professional jobs. They perceived their lack of English skills as a handicap in the workplace. They preferred to learn English before answering professional job adverts.

Unlike professional jobs, menial jobs have low or no entry requirements. Attending to parking lots, casual construction work, and security guarding are some examples of this. The first two do not necessarily require the knowledge of English. It takes physical strength to be a car guard or a shovel boy. Although specific training is required to become a security guard, some security companies are prepared to employ foreigners who

have not done the training course. This could be due to the reputation of male South African security guards who abscond after being paid (Sichone, 2006). Security companies struggle to satisfy their customers and are forced to hire foreigners who seem to be more disciplined when this happens. The Security Officers' Board (SOB) has declined to register training certificates of foreigners who are not permanent residents (Bernstein, 2003) which discourages such migrants from investing in training. This has resulted in a situation where security companies and migrants negotiate to meet each others' needs albeit outside the margin of the law. While its original mandate is to strengthen the state of security in the country, the SOB has promoted an environment that contributes to human exploitation and lack of safety.

African skilled migrants doing menial jobs do not intend to make a career of such jobs; instead, they exploit them as a temporary measure. They use the income to finance their long-term goals. The menial jobs help them to meet the short-term goal of sending money back home.

The second category of reasons consisted of 'immediate reasons'. These related to the real barriers that respondents experienced in their interactions with employers in the professional job market. It seemed to me reasonable to examine these interactions before confirming or refuting the widely held belief that xenophobia is behind the discrimination against skilled migrants. The immediate reasons were limited knowledge of Xhosa and Afrikaans languages, xenophobia, racism, and the temporary nature of the asylum seeker permit identity document.

The findings suggest that some skilled migrants did not answer job adverts that listed the knowledge of Afrikaans and/or Xhosa as a requirement; they seemed to believe in a linguistic division of labour, they saw such jobs as reserved for locals. Their claims suggested that they perceived it as impossible to learn such languages. Such a perception is

contradicted by the findings of this study. If some Congolese can learn English, there is no valid reason why Zimbabweans or Zambians could not learn Afrikaans.

The impact of lack of knowledge of English and Afrikaans held back in other ways. A respondent with a degree in Agricultural Science was denied a farm manager position because he could not communicate in the languages (Xhosa, Afrikaans) that the workers understood. An employer denied a respondent's friend a project manager job because he could not speak 'proper' Xhosa.

Respondents reported that they felt excluded by xenophobic job adverts that limited eligibility to locals. Others felt discriminated against across citizenship lines when they met with employers. I have justified this feeling by drawing on the bio-cultural theory of xenophobia. According to this theory South Africans may not identify foreigners until they become aware of certain differences in appearance or behaviour (e.g. dressing styles, English accent) (Harris, 2002; Sichone, 2002).

This research has also demonstrated that some employers are not prepared to hire foreign workers irrespective of the expertise that they may possess. A respondent's friend with a degree in Accounting was denied a job as an accountant because he was not a local. The employer told him that he hired South African citizens only.

After more than a decade of democracy race still determines access to economic opportunities in South Africa. A coloured school principal failed to appoint an experienced Zimbabwean teacher because he considered that as a 'black' person he was not the ideal person to teach 'coloured' children.

My findings show that although issued by the Department of Home Affairs and granting right to take up employment, the section-22 asylum seeker permit identity document further threatens the employability of skilled migrants. Employers willing to employ them

for their skills are discouraged when they realise that applicants hold this permit because it is valid for a short period (three months).

