Identifying the socio-economic impacts of the 2019-2020 refugee occupation and COVID-19 related restrictions on immigrant-owned businesses in the urban informal sector of Greenmarket Square, Cape Town

By

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DECLARATION

I, Michaela Madurai, hereby declare that all of the work presented in this Master's thesis is my own work. Each important contribution to, as well as quotation in, this thesis collected from the research or work of others has been attributed, cited and referenced. This thesis has not previously been submitted in whole or in part for the award of any degree. I permit the University of Cape Town to reproduce for research either the whole or any part of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

Signature Signed by candidate Date 13 May 2022

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBD – Central Business District

COVID-19 – Coronavirus

GMS - Greenmarket Square

SAPS - South African Police Services

SASSA – South African Social Security Agency

UNHCR - United Nations High Commission for Refugees

ABSTRACT

The socio-economic impacts of the 2019-2020 Greenmarket Square refugee occupation and the COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions are the central focus of this study. More specifically, the impacts of both - the occupation and the pandemic related restrictions - on African immigrant-owned businesses in the informal craft market of Greenmarket Square (GMS). This research explored this impact using a qualitative approach. Participants were selected using a non-probability purposive sampling approach to include both men and women immigrants from Africa who traded in the GMS craft market from a stall. Interviews were conducted both face-to-face and via telephone and supplemented by direct non-participant observation. The main findings included that the refugee occupation and associated noise, smells and crime repelled the primary customers – tourists. Discrimination between the immigrant stall owners and refugees and vice versa was also rife at this time. A few months later, COVID-19 arrived in South Africa and the related travel restrictions, lockdowns and trading limitations negatively impacted the potential for economic recovery of the entrepreneurs. Participants of this research shared insight about their economic hardships, which they faced with minimal external support. Participants needed to initiate survival tactics to generate any income. The knock-on impact included the suspension of remittances for families in their countries of origin. Although these businesses have started operating again, there are still challenges. These informal craft businesses will take a long time to get back to previous levels of income generation; however, stall-owners remain optimistic. Understanding how the African immigrant stall-owners navigated these challenges provides insight into immigrant livelihoods and survival strategies, as well as indicating their determination and capacity to strive against the odds.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Positioned in the heart of the Central Business District (CBD) of Cape Town, South Africa, the site of Greenmarket Square (GMS), originally known as 'Burgher Watch Square,' was founded during the 18th century at the time of the Dutch occupation in the Cape. It functioned as the first market square and acted as the hub for trade commodities and supplies, including slaves. The square was later transformed, post- slavery, into a fresh fruits and vegetable market. To mark its transformation, it was renamed 'Greenmarket Square'. No notable changes occurred until the 1960s when the model of the market was altered to that of the flea market, which in more recent years has come to be dominated by African arts and crafts (Chilwan, 2009; Wankah, 2009). A space that once subjugated the African people and culture has become a site that celebrates the rich diversity of the African continent (Wankah, 2009). Although the business carried out in GMS does not centre around being 'green,' the name GMS has stuck and remains today (Oakes, 2014).

The contemporary business model of the craft market centres around sharing parts of Africa through vending the craft products to international tourists. Stall owners are heavily dependent on the tourists that flood the market to generate an income (Chilwan, 2009). GMS was rated as one of the top ten tourist destinations in Cape Town in the years before 2019 (Mugobi, 2019). National diversity characterises the stall owners who originate from South Africa, various parts of the African continent, and throughout the world (Chilwan, 2009; Dyers & Wankah, 2010).

The GMS craft market falls within the brackets of the informal sector, which is a multidimensional sector that constitutes an assortment of industries, trades, and businesses. It is not solely limited to rural areas (Bernstein, 2020; Chikamhi, 2011). The informal sector plays a critical role by absorbing marginalised workers that have not been welcomed into formal sector employment for differing reasons (Khambule, 2020). Within the informal sector, African immigrant entrepreneurs are said to dominate and outshine, more so in the context of GMS, whereby immigrant entrepreneurs own and staff their informal craft stalls (Bernstein, 2020; Chikhami, 2011).

African immigrant-owned businesses in the GMS craft market have experienced substantial economic progress and have played a positive socio-economic role in South Africa. They have been able to attract many tourists, encourage economic activity, and aid in reducing the

unemployment rate that affects both South Africans and immigrants. However, the relative prosperity of stall owners was impacted by a turn of events beginning in 2019. The first event, known as the refugee occupation, commenced in October 2019. A large group of heterogenous refugees were offered sanctuary by the Central Methodist Mission Church adjacent to GMS as they fled a brutal police eviction from their occupation of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) offices in St Georges mall, Cape Town. The church and surrounding areas were occupied by refugees which heavily impacted the flow of business in the craft market (Brunsdon & Magezi, 2020; Dryding, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic (2020 to current) followed and severe lockdowns, travel restrictions and trading restrictions prevented stall owners from trading for a long time. Low tourist numbers impeded recovery (Broadbent, Combrink & Smart, 2020; Zanker & Moyo, 2020). Details surrounding these events will be further explained in the literature review. This research has attempted to understand how the refugee occupation and COVID-19 related restrictions affected immigrant-owned businesses in the urban informal sector of GMS on a social and economic basis.

Physical Context

The beautiful cobble-stoned location of GMS is home to one of the oldest craft markets in Cape Town. As previously mentioned, the GMS craft market can be found in the heart of the CBD, precisely at the junction of Shortmarket and Longmarket street (Chilwan, 2009). According to Mugobi (2019), GMS continuously hosted over 197 craft stalls; thus, the floor of the square was packed with stalls that congregated close to each other, contributing to its splendour (Mugobi, 2019). Each stall is abidingly decorated with exquisitely bright and eye-catching handcrafted goods and is covered overhead with a sturdy cloth gazebo to offer protection from differing weather conditions. The square is encircled by buildings that display European architecture from the colonial era, such as the well-known Old Town House (Burgher Watch House) and the Central Methodist Mission Church. While the neighbouring buildings have been converted into retail stores, restaurants, and cafes for tourists to revel in. GMS is well known for its lively and eccentric nature, crowded with tourists from far and wide and stall owners deriving from different African countries, adding to the rich multiplicity felt in the square. One could spend hours walking in the open-air market enjoying the handcrafted work found within each stall. As well as would also be gifted with the sounds and melodies of African drums, street buskers, and choirs who share the stories of Africa through song (Chilwan, 2009). GMS is a pleasure for both the eyes and ears.

Significance of the Research

In 2019, I had the opportunity to conduct my Honours research in GMS, specifically on immigrant entrepreneurs within the informal craft market, exploring the impact they have in the space (Madurai, 2019). The key findings of my research suggested that immigrant entrepreneurs within GMS play a vital role in job creation for both local South Africans as well as for other immigrants; they have willingly shared entrepreneurial skills that can enable further employment opportunities, and they have made a massive contribution to the growth of the local economy as these businesses have attracted a large and booming tourist clientele. My research findings have suggested that immigrant entrepreneurs were able to thrive in their businesses with success and autonomy, while they have also proven to be an asset to South Africa. These businesses had their ups and downs, but economic generation was never substantially hindered; immigrant entrepreneurs had always been able to earn ample to meet their daily needs. Approximately two months after I finished conducting my research, the refugee occupation and soon after, the COVID-19 pandemic related lockdown commenced, causing harm to these businesses and to the livelihoods of stall owners. I decided to continue conducting research in GMS in order to discover the potential changes and impacts had on these businesses as a result of the refugee occupation and COVID-19 related restrictions. A significant feature of this research has been to understand the stall owners experiences, and recognise how they navigated the tremendous changes that they were abruptly subjected to. The differences between the positive 2019 findings is complimented by the post-2019 research, which shows both the negative impact of the crises, as well as the kinds of strategies immigrant entrepreneurs deployed to survive. As such, this thesis compliments the earlier findings, and expands the literature on immigrant-owned informal businesses in GMS.

Research Question

Bearing all of the context in mind, the central research question that this thesis aims to address is: What are the socio-economic impacts of the 2019-2020 refugee occupation and the COVID-19 related restrictions on immigrant-owned businesses in the urban informal sector of Greenmarket Square, Cape Town?

Chapter Outline

This research paper has been broken down into eight chapters. Following chapter one's brief introduction concerning the history of GMS and this research paper, chapter two provides

insight from previous studies conducted surrounding pertinent topics covered in this research in order to offer context and understanding. Chapter three describes the methods utilised in the research process, from conceptualisation to data collection and analysis. Chapters four through to seven presents the words and views shared by participants which collectively creates the findings and discussion chapters. Chapter eight concludes with a reflection on the findings in order to sum up the answers to the central research question.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

An analysis will take place within this chapter on existing literature to provide more insight and background into the focal points of this research. This literature review will look upon research surrounding the lived experiences of African immigrants in South Africa, their reasoning for joining the craft industry linking to the informal sector and displays more insight into the turning points of the refugee occupation and the COVID-19 pandemic, events that caused major disruption for the craft businesses in GMS.

Xenophobia (discrimination)

Dyers and Wankah (2010, p. 6) have referred to the term xenophobia as the "irrational fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, or what is strange or foreign." This 'fear' towards migrants has been fostered by politicians who fail to uphold their human rights, by police who fail to protect them, and more increasingly, by South African citizens who have violent attitudes based on misconceptions (Crush & Ramachandran, 2014). Enwere (n.d., p. 88) explains: "the word xenophobia is derived from Greek words 'Xeno,' meaning stranger or foreigner, and 'phobia,' meaning fear."

Xenophobia is manifested in illogical narratives and myths. Migrants are accused of using social services and amenities fashioned for South Africans, and are wrongfully held liable for crime, and the spread of diseases, namely HIV/AIDS. The government infers migrants are responsible for governmental failures, using foreigners as scapegoats (Bolzoni, 2009; Dryding, 2020; Handmaker & Parsley, 2001; Mukumbang, Ambe & Adebiyi, 2020). Deemed a "societal evil" (Enwere, n.d., p. 93), xenophobia has barred migrants from fully integrating into South Africa as they are surrounded by intimidation in their daily lives (Enwere, n.d.). Xenophobia has constructed refugees and asylum seekers as "parasitical to the state" (Enwere, n.d., p. 89), thus highlighting how they have been dehumanised. Xenophobic acts within the informal sector includes looting shops, setting fires, and physical attacks on migrants. One refugee tells the story of leaving their home country due to the lack of safety caused by the civil war, only to arrive in South Africa to be the victims of xenophobic violence (Crush & Ramachandran, 2014).

Misago (2016), reported that interventions created by government and local authorities to curb xenophobic violence have been futile. As a result, xenophobic violence has been placed within the category of being a "'normal' crime with no need for additional targeted interventions" (p.

450). However, in 2019, the South African government enforced a 'National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial, Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance'. This plan seemed progressive but, has resulted in yet another governmental failure (Hadebe, 2021).

Sebola (2017), stated that racism can be found within xenophobia as xenophobic attitudes have been targeted towards individuals with a darker skin complexion "one is too dark to be a South African" (p.90). Consequently, many have faced mistreatment, arrests and even the social renouncement of their citizenship solely based on the colour of their skin.

Asylum seekers and refugees

Within the historical context of South Africa, the discriminatory system of the apartheid regime ruled daily life. Laws and legislation pertaining to refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants did not exist as South Africa was a migrant-producing country rather than a migrant-receiving country (Manicom & Mullagee, 2010). The apartheid regime formally ended in 1994, which brought about a democratic reform that promised change for South African citizens and welcomed foreign-born migrants in search of a haven. During the years that followed, South Africa had become a magnet for many migrants from around the African continent. Reasons include the fast-growing and advanced economy, and progressive human rights and laws for asylum-seekers and refugees (Gatticchi & Maseko, 2020; Manicom & Mullagee, 2010; Mukumbang et al., 2020). South Africa is said to be the country of choice for several, originating from the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This includes Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as from other parts of the continent such as Burundi, and Rwanda (Mukumbang et al., 2020 & Manicom & Mullagee, 2010). Mukumbang et al. (2020) draws from an article by Willie and Garba (2020) which estimates that approximately 4.2 million migrants have entered South Africa, making migrants a sizeable portion of the population.

The Refugees Act of 1998 (Act 130) is a progressive piece of legislation which states South Africa's promise to offer adequate protection to asylum seekers and refugees who have left their home countries for causes including war and the fear of persecution and unrest caused by race, ethnicity, religion as well as political standing (Manicom & Mullagee, 2010). Multiple rights are guaranteed (Masuku, 2020; Mukumbang et al., 2020), and South Africa has been lauded internationally for their approach. However, the implementation of this Act has been abysmal, and many have not been able to benefit from the protection or opportunities promised

(Crush, Skinner & Stulgaitis, 2017). The increase of asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa has placed an immense strain on the South African government who, has the duty and responsibility to sustain their constitutionally guaranteed human rights. At the same time, the government must also follow through on the continuous pledge of bettering the socio-economic lives of South African citizens, specifically those who were and still are marginalised due to the apartheid regime. Such challenges have resulted in many law changes favouring South African citizens to the detriment of migrants (Mukumbang et al., 2020). A multitude of South African politicians do not hide their anti-African immigrant opinions, and play the blame game in order to garner more support and votes from the local populace. They have fostered the construction of narratives that paint migrants as thieves that steal jobs (and women), and lay the blame for poor service delivery in poor communities at the door of African immigrants (Gatticchi & Maseko, 2020). At the same time, South Africans have adopted discriminatory narratives, believing that migrants are the source of crime and the outbreak of disease (Manicom & Mullagee, 2010). In 2016, the Refugees Amendment Act restricted the rights guaranteed in the original legislation. This had the effect of increasing exclusion and marginalisation; therefore, it is clear that anti-migrant opinions and attitudes are represented in official policy creation and practise within the South African society (Crush et al., 2017).

South Africa has been characterised as a xenophobic society that has blinded many to the positive contribution that refugees and asylum seekers have made to South Africa in the social, economic, and cultural spheres. Such disdain has caused widespread acts of hostile violence, and discrimination against the unprotected refugees and asylum seekers in the country (Crush et al., 2017). Xenophobic views against African immigrants have not only caused destruction to the lives of migrants but also to their businesses within the informal sector (Carciotto, 2020).

The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) holds responsibility for matters revolving around refugees and plays a vital role in processing asylum applications. Such applications give asylum seekers access to healthcare, education, and other essential social services they have the right to receive. The reputation of DHA is poor, narratives of corruption and incompetency abound. In addition, DHA consistently fails to provide guidelines outlining the asylum process or translators, closes offices, or makes them inaccessible. There are a limited number of staff members dealing with refugees and asylum seekers, and many staff have not been adequately trained, and often do not have the adequate knowledge of immigration laws. Resources such as computers, telephones, a working database and other fundamental infrastructure are often

lacking. Stories of asylum seekers having to wait in long queues for hours or even overnight to get admitted abound. Such factors have been significant contributors to the delay of asylum proceedings for many applicants (Enwere, n.d.; Manicom & Mullagee, 2010; Umezurike & Isike, 2013). Crush et al. (2017) have stated that only 10% of asylum seekers had been awarded their refugee status cumulatively by 2017, displaying the system's inefficiency.

Umezurike and Isike (2013) have conducted research with African immigrants to gain a deeper understanding of their thoughts and experiences pertaining to the Department of Home Affairs. Participants shared that they often experienced disrespect, humiliation, and intimidation from department officials. Based on an incident, a participant expressed that "the insults and assaults on African foreigners start from the gate" (Umezurike & Isike, 2013, p. 58) and further stated that African immigrants face aggression through physical abuse in moments where simple mistakes are made. Umezurike and Isike's (2013), participants were under the impression that service delivery issues experienced at the DHA were not caused due to operational inefficiency but due to prejudice against African immigrants alone. This was identified as racial discrimination on the one hand, as white immigrants are welcomed while African immigrants receive "blatant racial discrimination in a country with an apartheid past" (Umezurike & Isike, 2013, p. 59). On the other hand, xenophobia was another factor used to explain the anti-African immigrant sentiments held by DHA officials who promote the rejection of "blacks in the country when they were not indigenous South Africans" (Umezurike & Isike, 2013, p. 60).

Challenges are also experienced when attempting to renew or even gain documentation, hindering their attempt to seek employment which has almost become impossible, more so for undocumented migrants (Mukumbang et al., 2020).

The narrative that moving to South Africa would result in a more prosperous and economically sound life is prevalent amongst refugees and asylum seekers, but this has only occasioned increased pressure. Heneck (2021, p. 2) documents a migrant claiming this narrative "…is just a hustle." Despite this, refugees and asylum seekers have been integrated into the social and economic sectors of South Africa, this can be seen in rates of employment, and the number of refugee and asylum seeker children who are attending schools. However, this is not the case for a large proportion (Crush et al., 2017). Concerning employment, the South African government is said to have created and enacted strict by-laws, which have made it difficult for migrants to obtain adequate employment; South Africans also get the upper hand as employers

often choose them over migrants. While other factors that impede their access into the job market also consist of language barriers and increased levels of racism (Asoba & Mefi, 2020b; Mukumbang et al., 2020).

Migrants have turned to the informal sector or other informal modes of employment to generate an income for economic survival (Mukumbang et al., 2020). Such employment is immensely precarious and can be an unreliable method of income generation. When extra financial support is needed for their businesses, refugees and asylum seekers struggle to acquire a loan from the bank (Crush et al., 2017). Crush et al. (2017) state that 75%-80% of loan requests are declined. It is often forgotten that these businesses have been able to create employment opportunities and grow local economies. This factor is generally disregarded (Carciotto, 2020).

The choice to start a craft business

According to Asoba, Twum-Darko and Tengeh (2018), 100% of their participants concurred that immigrants originate from countries where the craft business is popular. They also note that South Africans do not dominate in this sector as they lack "a strong indigenous curio-producing sector" (Asoba et al., 2018, p. 252). Asoba et al. (2018) further state that 81.8% of the immigrants who participated in their study shared that immigrants start their own businesses in the craft industry to sustain their livelihoods.

Regarding challenges, as noted above, informal traders who are immigrants often face challenges accessing formal finances and support, partially due to DHA inefficiency in providing legal documentation (Chikamhi, 2011).

More challenges are presented when finding the right space to carry out their business. At GMS for instance, there is no permanent shelter which means that weather impacts business (Chikamhi, 2011). Additionally, immigrant-owned businesses often fall victim to acts of crime, such as the theft of goods and money, perpetrated by unhappy South Africans whose negative motivations are driven by jealousy (Asoba, Edoun & Mefi, 2020a & Tengeh, 2013). Another common challenge that immigrants experience when carrying out their business is the language barrier, making it increasingly difficult to communicate with customers (Asoba, 2014).

The positive impact of foreign migrant owned informal businesses

Research has demonstrated that immigrant entrepreneurs play a major role in job creation which results in the reduction of the high South African unemployment rate and assisting in reaching the country's goal of poverty and crime alleviation (Crush, 2001; Fatoki, 2014; Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2016; Tawodzera, Chikanda, Crush & Tengeh, 2015). Mlambo (2020), states that even though African immigrants play a small role in job creation, compared to larger business, their contribution needs to be acknowledged. Especially in the context of South Africa. Job creation is not limited to their businesses alone but is widespread. Tawodzera et al. (2015) have pointed out that African immigrants also encourage job creation by purchasing goods from South African-based manufacturers, who have a sizeable employee group within the industry.