On the subject of the skills shortage in South Africa, the second objective of this study, the findings suggest that the Government and some key role players in the economy have not taken the matter seriously enough. As highlighted above, the Department of Home Affairs is an example of the failure of the Government to address the skills shortage efficiently. The findings suggest that this Department has deliberately prolonged the process of determining the status of asylum seeking applicants. Migrants with 'scarce skills' who have applied for asylum struggle to find jobs because their status in the country is uncertain. An asylum seeker, should not, by law, wait more than six months. But the Department of Home Affairs violates the law by prolonging this period arbitrarily at the expense of the migrants and the South African economy. Meanwhile, the Department issues the section-22 temporary asylum seeker permit identity document to applicants. In some cases this permit has been extended for years. The permit is not trusted by some businesses that are willing to employ skilled foreign nationals because of its temporary nature and apparent lack of credibility. The permit is printed on a large quite soft A4 paper often with computer and handwritten conditions of issuance. It takes some patience to read all the conditions (Landau, 2007).

Despite a shortage of accountants and teachers needed to sustain economic growth in South Africa, some employers still disqualify skilled applicants because they are not South African citizens. Others disqualify them because they belong to the 'black' racial group or cannot speak a South African language (Xhosa, Afrikaans). Such realities throw into doubt the extent to which the Government and businesses are informed about and willing to tackle the skills shortage in this country. School principals should learn that there is no benefit in excluding one 'black' foreigner teacher because this could mean

compromising the future of twenty South African children. Discrimination has never promoted development even if it is done in the name of 'nationalism' (Landau, 2007).

On the topic of education as a means of accessing better employment conditions and higher incomes, the findings suggest that the value of education is not forgone even though skilled migrants do menial jobs. Difficult life conditions can force 'educated' people to accept demeaning jobs that do not utilise their intellectual capacity and are not financially rewarded. However, in the long-term 'educated' people do benefit from the investment they make in acquiring knowledge. They stand a greater chance of finding professional jobs; enjoy good working conditions and salaries compared to people with little or no education. There seemed to be no established exit point from menial jobs. Skilled migrants exploit various strategies to upgrade their standards of living. These strategies include saving money to further their studies or open a business while continuing to apply for professional jobs. In addition, their scarce skills such as the knowledge of a foreign language (e.g. French) seem to facilitate access to professional employment in the hotel industry.

Regarding the link between migration and development, the findings suggest that the correlation is not automatic, as some believe. Mainstream studies have stressed that migration contributes to development mostly through remittances. Remittances do help to alleviate poverty in the countries to which migrants send them (DFID, 2007; UN, 2006; Crush, Williams & Peberdy, 2005). The findings of this study also suggest that particular attention needs to be paid to the quality of jobs that migrants do which constitutes the source of the remittances. It makes only a little sense to magnify migration when migrants are condemned to work in conditions that asphyxiate their intellectual capacity. Sustainable 'development' entails efficient utilisation of all resources, not simply of petrol, electricity, and water. Human beings are the most important resource that the earth has been blessed

with; yet, the discourse around an efficient global utilisation of this resource has been replaced by the hegemonic rhetoric of trade.

This research has made some contributions to the study of migration. The first contribution relates to the interplay between the decision to emigrate and the quality of information that migrants possess. This study shows that the limited sources that 'educated' migrants rely on to find out about opportunities in their country of destination explain why they end up in menial jobs.

The second contribution points out an established '*social psychology of compliance*' in some migrants' home countries which defines migrants as successful and as providers.

The third contribution refers to the migration literature on South Africa. The findings challenge the narrow and implicit finding of some earlier studies (Warner & Finschilescu, 2003; Bernstein, 2003; Crush, 2008), and the commonly held belief that xenophobia is 'omnipresent' in South Africa. Migrants are not as innocent victims as some have described them. This research shows that the position of skilled migrants in menial jobs is to some extent attributable to themselves. One example of this lies in a migrant's failure to extend his social network beyond the migrant community.

This study can be of great help to policy makers seeking to alleviate discrimination against migrants, though the qualitative methodology used does not allow for generalisation. The study has given a 'thick' understanding of the reasons for the position of skilled migrants in menial jobs in Cape Town. Quantitative researchers can draw on these findings to design larger surveys to test or weight the findings.