Additionally, immigrants' entrepreneurial skills have proven to be a personal benefit and a benefit to South Africans; immigrant entrepreneurs transfer their business skills, often scarce skills to the South Africans that they employ, indicating a mutually advantageous relationship (Ngota, Mang'unyi & Balkaran, 2017).

Within communities, immigrant owned businesses are often started through identifying and meeting the needs of a community through providing affordable goods and services, furthering their positive contribution (Garg & Phayane, 2014; IOM, 2021). These businesses promote the economic growth of local economies through money flows and by purchasing supplies locally, as well as encourage economic development. Tawodzera et al. (2015, p. 29) state that their contribution to the economy is done in three ways – by "paying rent, purchasing agreements, and employment of South Africans". Thus, they play a role in keeping the economy afloat.

All of these factors were at play in the GMS space and amongst stall owners up until 2019.

The turning point

The refugee occupation of the Central Methodist Mission Church

The following research findings have been collected from various news articles, as academic research surrounding the refugee occupation was unavailable. On the 8th October 2019, a group of heterogenous refugees joined together to carry out a sit-in within the UNHCR offices. Their

goal was to be relocated from South Africa to another, safer, country that treated them with dignity and humanity (Palm, 2020). However, the refugees' demand was said to be highly unrealistic (Nowicki, 2020b). As a result, the UNHCR could only offer limited services to the refugees (Washinyira, 2020a). A court order ordered the refugees to leave on the 18th of October 2019. The refugees refused, and more joined the cause, growing to over 5 thousand individuals (Peoples Dispatch, 2019). On the 30th of October, the refugees were forcibly removed from the UNHCR offices and some fled and were offered shelter at the Central Methodist Mission Church bordering GMS (Nowicki, 2020b). According to a report from Peoples Dispatch (2019), the refugees were treated violently when removed from outside the UNHCR offices. They were 'attacked' and compelled to leave through police force, through acts of violence using stun grenades, water cannons, pepper spray, and physical brutality, and many refugees were arrested (People's Dispatch, 2019). Those that sought shelter in the church stayed and began living there.

Evans (2020) highlighted that the refugees in GMS had to carry out essential daily activities in and around the overcrowded church, such as sleeping outside, cooking meals with small fires, and washing themselves, as they had no other option. This was later restricted as by-laws were enacted to prohibit such (Evans, 2020). Washinyira (2020a, p. 1) reported a refugee saying that carrying out such restricted tasks that were essential for their survival "we are not allowed to cook and wash outside, but I am a human being. I still need to wash and eat." Palm (2020) shared an observation that many lived in small makeshift tents created with wooden boards and plastic around the pavement surrounding the church for many months, whilst others slept on benches inside. The surrounding conditions were noisy and dangerous.

Another battle faced by the refugees was the immense hunger; they had received food aid, but this ended abruptly (Palm, 2020). Health and safety risks were prevalent as the church was overcrowded with refugees; therefore, disease spread like wildfire. Additionally, various spouts of violence broke out in the church amongst the refugees. It is clear that such tension further increased safety concerns in the square and also increased disruption (Nowicki, 2020a).

In December 2019, the City of Cape Town engaged with the court to gain a court order to ensure that the refugees would abide with by-laws and keep peace in the area without affecting the businesses in GMS (Nowicki, 2020b). The court allowed the City to enforce by-laws on the 17th of February 2020. This also gave the City power to remove the refugees after seven

days by any means, including through force which would leave many of the refugees stranded as they did not have a safe place to return to (Palm, 2020). After a six-month occupation, the court granted an interim order prohibiting the refugees from staying in the area (Washinyira, 2020b). The City of Cape Town shared that the refugees were to be removed from GMS, but an 'illegal' invasion later occurred, and the church placed a charge of trespassing. The City warned the refugees that they should not go against the by-laws, and that they must voluntarily reintegrate into their old communities (Evans, 2020).

On the other side of the spectrum, businesses and residents in the area were not pleased with the refugee occupation. They were initially sympathetic towards the refugees but were later found to be impatient and wanted the refugees to leave (BBC News, 2020). Traders in GMS also wanted the refugees to leave: "We make money in summer and have lost five months of business; they are taking bread away from our mouths" (Washinyira, 2020a, p. 1). Another trader stated: "These people should go back to where they came from. They can afford to pay rent. I see them buying cold drinks and fast foods, but I can't even buy myself a bottle of water…They defecate and urinate everywhere. Customers are scared of them" (Washinyira, 2020a, p. 1).

The refugee occupation ended on the 2nd of April 2020 as government invoked National Disaster Management Act Regulations to gain entry to the church and forcibly remove the remaining refugees after attempts to negotiate through the DHA and the Department of Public Works failed (Hyman, 2020; SAPS, 2020). The eviction was loud and brutal, and refugees were forcibly led onto buses (Hyman, 2020). They were transported to Paint City, Belville, a location used to supply shelter for the homeless (Stent, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic

A nationwide lockdown to mitigate the rapid spread of COVID-19 was enforced on the 27th of March 2020 in South Africa and was supposed to end in July 2020, however was extended through to 2021 (Heneck, 2020). The lockdown was proposed to allow the country's health system to cope with the rate of infections. During this period, only essential services were allowed to operate. The pandemic has resulted in a stark decline in the already volatile economy of South Africa and has also placed the rate of unemployment at a 17-year high (Gatticchi & Maseko, 2020).

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, informal sector workers within various businesses were not permitted to work as their services were not considered essential. Bernstein (2020) estimates 2921000 or 20% of the employed operate in the informal sector, with a larger portion of these businesses owned by migrants.

In the informal sector, it was spaza shops and food traders who were (after initially being denied) granted permission to trade during the national lockdown as they were considered essential services (Skinner & Watson, 2020). For other informal businesses, the effects of not being able to work for the duration of the lockdown have been long-lasting. After the national lockdown was lifted, participants surveyed by WIEGO (2021) stated that they had not been able to generate the same daily income as they did prior to the lockdown. Seventy-two percent of participants stated that their culminative household income was far less than that earned prior to the lockdown. Market traders have been affected by the national lockdown, but out of all informal sector occupations, they are said to be the least economically vulnerable (WIEGO, 2021).

The South African government introduced aid interventions to alleviate the social and economic devastation initiated by COVID-19 related restrictions. The aid interventions in the form of financial support to meet daily needs can be seen through increasing child and social support grants and through the implementation of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant (R350) offered to South Africans, permanent residents, and refugees. Furthermore, financial support was offered to businesses affected by the pandemic through the Business Relief Fund stimulus that amounted to R500 million (Khambule, 2020). Apart from financial support, the government also offered aid through food parcels that were distributed in predominantly underprivileged communities (Hadebe, 2021). A major downfall is that the types of financial and social support offered by the South African government were generally restricted to South Africans, or required a level of formality that many immigrants from Africa did not have access to (De Groot & Lemanski, 2021; Hadebe, 2021; Mukumbang et al. 2020).

Khambule (2020) found that the government affected over 3-5 million informal traders by prohibiting economic activities within the informal sector during lockdowns. They offer an alternative example in India whereby the government increased safety measures for informal sector workers, allowing income generation to continue. The South African government has

undermined the critical role played by the informal sector as a 'shock absorber'; thus, the government is to blame for high rates of poverty and unemployment that rapidly continues to grow (Khambule, 2020).

In order to survive the impact of COVID-19 and related restrictions, many immigrants in the informal sector had to adopt survival mechanisms to get through. Mbeve, Nyambuya, Munyoro, Dube & Shumba's (2020) research explored the ways that Zimbabwean informal traders residing in the inner-city of Johannesburg navigated around the nationwide lockdown without financial support from their businesses. They argue traders displayed "resilience and creativity" (Mbeve et al., 2020, p.53) to overcome their challenges and ensure their survival and the survival of their families, and were willing to take on any form of work. Domestic services, mainly "cleaning and washing" (Mbeve et al., 2020, p.55), were identified as the "immediate survival strategy" (Mbeve et al., 2020, p.55). Another strategy adopted was to create strong community ties, also referred to as social support systems (Mbeve et al., 2021). Rogan and Skinner (2020) unearthed another survival strategy showing how informal sector workers used up their savings to purchase basic food necessities for their families, a factor that reduced financial autonomy.

The case of Greenmarket Square as a tourism related business site

Tourist related businesses have suffered badly during COVID-19 pandemic times (Rogerson, 2021). Rogerson and Baum (2020) argue that it will take an extensive period and many difficulties in reconstructing this sector.

These impacts were definitely felt by GMS stall owners in specific ways that relate to their space as a tourism related business, but also to the informal nature of their businesses, and in many cases their immigrant status precluded accessing assistance as argued above.

In January 2021 *IOL Online* published a news article having interviewed stall owners about their wishes for the new year (Githahu, 2021). Generally, stall owners desired a more prosperous 2021 after the impact of the 2019 and 2020 crises: "For us 2020 was as if we died. We are now coming back to life after almost a year of little or no business here in the square" (Githahu, 2021, p.1). Many stall owners have not returned to GMS because they live far away and could not afford daily transport but were being encouraged to although the authorities were

silent on the matter and did not offer any aid or support. The COVID-19 pandemic made traders and customers fearful, which has resulted in the limited movement of both into GMS. During the lockdown, with trading restricted, many stall owners had to depend on handouts and any financial support from their families back home; such amounts were often minimal. Imports were also affected due to the lockdown; consequently, stocks remained limited while old products that would have been sold in the previous year still constituted as current stock (Githahu, 2021). The ongoing effect of travel bans and COVID-19 related restrictions and fears meant tourist numbers did not return to pre-COVID-19 numbers. As tourists are the main clientele of GMS, this meant stall owners could not quickly recover. As one stall holder shared: "The virus really couldn't have come at a worse time for us. I don't know what I will do if it doesn't go away soon" (Tshuma, 2020, p.1) indicating the economic strain already placed on businesses prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. Even before these two crises, research from April 2019 indicated the state of businesses in GMS amongst craft market traders was said to be infrequent: "Business is on and off. If you are lucky, you may make one or two sales a week. There is no business anymore" (Washinyira, 2019, p.1). Though many attributed sales challenges to changing weather, others pointed to a longer downturn in sales: "We commonly struggle in winter, but for almost two years now, seasons don't matter...We are always struggling to get customers." (Washinyira, 2019, p.1), indicating that business was already declining. Washinyira (2019) writes that stall owners believe the decline to be part of the competition in the market, for when a product sells well, other traders start to sell the same.

Remittances

The COVID-19 pandemic has spearheaded a massive financial crisis globally that has had a notable impact on remittances (Akpa, Awode, Okwu & Oseni, 2021). In pre-COVID-19 times, remittances sent by international migrants account for over $250 billion every year on a global scale which is significantly more than developmental financial aid that many countries obtain (Pendleton, Crush & Campbell, 2006). While there are many assumptions surrounding the origin of remittances sent, the most prominent being that they are sent from the developed world to the developing world, the World Bank has found that over 40% of remittances are, in fact, acquired from developing countries such as South Africa (Pendleton et al., 2006). South-South Migration has become increasingly important and has been able to keep the flow of capital within the African continent (Pendleton et al., 2006).

COVID-19 has hit the economy hard of the African Union due to many points, such as the cutback of Foreign Direct Investment, limited Overseas Development Assistance, the lack of tourism, and the increase in the reduction of remittances sent throughout the continent. African countries have suffered proportionally due to the lack of remittances as remittances have "shrunk drastically" (Kassegn, 2021, p.2), and for futile states in Africa, the "economic shock will be magnified" (Kassegn, 2021, p.5) without the financial inflow that African countries are dependent.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures to curve the spread, such as the implementation of a lockdown and the closure of non-essential businesses, have had a devastating effect on the flow of remittances for incomes have been cut (Kalantaryan & McMahon, 2020). This has impacted the growth of developing economies and exacerbated the poverty that many households are subjected to, which will be challenging to deal with and recover from (Kalantaryan & McMahon, 2020).

The analysis of literature provided above from previous studies has assisted in bringing about a deeper understanding about the context of this research.

CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

The following chapter explains the methodological process followed in this research. A qualitative approach was conducted through face-to-face interviews, telephonic interviews and observations. In order to analyse the data collected a thematic analysis was carried out. Due to the personal nature of the research conducted, important ethical considerations have been explained below. Despite adequate planning, this research encountered challenges specifically with participants and COVID-19 related safety.

Research Design

For the purpose of this research, I utilised a qualitative approach in order to provide a thorough exploration as well as an understanding of the participants lived experiences, attitudes, inner feelings, and interactions within the context of the GMS craft market (Kothari, 2004; Marvasti, 2004; Rahman, 2020). Ritchie (2003) pointed out that a qualitative approach has been deemed to hold both detailing and exploratory functions, which play a role in ensuring that participant's interpretations and views of the phenomenon surrounding them, in this case the refugee occupation and the COVID-19 pandemic related impacts were captured in a manner that reflected their own views and awarded participants complete autonomy (Ritchie, 2003). One of the aims of qualitative research is to uncover *how* things happen (Ritchie, 2003; Willig, 2013). Willig (2013) argues a qualitative approach cannot make predictions regarding a phenomenon as it focuses on the differing individualistic processes of lived experiences, consequently capturing honest personal accounts. It is clear that a qualitative approach was the most appropriate approach for this research, as the goal of this study was to gain personal insights from my participants regarding their feelings and views about the two main events that had impacted their livelihoods and their businesses.

Sample

I used purposive sampling for this research. According to Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood (2013, p. 4), purposive sampling is specifically selecting participants that are "knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest." For this study, the participants were African immigrant entrepreneurs owning a stall and trading in the urban informal GMS craft market. I intended to use the snowball method to recruit participants (Mason, 2002), however, this only occurred for three participants. I deployed a convenience sampling method, recruiting participants who were "readily and easily available" (Taherdoost,

2016, p. 22). I moved from stall to stall in the square, requesting assistance from potential participants that mirrored the sample requirements of this research. Aiming for ten, I ended up with eight participants.

Demographic Breakdown

Four participants are classified as refugees, one as an asylum seeker, two held permanent residency, while the status of the remaining participant was undisclosed. In terms of nationality, three participants were from Kenya, three were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and two were from Malawi. In my observation, these three nationalities currently dominate in GMS, with only a few South African stalls in the mix.

Methods of Data Collection

Interviews

In order to gather vital primary data from my research participants, and in alignment with a qualitative approach, I conducted individual interviews with my participants. Interviews are a valuable system of data collection as the researcher can gain access to the participants thoughts, motivations, and views based on their construction of the social world surrounding them (Punch, 2013). The one-on-one engagement permitted my participants to speak freely about their life and personal circumstances within the context of GMS (Ritchie, 2003).

I chose to use a semi-structured interview approach with the aid of an interview schedule. The interview schedule assisted in keeping the interviews on the right track without swaying away from the focus of the research, ultimately facilitating “a conversation with a purpose” (Mason, 2002, p. 67).

I had aimed to conduct all of my interviews face-to-face in GMS, following strict COVID-19 safety protocols to guarantee the safety of all involved in this research. The protocols included maintaining a safe social distance and wearing a mask at all times, even though the open-air nature of the market allowed for efficient ventilation. In addition I planned to sanitise my smartphone (used for recording) and my hands after each interview with an effective alcohol-based sanitiser. Engaging in recruitment I noted a lack of adherence to COVID-19 prevention protocols amongst stall owners. I then made the choice to conduct telephonic interviews, compensating participants for their data costs. Carr and Worth (2001, p. 512) define telephonic

interviews as being "a strategy for obtaining data which allows interpersonal communication without face-to-face meeting." Block and Erskine (2012) concur that conducting interviews through a telephone is beneficial as the researcher can gain access to more participants while it is also time-efficient. Based on my research experience, I cannot entirely agree, as I found it more difficult to conduct interviews in this manner. I was able to collect ten telephone numbers, but disappointingly, only two participants responded to my research invite; I tried to call participants, yet my call was either declined or my interview invitation was rejected. As a result of these hurdles, I had to re-evaluate my approach and conduct face-to-face interviews. To gain new participants, I was required to go back to the square and reach out to stall owners that suited my sample requirements. The interviews were conducted soon after our introduction. All in all, I have conducted four interviews via telephone and four interviews in person. I was only able to seek eight willing participants at most due to numerous counts of rejection and distrust from potential participants. I also stayed away from potential participants who were not following COVID-19 safety protocols, such as wearing a mask for my safety, which further hindered my participant count.

For the interview data to be captured accurately the interviews were consensually recorded using the voice recorder on my smartphone. Yeo, Legard, Keegan, Ward, McNaughton Nicholls & Lewis (2014) indicate that by doing so, the participant's tone, doubts, expressions, and specific language used are adequately grasped and provide greater significance.

Observation

Due to the challenge of finding willing participants, I decided to include the method of observation as a way to gather more data. The method of observation permits the researcher to "record and analyse behaviour and interactions as they occur" (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003, p. 35) from an outsider's point of view. The form of observation followed was direct non-participant observation, which refers to a form of observation whereby the researcher can gain close access to the study site as an outsider (Ciesielska, Boström & Öhlander, 2018). It is important to note that my observations only apply to the COVID-19 period, I did not observe the refugee occupation and its impact. In order to conduct a thorough observation, I had to walk around the square at different points of the day during my visits. GMS is a free public space; therefore, I did not require special permission to conduct my observation and did not tell my participants that I was observing their setting to capture the most natural data. To keep track of my

observations, I kept a fieldnotes journal and was able to take photographs of the stalls and the space. Observations were carried out in the morning and afternoon. The observations that have been collected are based on my interpretations of what happened in the square over a particular time, and changes are likely to have occurred since my observation period.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process is believed to be the most complex step within qualitative research (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). A data analysis occurs to convert the data collected from the research participants into evidence used to answer the research question. In order to analyse the data collected in this research, a thematic analysis was followed. According to Braun and Clarke (2012, p. 1), a thematic analysis is a method utilised to "systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning" that is found throughout the research data collected. Concurrently, a thematic analysis also 'interprets' many vital points relating to the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Kiger and Varpio (2020, p. 2) draw on Braun and Clarke's definition from 2006, which highlights that a thematic analysis is "a method for analysing qualitative data" through "searching across a data set to identify, analyse and report repeated patterns." The goal of a thematic analysis is to find commonalities in the research findings that pertain to the research topic (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Once the interviews were conducted with research participants and observation notes were collected in GMS, the voice recordings gathered from the interviews were manually transcribed without the aid of a transcription software. In contrast, notes collected from the observation were used to create a descriptive text to evaluate what was witnessed. This was followed by applying the six-phase approach created by Braun and Clarke (2012) to the interview transcriptions. I became familiar with the data, then I generated initial codes, I searched for themes and reviewed potential themes, I defined and named the themes and was then able to start writing up the findings section of this thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Utilising a thematic analysis offered the possibility to pinpoint commonalities and even differences amongst the research participants, which offered insight and illuminated the diversity of views (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research has been identified as being an intrusive approach due to the personal nature of such research (Punch, 2005). A fundamental aspect of the research is ensuring the protection of the research participants, specifically their information and their identities. In addition to taking the steps outlined below, the research project was ethically cleared by the Department of Sociology to guarantee institutional oversight of ethical research practice.