The constraint of time in particular has not allowed me to include the views of employers. This should form an area of further research for those interested in migration studies. Including the views of employers would surely provide a balanced judgement about

the position of African skilled migrants. It would be interesting to know, for example, whether and how Affirmative Action, Black Economic Empowerment and Employment Equity policies affect the ability of employers to hire foreign labour.

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Regarding the first objective, my findings suggest that the reasons for African skilled migrants holding menial jobs in Cape Town are many and interrelated. None of them on its own can provide a satisfactory answer to the anomalous position of migrants with a tertiary education performing menial jobs. Furthermore, the findings suggest that this situation cannot fully be understood without some information as to why the migrants left their home countries and how they came to South Africa. I have grouped the reasons for the dismal position of these migrants into two categories.

The first category I have referred to as antecedent reasons. The antecedent reasons drove the migrants to leave their home countries, raised expectation of finding 'professional jobs' in South Africa, yet undermined the migrants' initiatives in applying for 'professional' jobs, and/or forced the migrants to take up menial jobs. Antecedent reasons were deprivation in home countries; reliance on superficial information and/or emotions which raised the expectation of finding 'professional' jobs soon after arriving in South Africa; the imperative of survival once they were in South Africa; reliance on limited social capital to find jobs; limited English skills; low entry requirements characterising menial jobs; and the fact that the migrants saw menial jobs as temporary measure and exploited this facet of such jobs.

Most of the participants in this study mentioned unemployment as one of the reasons why they left their home countries. Some Congolese and Zimbabweans argued that they failed to secure employment in their home countries although they were highly skilled. Respondents who were employed in their home countries reported that the salaries they earned were too low to allow them to live decently, and/or meet their goals. Other participants reported that political instability and lack of freedom in their home countries motivated them to emigrate.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: List of participants in the in-depth face-to-face interview schedule by age, nationality, qualification, and dates of interview

N°	Respondents	Age (years)	Nationality	Qualification	Date of interview
1	Mr. M	34	Congolese (DRC)	Accountant	13 th April 2008
2	Mr. G	27	Congolese (DRC)	Electronic and mechanical engineer	2 nd May 2008
3	Mr. D	30	Congo (DRC)	Electronic engineer	10 th May 2008
4	Mr. N	32	Congolese (DRC)	Theologian	20 th April 2008
5	Mr. V	38	Congolese (DRC)	Lawyer	23 rd April 2008
6	Mr. Y	25	Zimbabwean	Teacher	17 th May 2008
7	Mr. R	29	Zimbabwean	Economist	18 th May 2008
8	Mr. S	27	Zimbabwean	Economist	8 th May 2009
9	Mr. O	24	Zambian	Marketer	11 th May 2008
10	Mr. T	27	Zambian	Grade 12	20 th May 2008
11	Mr. J	28	Burundian	Agriculturalist	25 th May 2008
12	Mr. L	26	Cameroon	Industrial engineer	10 th May 2008

Appendix 2: List of participants in the focus group interview per age and qualification

N°	Respondents	Age (years)	Nationality	Qualification	Date
1	Mr. G	27	Congolese (DRC)	Electronic and mechanical engineer	25 th February 2008
2	Mr. D	30		Electronic engineer	
3	Mr. M	34		Accountant	
4	Mr. V	38		Lawyer	
5	Mr. U	27		Teacher	
6	Mr. N	32		Theologian	

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Appendix 3: In-depth face-to-face interview schedule

- 1) When did you leave your country?
- 2) What were the reasons for you leaving your country?
- 3) When did you arrive in South Africa (Month, Year)?
- 4) What other countries did you live in before that?
- 5) What information did you have about South Africa prior leaving your country?
- 6) Where did you get it from?
- 7) How did that information influence your decision to come to South Africa?
- 8) What were your work expectations?
- 9) What opportunities (employment, self-employment, studies) did you first know about when you arrived in South Africa?
- 10) How did you know about them?
- 11) How did that information affect your life in South Africa?
- 12) What was your main objective when coming to South Africa?
- 13) Considering your main objective, how is life in South Africa helping you to reach your goals?
 - a) A lot
 - b) Little
 - c) Very Little
 - d) Not at all

Why?