Informed consent

Before conducting the interviews, my participants were handed a consent form kept in a sanitised plastic sleeve. Participants could sign the form or verbally consent, depending on what was most comfortable for them, as many participants did not want to share their signatures. I read out the consent form and confirmed that my participants fully understood the information about the study, their rights to decline questions and withdraw from this research, consent for voice recording and the use of the data for the purpose of this Master's thesis. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed, and I have used pseudonyms throughout.

Protection from Harm

As the researcher, I had the primary responsibility to protect my participants. Since the participants of this research were immigrants, an extra level of protection was required due to their marginality. Their daily experiences are riddled with acts of discrimination, exclusion as well as mental and physical distress; thus, they form part of a vulnerable group (González-Duarte et al., 2019). I needed to ensure that I did not generalise and could confidently guarantee that I would not pass their information to any authorities and do my best to ensure that they would not be subject to additional prejudice based on their participation (Lu & Gatua, 2014). Conducting semi-structured interviews also assisted in alleviating any pressure felt by participants, as they had the autonomy to reject questions that made them uncomfortable. Protection from harm was also enforced in this thesis as the views shared by participants have not been used against them but rather in a light that conveys their experiences.

Privacy and Anonymity

My participants were informed that the information they chose to share would be used for this thesis. The voice recordings collected were kept safely on my laptop, which required a password to retrieve, and I was the only person that listened to these recordings. All my

participants wanted to keep their names anonymous; thus, labels such as ‘Participant A’ have been used to protect their confidentiality.

Researcher Reflexivity and Responsibility

I am aware of my positionality as a South African Master’s student. I acknowledge that my position is free from the constraints and challenges my participants are subjected to as immigrants. Through the research process of conducting interviews, I was mindful that the question-and-answer manner of this research approach could have been daunting and interrogative, which enacts a nationality-based hierarchy. I believe the semi-structured interview approach allowed for a give and take in the conversation that somewhat mitigated this. In addition to these power relations, language is also a constraint. Interviews were conducted in my home language, English, which is not the home language of my participants. I spoke slowly and clearly in a comprehensive tone and made it known that they could respond comfortably without pressurising them. I had the responsibility to be sensitive and avoid asking questions that would make my participants feel discriminated against. I made sure to accommodate any fears, worries, or concerns held by my participants without any apprehension, as they were the priority. I had the ethical responsibility to represent my participants most honestly and accurately. I had to constantly be aware of and avoid replacing their voices with my own or “eclipsing their voices with mine” (Fitzpatrick, 2013, p. 53). I have not reconstructed their words to fit the research question. I have represented their actual experiences without censorship or furthering their subjugation. I had the responsibility to show respect, honesty, and support to my research participants.

Research Challenges

The prime research challenge was the recruitment of participants. The first participant was from my research conducted in 2019 who shared two contact details of other potential participants; however, only one participant responded. On my first day of fieldwork in the square, I was able to collect ten cell phone numbers of potential participants, but only two out of the 10 responded to my interview invitation. The success of snowball sampling was limited which led me to direct recruitment at GMS. I was rejected numerous times by potential participants during this time. COVID-19 safety concerns also reduced the number of potential participants as I avoided stalls where stall owners were not wearing masks. I did not want to ask participants about their vaccination status, and also wanted to minimise my own risk of

contracting the virus. I took the approach that COVID-19 safety protocols were obligatory for both the researcher and participant, however in one case a participant refused to wear a mask, and I chose to go ahead with the interview in case my rejection was viewed as discrimination.

CHAPTER FOUR: Collected experiences of starting a business and living in South Africa

This chapter begins to engage with the findings generated by interviews with African immigrant stall owners in GMS geared toward answering the central research question which sought to explore the socio-economic impacts of first the refugee occupation, and then the COVID-19 related restrictions on their livelihoods and businesses. More specifically, this chapter sheds light on the how's and reasons participants started their businesses in Greenmarket Square. The second section of this chapter aids in offering an understanding of their lived experiences while in South Africa which naturally differ in some regards and might display similarities in another.

The Starting Point: Starting a business in Greenmarket Square

Starting a new business can be an immensely daunting task for anyone, more so for African immigrants, as they have more to lose than to gain. Specifically, when their businesses experience challenges. Fatoki (2014) and Chikamhi (2011) have pointed out the drivers that promote African immigrants to start their own businesses. Participants A and C started their businesses as they had family who were already trading at GMS. Participant A began their business as their Mother-in-Law had a stall in the square, which, she handed down to participant A: "*I visit my Mother-in-Law here in Greenmarket Square and she gives me this space to start.*" (Participant A). Consequently, they changed the nature of the products sold, shifting to products made from colourful African textiles.

Participant C started a business in the square after receiving an offer from their younger brother: "*I start my business with a… an offer from my younger brother*." (Participant C)

Alternatively, participant B and participant F were introduced to business in the square by joining their stall-owning husbands. Participant B is part-owner of the business: "*… I find my husband was having a store and then I join him*" (Participant B). Participant F is now the complete owner of the business following the passing of their husband: "*It was… I inherited it from my late husband. He was the one who founded the business, so I just came, and I joined him here.*" (Participant F)

Participant H began their business life with the manufacture of craft in Malawi, working with their uncle and Grandfather after completing school. Their family business was later moved from Malawi to GMS.

"*This business, a, it started in 1999, I was at school where I am coming from, I'm from Malawi, yeah so, this business is from the family. It's a family business, we start from home. My uncle, my grandfather that's their business so that's how I learnt this business so I'm just taking from there just to continue for the business. That's what I did*." (Participant H)

Since participant H was immersed in the running of the business from its days in Malawi, they were able to acquire the adequate skillset to resume the business in GMS. This reflects the work of Asoba et al. (2018) whose participants shared about the popularity of craft businesses in parts of Africa.

Supplementary characteristics of starting one's own business is the ambition to seek autonomy, economic prosperity, and opportunity, as displayed by Fatoki (2014) and Asoba et al. (2020b). For participant G, these features mirror their motive into founding a craft business in the square, as they held employment, nonetheless saved the capital from their job to start up their own business. Furthermore, participant G was the only participant that did not have existing connections in GMS; thus, their venture was independent.

"Oh, first I was working for someone and then I raise some funds and after that I started my business." (Participant G)

In contrast, only two participants, participants D and E, started a business in the square as they could not find alternative forms of employment in South Africa (Asoba, 2014; Fatoki, 2014). Participant E first searched for a job as a salesperson but was unsuccessful. In addition, participant D also battled to procure employment in South Africa after arriving from Kenya. Both of the participants had friends who owned and operated stalls in GMS. This offered the participants insight into the benefits of running a craft business, encouraging them to start a business of their own using their financial savings.

"I started like a… 15 years ago, I told you I came from Kenya, so when I came to South Africa, I was looking for a job and then I find myself in these market, I find my friends doing the same

business so I thought also I should start it, I had some capital, so I just started." (Participant D)

"…my business, I started um, I had small capital actually I was looking for a job, I couldn't find the job that I wanted because I'm a salesperson then I had small money, then I decided to buy this because I visited a friend then I see what they are doing so I took my small money and buy stuff then I started like that." (Participant E)

These findings display that starting a business in GMS happened for different reasons, with the most common being through familial connections. Starting, owning, and maintaining their businesses exhibits the top-notch entrepreneurial skills that they hold.

Life in South Africa

As opined by Mukumbang et al. (2020), Gatticchi and Maseko (2020), and Manicom and Mullagee (2010), South Africa has been identified as a magnet for many immigrants originating from around the African continent. Prior to relocating to South Africa, immigrants often have an idealised view of what life in South Africa will be like, but are often met with economic hardships, xenophobia and violence, amongst other challenges (Mukumbang et al., 2020) as typified by this response from Participant E: "*In South Africa? If I say I find that success in South Africa I would say no. South Africa life is a struggle, it's a struggle, everywhere is a struggle but South Africa for us is a real struggle".* (Participant E).

Participant B agreed, however they also highlighted that this is the same for many different countries: *"Mm, honestly, yeah. There's no problem, there's no big problem at all because you know South Africa it's a … sort of very complicated countries like other African countries."* (Participant B). This was not the only view though. Many participants reflected a more balanced view, life in South Africa has been constructed as unsuccessful on the one hand and relatively successful on the other hand, in different ways. For example, participant B goes on from saying that hardships are everywhere, to highlighting their children's access to education in South Africa which would not be possible in their country of origin: "*Our children study, they finish, they working, so they never stopped going a to school because every day they used to go to school. In a…our country this is struggle. My, my children came when they were in creche ha. They start creche here* (Participant B).

Likewise, despite hardships participant A has not become despondent but has tried to find things to be appreciative of: "*No, it's not successful here in South Africa, really, we just... like to me right now I can tell you the truth, um, because I take a long time in South Africa. I am not in my country. I can just appreciate the small things. Like good people, the school for the children, otherwise, everything is not good for me."* (Participant A)

Both participants speak of the importance of access to education which is better for them here rather than in their country of origin. They have succeeded to access this education despite the discriminations and rejections many refugee children face in accessing their right to education. (Enwere, n.d.). The acclimatisation to South African culture is also highlighted by participant B: "*So, they almost grown up here. So, they know South Africa better than my country, you understand*." This sentiment was shared with pride about what their children have managed to achieve.

Additional remarks of success were shared by two participants being, participants D and F, who found that their lives in South Africa were more fruitful. The response from participant D was short as they did not want to explain further: *"I would say yes, because yeah…*". Participant F agreed with more certainty: "*I can say yes. That's for sure"*

These findings signify that lived experiences amongst African immigrants in South Africa differ widely and cannot be generalised in neither a positive nor negative light.

CHAPTER FIVE: The impact of the refugee occupation

This chapter provides accounts collected from participants about their views concerning the refugee occupation. Collecting their true thoughts provided a deeper understanding on the stance they had taken despite many being refugees themselves. This is followed by a deeper exploration which brought about inclinations of discrimination that occurred between stall owners and the refugees within the occupation and vice versa. This chapter concludes with an analysis on the role of SAPS during the occupation. Participants shared a mixture of remarks regarding their role. It is important to note that the thoughts and words collected and expressed are from the sample group of African immigrant stall owners alone and does not reflect my own. I acknowledge that this view is also one sided and is often negative as counter narratives were not collected from the refugees. However, my views have been presented within the writing process. I have made a conscious effort to limit my bias and remained aware that I could not eliminate it completely.

The refugee occupation and its impact on GMS stall owners

As mentioned previously, owning and operating a stall in the GMS craft market has offered great success and economic prosperity for the most part; however, the refugee occupation of 2019 was a serious disruption to business as usual.

Only one of the participants, participant A, felt empathetic towards the refugees within the occupation as they are classified as a refugee: *"I was feeling very bad because I am a refugee also (laughs)."*

The remaining participants did not have any pity towards the occupation nor for the refugees involved as they were fixated on the effects had on their businesses and overall livelihoods. A substantially negative change occurred as the flow of customers started to decline as a result of the occupation. Consequently, participants established that it was challenging to operate their businesses successfully as they are heavily dependent on tourists in order to generate an income: *"The market, there were no tourists, so it was very tough, very, very tough"* (Participant C).

The nature of the occupation continued to repel potential customers from visiting the square. Participant H adds a reasoning for the lack or reduction of customers, predominantly tourists, due to the widespread fear of the refugees involved in the occupation: *"…they affect our*

businesses because the, most of the tourists they are scared, they are too scared to be in the market, they don't want to come in the market because of the refugees, so it's like they are blocking them, so they are being scared always..." (Participant H)

Another dimension to the fear was because of the engagement between the refugees and law enforcement, which was an intense affair, causing customers to flee the square*: "...there was too much noisy. You know foreigners, some people, they don't like noisy. Because there was a time when it was violent when the law enforcement approach them, then they'll be like fighting, the market is full so you the customers scared, they run away. Nobody like..."* (Participant E). The refugees would also physically barricade the access points into GMS: *"... they were like blocking even the roads for the customer to come inside..."* (Participant B).
In addition to fear-based deterrents for tourists (customers), during the occupation, the square was completely overcrowded and dishevelled; it was no longer a space for business. As reported, the refugee occupation was said to take place in and around the perimeter of the Central Methodist Mission Church, but this was not the case: *"... they was camping around here and they were messing up the market. In the morning you come and find them sleeping even, the tents they were here in the market..."* (Participant D). Not only in the market in tents but also *"They used to sleep on this street..."* (Participant E). Both business and street spaces were occupied which hindered the effective access and operation of stall owners.

Overcrowding meant that the refugee occupants had to often sleep, make food and wash themselves in public. This had a knock-on impact on the physical conditions of the square (Evans, 2020). Participants emphasised that the occupation created a surreal scene. GMS was once a space renowned for colour and vibrancy but had been destroyed due to grime and the effect of the lack of adequate sanitation. This meant that the streets also became a public toilet: *"...that's (street) where they used to pee, poo, it wasn't good at all..."* (Participant E). As one participant described: *".... It did not work for us with business, I did worry yes because things that was around the square, the square was like a toilet and everything, no customer was coming in and even us, we almost suffocated on too much smelly..."* (Participant C). One participant even noted that their businesses were deliberately targeted: *"...they could even pee even on your stall, so it was very bad thing, we didn't like it...."* (Participant D), and there is some speculation from the participant that this was deliberate because the stall owners did not support the refugee occupation, and the occupants were jealous of the relative privilege.

As described by Washinyira (2020a) participants were frustrated and recognised the negative impact on their businesses: *"... we have less customers because no one could smelly to stay on this smelly place, no one, they was coming and just run away, we did not have customer on that time."* (Participant C).

Nowicki (2020a) only wrote about the unsanitary conditions within the church, but the participants have made it clear that the impact was far wider. In addition to the unsanitary conditions, when fights broke out between refugee occupants, it moreover had an impact on the stall owners: *"... Oh, it was terrible. Imagine. Them they are there, and the customer is busy. Especially me, I am…I am in front of the road on the main road here in the long market, when you are busy with customer, maybe they fighting or they quarrelling so the customer gonna leave and go first. It was hard…it was hard I'm telling you."* (Participant B). Some aggression was also directed at customers of stall owners close to the refugee occupants: *"... that time it was very difficult, most specially me as I am here in the end, they were sitting here to the tree, rude swearing the people, swearing the whites as if its them who makes them to come here, it was very bad, terrible, I'm telling you."* (Participant G).

Participant E was under the impression that stalls situated in the middle of the square were better off as they were almost protected from the refugees, but that was the only benefit as customers could not reach that point of the square; therefore, the flow of business remained stagnant. "*So, people in the middle of the market were a little bit better...."* (Participant E)

Palm (2020) emphasised the disruption caused by noise pollution during the occupation that prevented customers from supporting the craft businesses. Noise and raucousness filled the entirety of the square *"... and them also the time they had a meeting, their meeting singing, shouting, something like that so yeah…"* (Participant B). Customers did not like the noise or uproar: *"Our customer they doesn't like noise they don't like a lot of people around so we spend the whole time with no business…" (Participant C).*

Instead of buying from GMS stall owners, 'safer' 'nicer' places were patronised: *"It was economically affected, the sales went down, we used to have tourists, tourists could come, when they see a lot of people in one community and they all, they used to have so much drama's, the customers didn't want to be in Greenmarket Square. They preferred shopping in the shops…"* (Participant F)

Participants E and F reacted to the occupation by stating that the refugees could have handled their plight in a different manner, in a way that would not impact businesses and livelihoods as much:

"*... It was not a good thing. I don't know if it's a good thing, how they approach it? But for me, it wasn't a good way of approaching the or solving the problem. Yeah, because you can't solve a problem by affecting other people."* (Participant E)

"Okay for me, I didn't like the idea because there is always a way out in a proper diplomatic way so for me it was not a reason enough for them to come and come over here." (Participant F)

Participants D and E both highlighted that they thought this refugee occupation was the beginning of their businesses declining: *"That time they also affected us too much, because there is a, there was no tourists who would come… and to see what they were doing… we lost a lot of business that time. Actually, that was the beginning of our problem here."* (Participant D)

This finding contradicts the research of Washinyira (2019), which found that businesses in GMS were already starting to face a decline since April 2019, prior to the refugee occupation; thus, the starting point of their challenges seemingly dated far back. My own research (Madurai, 2019) conducted in the middle – to the end of 2019 differs from these findings as more positive responses were recorded, and struggle was not evident. Within this research, I found that minor challenges were present. Participants have highlighted that the refugee occupation was the first round of challenges that they had to overcome.

Conflict between stall owners and refugee occupants

Discrimination in the context of immigrants is defined as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life" (OHCHR, n.d.). African immigrants are no strangers to occurrences

of xenophobic discrimination and violence in South Africa. The shift during the refugee occupation concerned African immigrant stall owners discriminating against the refugees involved in the occupation, and vice-versa. Despite their shared identity or status fostering the idea of empathy based on common struggles, these two groups did not support one another. Participants were discriminated against by refugees involved in the occupation. In one case this was attributed to their legal status: *"...I was also refugee, now I'm permanent resident. So, them, they think when you are permanent you get everything..."*. They went on to speak about wanting to assist, and refugees refusing their assistance which resulted in enmity: "*But them, they didn't want to listen, so they become our enemies. They become our enemies."* (Participant B).

This enmity went further in the way that Participant B started using the refugees' illegal status as a ground for discrimination and different treatment: *"...Sometimes they say oh, we don't have papers here to support that, how can you support illegal people, illegal people? If you want to be supported, you have to come, you go to the office, like UN office…".* The notion of 'us' versus 'them' one of the key features of South African xenophobia is now becoming evident in the narrative of this permanent resident.

Participant D, legally a refugee, also displayed some of the 'us' vs 'them' thinking when they stated: *"...there was, we had a big problem during that time, us we are refugees also and you were not participating with the refugee, whatever they wanted us to do, they were finding us like we are funny, why we not joining them. So, there was a lot of discrimination, but we didn't join them, but they didn't like it, they didn't like us mmm…"* (Participant D). Their statement also highlights the pressure stall owners felt from refugees to join the movement, and the harassment stall owners faced when they refused, tied in with their desire to operate their businesses as best as possible in order to earn an adequate income that would ensure their survival. With their livelihoods threatened by the impacts of the refugee occupation, participants chose to go against the sense of African unity ordinarily held amongst African immigrant communities, despite legal statuses. African immigrant stall owners and the refugees started to identify each other as the foes.

Despite these conflicting differences between the groups, discrimination from South Africans resulted in both groups being lumped together: *"you know South Africans cannot recognise a refugee, those who are there and the other, so it was a little bit yeah, a little bit... We were all*

put in one group, foreigners. Kwerekwere. (laughs)" (Participant F). This derogatory term (Olatundun, 2008) and the associated narratives of scapegoating foreigners meant that stall owners felt tarnished by the actions of the refugee occupants.

The role of SAPS in exacerbating the situation

SAPS have been known to share anti-immigrant sentiments which hinders the protection that immigrants have the right to receive (Crush & Ramachandran, 2014). They have also been shown to be "instigators of violence" (Crush et al., 2017, p, 794) due to their aggressive and unjustified physical, psychological, and emotional ill-treatment directed towards immigrants. Prior to the occupation, the presence of SAPS in GMS was looked down upon by participants, for they were believed to be involved in criminal activity found in the square: *"...the police they are also corrupt, because you see we have a bank here, sometimes you have a customer, those customers when they coming here to buy some stuff, they don't have cash they have to draw the money there, if we show them the thieves, those who are stealing the cards for the customers, they don't do nothing because those thieves they give them something, it's very terrible, I'm telling you. They are corrupt also."* (Participant G). The sense was that SAPS supported the thieves which had a negative impact on stall owners' businesses.