- 14) Have you taken any actions to meet your main objective in South Africa? Yes/No

If Yes, ask the following

- What actions have you taken?
- Where your actions successful? Yes/No, Why?

If No, Why?

- 15) Do you think that you can still meet your main objective in South Africa? Yes/No

If Yes, ask

Why?

How do you plan to meet your main objective?

If No, ask Why?

16) What are your qualifications?

17) Where did you get them (Institutions, country)?

18) When did you get them?

19) Do you have any work experience? No/Yes

If No, go to next question

If Yes, ask can you tell me more about it (institutions, length period, your positions)

26) What jobs have you done since you arrived in South Africa (Where, when?)

27) When did you get it your first (second, third, fourth, etc...) job (Month, Year)?

28) How did you get it (How did you know about it)?

29) Did you like it? Yes/No

Why?

30) Did you sign a contract for your first, second, third...fourth job? Yes/No

If Yes, go to next question.

If No, ask Why?

31) What was your average wage/salary?

32) How did you get paid (daily, weekly, monthly, tips, commissions)?

33) How many days did you work per week?

34) How many hours did you work a day?

35) What were the requirements for you to get the job?

36) What is your current job?

37) When did you get it (Month, Year)?

38) How did you get it?

39) What were the requirements for you to get the job?

40) Did you sign a contract for your current job? Yes/No

If Yes, go to next question.

If No, ask Why?

41) What is your average wage/salary?

42) How do you get paid? (daily, weekly, monthly, tips, commissions)?

43) How many days do you work per week?

44) How many hours do you work a day?

45) Do you like it? Yes/No

If Yes, ask why

If No, ask

- What would you rather be doing? Why?
- Why are you not doing it? What could be examples of that?
- Have you ever applied for/initiate (employment, self-employment) it? No/Yes

If No, ask Why?

If yes, ask what was the outcome of your application/initiation? Why?

Probing questions

1. Have you at anytime been denied a job because you:

a) Were a foreigner? Yes/No,

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

b) Did not have a qualification from a S.A. university? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

c) Could not communicate properly in English? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?

- If No go to next question

d) Did not have a S.A. identity document? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

e) Could not speak Afrikaans, Xhosa or a South African language? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

f) Other reasons (No work experience, Please specify) Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

2) Do you know anybody who has been denied a job because he/she:

g) Was a foreigner? Yes/No,

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

h) Did not have a qualification from a S.A. university? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

i) Could not communicate properly in English? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

j) Did not have a S.A. identity document? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?
- If No go to next question

k) Could not speak Afrikaans, Xhosa, or a S.A. language? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?

- If No go to next question

1) Other reasons (No work experience, Please specify)

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?

- If No go to next question

3) Do you know anybody who has been hired because he/she:

a) Was a foreigner? Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?

- If No go to next question

b) Could Speak a foreigner language (French, Portuguese?) Yes/No

- If Yes, what was the job? How did that happened?

- If No go to next question

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Appendix 4: Social, economic and demographic information of respondents

1. When were you born?
2. Where were you born?
3. What is your current citizenship?
4. What type of identity document do you hold?
 - a) Passport (please state nationality)
 - b) Refugee status
 - c) Asylum seeker temporary permit
 - d) Tourist Visa
 - e) Other (Please specify).
5. Please specify your marital status
 - a) Single
 - b) Married
 - c) Divorced
 - d) Widow (Widower)If married,
 - What is the nationality of your partner?
 - Do you live together with your partner?
 - 1) Do you have children? Yes/NoIf Yes,
 - How many?
6. What are your main sources of income?
7. Please specify a range reflecting your monthly income in the current job?
 - a) Income < R 1,000
 - b) R 1,000 < Income < R 2,000