During the refugee occupation, the heavy presence of SAPS was felt throughout the square during various periods. Immigrant stall owners shared mixed remarks about the involvement of SAPS during the occupation. Though there was no direct harassment, there was still a negative impact for this participant: *"No, they did not give us any problem on the side of the market, the only problem is they come and they just tell us, you have to pack now because we are going to do this with those people, we want to take them out and sometimes they ask us to pack with no even notification so we have pack again and go home and maybe next day they will say, we don't want anyone on the square."* (Participant C). This added costs in terms of setting up and striking down their stalls and limited their income generation as they could not trade full hours.

Despite the sentiment that police were not helpful, some were pleased that they were intervening with the refugee occupation. Whilst Participant C was told they needed to pack up without warning, others were notified and had a correlating positive view of the police as being helpful: *"...the police was very cooperative with us. Police around, the law enforcements they*

are very cooperative. They used to tell us one time they are going to chase them out and they would come and notice… give us a notice that we should be careful when they would send them out. They were very cooperative…" (Participant D). The differing in opinion could potentially be because of the way information was shared amongst stall owners, perhaps based on nationality or proximity.

Another participant refutes that SAPS were even present during the occupation. Participant F only witnessed the presence of SAPS when driving the refugees out of the square *"only the time they came to chase them. Otherwise, the police were not here all the time, no."* Participant B questioned their effectiveness, saying: "*they come sometimes; they were no good at all. I'm telling you*."

The stall owners turned against the refugees by criminalising them as well as reduced them to being the enemy despite the numerous commonalities they share as African immigrants in South Africa. Stereotypes targeted towards African immigrant communities by South Africans are often associated with crime, illegality, violence, and the lack of hygiene. These stereotypes were thrown at the refugees by stall owners who were frustrated as their businesses and livelihoods were impacted. The refugees were in search of solidarity but backlash from stall owners was more evident. Most stall owners interviewed were against the refugees and vice versa, enforcing the notion of 'us' versus 'them, possibly without both parties even realising that such occurred. Mixed remarks have been collected about SAPS. SAPS are often riddled with anti-immigrant motives, however played the stall owners and refugees against each other by criminalising the refugees. As established within the literature review, the acts of SAPS towards the refugees were continuously violent and aggressive. As evidenced above, participants were generally not sympathetic toward the refugees and did not care about the violence SAPS deployed to evict them. SAPS did not direct anti-immigrant thoughts toward the immigrant stall owners but rather towards refugees in the occupation which was not dissuaded but encouraged

CHAPTER SIX: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions

Within this chapter the implications caused by COVID-19 related restrictions will be explained. Accounts have been collected from participants to understand how they felt during the genesis of the pandemic, which was a time of uncertainty, more especially since a period to economically recover after the impact of the refugee occupation was absent. Thoughts shared by participants about COVID-19 display sorrow and hardship as their lives completely transformed for the worst. The next section speaks of aid offered by the South African government which did not reach the participants of this research, thus, they had to seek survival strategies in order to meet their daily needs as will be displayed below. Another factor explained in this chapter will be that of sending remittances, which has naturally been disrupted as a result of the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 early lockdown periods, only essential services were permitted (Heneck, 2020). The kinds of craft-based businesses present in GMS were non-functional, increasing their financial strain, and this has had a lasting impact on participants. Thoughts shared by participants about COVID-19 display sorrow and hardship as their lives completely transformed for the worst: *"…You just fear inside, you don't know what you can do, you don't know when you can start. That was very bad the beginning. Yeah, it was very scary…"* (Participant A). Or as another participant eloquently expressed: *"Yoh, that one, it's like it's killing all the country, I'm telling you, you see, most specially me, let me tell you about me. Me, I'm supporting 8 children, I'm a mother, I'm a father, I don't have any income, only the income that I have its from here. So sometimes here, even the week, even the whole week I go home bare hands, nothing I make so that COVID aha."* (Participant G).

Once the lockdown levels had eased, and GMS was given the go-ahead to operate again, stall owners still experienced a limited flow of customers as international borders remained closed until the 21st of September 2020, prohibiting their target customer group the tourists, from filling up the square. *"…it was hard, very hard I am telling you. Complicated even but thank God they went out and the lockdown started which stayed 9 month before going out and after 9 months, we start market. Even now to sell 1000, you have to wait one week or three weeks to get 1000. We are selling small, small money..."* (Participant B).

The lack of customers occurred as tourists disappeared due to COVID-19. This has been devastating to these previously thriving businesses: *"…before COVID it was ok, the tourists were all over, were all over, we didn't have any problem, that time you could make your money, make your living nice no problem but now the COVID take away all the tourists…"* (Participant D).

Their struggle and of many others did not change once trading commenced, as economic hardships only grew greater. Income generation was minor, occurring at a slow pace or did not take place entirely due to the low rate of tourists as well as local customers that once flooded the square, as pointed out by participants. This mirrors the findings of WIEGO (2021), whereby participants could not generate the same daily income as they did prior to the first nationwide lockdown or before the outbreak of COVID-19 in South Africa. COVID-19 has diminished all efforts and progress that individuals have made in their personal and business lives: *"…that one takes everything up to the 0. I say so, like we are starting again, it put us down, all those things we were seeing before, it's not like before like this time it's very tough, what we were seeing before COVID was very good things than this time. Business, the business was going down, we were not going up like before, before it was picking up, now, every day its going down."* (Participant H).

Participant B also shared stories about loss of life, and strategies for survival:

> *"…Imagine from that march, they were inside. People die, people hang themselves, coz, there were no money and imagine like us, we are like hustling. We used to come every day in the market, every day, to get food. Now, sadly, you don't go to the market. We survive because children they were working, they, they were supporting for what can I say… food because to pay the house, we were not paying even the market we were not paying, how can you pay?"*

Their narrative demonstrates the multiple impacts of COVID-19 and the related lockdowns and restrictions, and ways traditional patterns of support within families were disrupted.

Aside from the economic and relational impacts, there was also a sense from participant C about a loss of freedom, as well as ongoing uncertainty: *"I don't think the pandemic finish, it's*

still very sad, since we can't receive our customer and since we are not free on our movement, and you don't even have a right to breathe because you have to cover your nose. The only thing I think I was having for free was the air to breathe now I have to cover my nose. I don't know until when this will go on. I don't know what is happening, yoh, I don't know." They go on to say that despite historical crises, the impact of COVID- 19 has so far been the worst:

> *"…the business let's say I start on 2007 on this square, things was going well. Sometimes there's down, there's a up, do for some different event like Ebola, like a crashed plane or, every time there's little problem that crash, after we pick up, then the worst one is this long time of Corona with nothing. We go home with no appointment, so no one was prepared to go stay home like a almost 2 years…, so it's difficult to survive like."*

It is the uncertainty that is most difficult, having to make difficult choices about where to allocate money: *"…with children and some people have a bond, like me, I have my bond to pay. So, if I don't pay the house, the bank will take the house, so we was just like that and up to now we are not standing, we don't know when we will stand" (Participant C)*

The difficulty in meeting basic requirements was also noted by participant F who could not access any formal help from government due to their refugee status and was sustained by their church: *"It was tough for us, us refugees because our business, the market was closed for one year and some months. We were not coming here totally, and we had to pay rent and we had to pay water, we had to pay our bills and no income. We didn't get reliefs from any, not government, not our city, nobody assisted us. Only like a church where I normally go, church organisation, but it was dramatic for us…"* (Participant F).

The COVID-19 pandemic has not come to a halt. The wrath of its destruction continues today with no clear end in sight. As Participant C has pointed out, the impact of COVID-19 has been far worse than any other outbreak or event that has shaken the global economy to date.

(Lack of) Support from the South African Government – where do you turn?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, immigrants within the informal sector were subjected to a double burden in the context of earning aid from the South African government which often

requires South African citizenship, or a level of business and legal formality in order to access relief (Khambule, 2020; Mukumbang et al., 2020). Participants backed this up, stating: *"The pandemic was very tough, very bad especially for us foreigners because the locals, the South Africans were taken care of by their government, they were given the grant, they were support…"* (Participant D); and *"…they offer only for the citizens, like me I'm a foreigner, I'm coming from the other side of the country, of the, Africa so they didn't offer for us anything else just…."* (Participant H). The fact that refugees qualified for the same support was not common knowledge. As Broadbent et al. (2020) demonstrated, the South African government could not fulfil citizens' needs, sometimes because of corruption and maladministration removing resources from those who needed it. In this context, the lack of decent service provision by DHA and the further marginalisation of African immigrants and their lack of access to support was cast into stark relief. Participants had to rely on their networks for support.

"…but us, no one supported us, only our fellow friends, those who are able but otherwise the rest of us, we felt it, it was very tough for foreigners, very, very tough…. Nothing, no support from them. We really suffered. Other people could even sleep outside, no, no, no shelter, no food (inaudible) even the refugee papers was a problem for us. We could even get a job but you see the papers was expired so we end up suffering more. So, it was very bad. The government did not support us..." (Participant D).

Sometimes these networks were experiencing similar difficulties: *"…Yoh, I was asking the people, like brothers what, what, but even themselves, they don't have nothing, but they were crying because we were not sleeping at all or eating…"* (Participant G), the networks of support were not able to assist.