- c) $R\ 2,000 < \text{Income} < R\ 3,000$
- d) $R\ 3,000 < \text{Income} < R\ 4,000$
- e) $R\ 4,000 < \text{Income} < R\ 5,000$
- f) $R\ 5,000 < \text{Income} < R\ 6,000$
- g) $R\ 6,000 < \text{Income} < R\ 7,000$
- h) $R\ 7,000 < \text{Income} < R\ 8,000$
- i) $R\ 8,000 < \text{Income} < R\ 9,000$
- j) $R\ 9,000 < \text{Income} < R\ 10,000$
- k) $\text{Income} > 10,000$.

8. Approximately what is your monthly expenditures on:

a) Food?

- $X < R\ 300$
- $R\ 300 < X < R\ 500$
- $R\ 500 < X < R\ 750$
- $R\ 750 < X < R\ 1\ 000$
- $R\ 1\ 000 < X < R\ 1\ 500$
- $R\ 1\ 500 < X < R\ 2\ 000$
- $X > R\ 2\ 000$

b) Rent?

- $X < R\ 300$
- $R\ 300 < X < R\ 500$
- $R\ 500 < X < R\ 750$
- $R\ 750 < X < R\ 1\ 000$
- $R\ 1\ 000 < X < R\ 1\ 500$
- $R\ 1\ 500 < X < R\ 2\ 000$
- $X > R\ 2\ 000$

c) Transport?

d) Savings

- $X < R\ 300$
- $R\ 300 < X < R\ 500$
- $R\ 500 < X < R\ 750$
- $R\ 750 < X < R\ 1\ 000$
- $R\ 1\ 000 < X < R\ 1\ 500$

- R 1 500<X< R 2 000
- X> R 2 000

e) Entertainment?

f) Remittances?

- X < R 300
- R 300< X < R 500
- R 500< X < R 750
- R 750 < X< R 1 000
- R 1 000<X< R 1 500
- R 1 500<X< R 2 000
- X> R 2 000

g. School fees?

h. Others (please specify)

9. Where do you live?

10. Accommodation type?

- a) Rent a house
- b) Rent a room
- c) Share (room, flat)?
- d) Own a house
- e) Others (Please specify)

11. In which countries do the rest your family live.

12. Do you send clothes, gifts to your home country? Yes/No

If Yes,

13. How often?

- a) Once a month
- b) Once every 2-3 months
- c) Once every 3-4 months
- d) Twice a year
- e) Once a year.

14. Do you receive money, food, or clothes from relatives? Yes/No

- a) In your home country?
- b) In other countries?

If Yes,

How often?

- a) Once a month
- b) Once every 2-3 months
- c) Once every 3-4 months
- d) Twice a year
- e) Once a year.

Approximately how much money do you receive?

- $X < R\ 300$
- $R\ 300 < X < R\ 500$
- $R\ 500 < X < R\ 750$
- $R\ 750 < X < R\ 1\ 000$
- $R\ 1\ 000 < X < R\ 1\ 500$
- $R\ 1\ 500 < X < R\ 2\ 000$
- $X > R\ 2\ 000$

15. Do you make more money in South Africa compared to your home country? Yes/No

16. Do you feel that that you have upgraded/learnt skills, knowledge, or work experience while in South Africa? Yes/No

If Yes, could you tell me more about it?

If No, go to next question?

17. Do you feel that you have lost skills, knowledge, or work experience while in S.A? Yes/No

If Yes, ask could you tell me more about it?

If No, go to next question.

18. Do you like it to stay permanently in S.A., go back home or would you prefer to go abroad?

Why?

Appendix 5: Focus group interview questions

1. Why do people migrate to South Africa?
2. What are the major difficulties facing migrants in South Africa?
3. Why do African migrants with a tertiary education do menial jobs in Cape Town?
4. How do African migrants with a tertiary education respond to the barriers they experience in the professional job market?

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