The lack of support from government meant that churches (Participant F) and NGOs often had to step up to fill the gap. Scalabrini Centre, already dedicated to upholding the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, was mentioned by two participants, though there were limitations on accessing support, and the ability of the organisation to meet the huge need:

"We just got some small support from Scalabrini, I don't know if you know Scalabrini centre. Only from that side. And it's not for everyone in Greenmarket. Like me, I get something small from Scalabrini because I am a member in Scalabrini. I start a small, small cost from there…" (Participant A)

"For me there was a time when they give me a parcel, I say yes, they give me a parcel, I was really happy, when I really needed it, yeah, Scalabrini." (Participant E)

"For us foreigners it was hard because nobody cared about us even Scalabrini, they were, they, they really tried, but we are a lot. So, some of us we didn't even know what is happening there. But at least they tried to support us, but South African government, we got nothing out of them." (Participant E)

Although participant E did not receive any form of aid from the South African Government, they did not hold any negative opinions toward them as they recognised that the government did not even have the means to assist citizens of the country: *"they didn't offer us any, especially me I wouldn't. I don't know about other people. But for me, I didn't get any support. But I don't blame them. (laughs). I don't blame them."* Interestingly, participant E supported the government's stance of 'South Africans first', arguing: *"They should support even their own people because… if they could support their people, their people they could give us or they could help us, but they couldn't even support their own people. So, its ok."* (Participant E)

However, such a resolution is unattainable due to the incompetency of the South African Government, a system that is riddled with corruption and innumerable injustices that places the needs of citizens last.

Some of these experiences of injustice are highlighted by participants in a series of frustrations about status and the lack of recognition of their contribution that predate and run through the period of COVID-19:

> *"Never! never nothing from South African government, I don't even know how, if someone already get something from them, the thing is, for my own, I know how to to to work for myself, how to do things. What I just ask to the government to give us, is to give us a little opportunity to have a permanent residence or something like that, allow us to go in and out and do business. Because sitting on this square is waste of time. We have a lot of knowledge that we can put on practise and go from country to country and make money, but we stuck on this same wave like me… I have an asylum paper. During 14 years I'm in asylum paper. I'm not moving, you know something, everywhere you*

> *go, I go to human rights, the human rights say they are not qualified to help me, I go to COVID protector, they always push you somewhere that you just lose your way, I don't know what the issue, I don't know. I'm not stealing, I'm not doing anything wrong. I am contributing for the economy of this country…Because this country has opportunity to find some space by yourself to get money but if you are blocked on the way of paper, you can't do anything, you must have documents..." (*Participant C)

The two permanent residents who are part of the participant group were able to use their status to access the Social Relief of Distress (and other SASSA) grants. However, this was not without problems. Participant G pointed out the inadequacy of the grant: *"Nothing, nothing. I was surviving for the SASSA grant R450, you think that that R450 is that enough for everyone? …"* Participant B lost trust in the process when their money disappeared: *"...I didn't have courage to apply again because I saw they put when the, the, the President say we have to get again, I saw R300 in inside my bank, I went to take, it's gone…"*

Concerning support offered for businesses, the South African government did not assist my participants as they were immigrant businesses owners within the informal sector. As reported by my research and by the research of Khambule (2020), businesses apart of the informal sector play a positive role in poverty alleviation, have created employment opportunities as well as have assisted in creating a booming tourist economy, their contribution has not awarded them any governmental protection or support which is direly needed. Even prior to COVID-19, there was no government support for immigrant businesses (Crush, 2017), it is therefore not surprising that informal sector businesses were left out of governmental strategies created to defend the economy from the devastation caused by the pandemic (De Groot and Lemanski, 2021).

More cogent to my participants, Washinyira (2020b) showed how the GMS management body was not supportive of traders, despite the fact that their businesses are the mainstay of the square. One participant noted: "*But in Greenmarket, we didn't get nothing and what was very bad. We paying more money for more years in Greenmarket after that they pay us, like we talk about the small business. We say oh if they can support also the small business. They just say no, you guys..."* (Participant A).

The only formal, and minor relief was provided by the City of Cape Town who offered a helping hand by suspending rental requirements for stall spaces from the time of the refugee occupation onward. This amounts to a minor deduction of R554 per month.
"No, you know when the refugees were here, we didn't even pay the place where we operating, even these time we don't pay…" (Participant D)

No other support was provided, and this left participants carrying the sole risks of the crises.

Survival tactics employed

Since non-essential informal businesses were prohibited from operating during the nationwide lockdown, modes of economic survival were important to adopt to ensure income generation. The findings of this research affirm that some participants attempted to seek any accessible mode of income generation to guarantee that basic needs could be met. Forms of employment adopted by the participants of this research as a survival strategy consisted of making and selling face masks which provided a meagre income (Participants A and B), washing clothes (Participants C and F), and selling fruits and vegetables as vendors on the street (Participants D and F). All these jobs fell into the bracket of essential services. As pointed out in the research of Mbeve et al. (2021, p. 53), immigrants have displayed both "resilience and creativity" in their endeavour to seek alternate means of employment.

This is confirmed in the stories my participants shared. Creativity is demonstrated in their strong entrepreneurial mindsets, which drives them to seek opportunities. As Tengeh (2013) argues, this could be called a 'survivalist instinct' which means they are willing to engage in any work available. This 'survivalist instinct' is another form of resilience. Purnomo, Adiguna, Widodo, Suyatna & Nusantoro (2020, p. 515) use terms such as "entrepreneurial resilience" and "self-efficiency," deploying skills developed through the navigation of previous misfortunes. Participant D calls this survivalist employment streams as "funny jobs," signifying that any possible opportunity was grasped, despite the job description, meeting the needs of themselves and their families was their biggest priority.

Mask making and selling was a hit and miss affair. One participant started making masks for Scalabrini, but this was not a sustainable project: "…*I sell masks to survive. You know the mask at the time, the first lockdown, We, um, I just start to make masks and just another lady there*

to Scalabrini, she takes our masks and we was maybe 10 people selling the masks to give, we just go and give her, she gonna give us money because she also gives some people masks for free and that money was used in this times. For now, masks, you can sell maybe 2 -3 and it becomes very cheap like R20's at the beginning it was R35…." (Participant A). Participant B made and sold their own masks and had no comments about the income generated from this.

Another creative survivalist strategy was displayed in this story participant C offered: *"the last money that I was saving for the, there was a tour in high school in Milnerton high, a Euro tour, that's supposed to be last year. Then I was saving money for my both children there to travel so I have to pay like a 90… 90 000 for those two to travel to the Euro tour. Then I was already on 40 000 then I tell them, I cannot afford anymore, can you give me the money back? They refund me the money, then from that, I get two machines. One to washing machine and one dry machine and then I start to wash people clothes, that's how I was feeding my children..."*. Though the opportunity to send their children abroad was lost, Participant C identified a business opportunity and 'pivoted' to find a way to sustain their family. This adaptability was not available to many people according to Rogan and Skinner (2020) who used their savings on basic food needs. Participant C was inventive and fortunate to be able to invest in something that would keep generating an income and maintaining some financial autonomy.

Participant F also turned to laundry, and fruit selling with not as much success: *"…I could go and wash clothes for people, I tried to sell the fruit on the street, the traffic also there was not accommodative, so we tried although it was hard, but we tried."* (Participant F). Even though seeking employment in addition to generating an income was an immense challenge, participant F demonstrated that perseverance was key despite the difficulties presented.

Participant D, who coined the term "funny jobs" also turned to vegetable selling to generate an income: *"…we did funny, other funny jobs (laugh). We did other… we could sell even vegetables on the road, on the street… on the... near the shops. Whenever you could go to the farm, buy some vegetables come and stand somewhere but also the police also don't like them, they chase you, they give your fines…"* (Participant D). Though creativity and resilience are displayed, so is the precarity of pursuing informal vegetable selling, with police fines potentially negatively affecting income. However, selling fruits and vegetables was classed as an essential service at the time, which meant it was one of the few viable options for income

generation when the lack of documentation and fewer jobs reduced opportunities for making a living.

Through these stories it is evident that participants did not sit back, nor allow the pandemic to get the best of them; they pushed on to seek jobs to hold onto a form of financial autonomy but, more importantly, to meet their most basic needs. Examples of "creativity and resilience," "entrepreneurial resilience," and "self-efficiency" can be identified in participants that adopted survival strategies. Resilience prevailed as they did not give up but instead turned to another form of income generation to make a living. Despite challenges relating to opportunities, and legal documentation due to the closure of DHA offices during the lockdowns, my participants have demonstrated strength despite the vulnerabilities that they have encountered. They pooled together skills they possessed to attain a survivalist income exhibiting their tenacity and persistence.

Though the majority of participants found alternative forms of income, three did not seek or find alternative opportunities at all. Participant E did not earn an income for months and relied on the funds they had procured and saved over time. They did not acquire a job to aid in their circumstance during the lockdown and could only afford to purchase food items: *"…there was no income totally zero income. No small jobs for me, it was nothing... Yeah, because the only thing you could do is to eat… I don't even want to think about it (laughs)."*

According to participant G, the management of GMS had promised them R5000 as seed funding to start a business that could be run during the lockdown. This did not materialise, and they were unwilling to sell fruits and vegetables as there were already too many other vendors: *"Nothing my dear, nothing, I'm telling you. Even here at Greenmarket Square, they said, first they said they gonna give us something like a maybe R5000 just to stay home and do something else, like the other people, most of the people here they leave they go to sell there at station, they sell fruit and veg but not all of us we can sell fruit and veg."* (Participant G)

Both these participants did what Rogan and Skinner (2020) identified as a key survival strategy adopted by informal sector workers which was to use their savings for basic needs for themselves and their families. The impact is that it robs them of capital to be used for their business.

In an interesting case, participant H did not pursue another job even though they found it difficult to endure the long months. As a mode of survival, participant H acquired financial support from friends abroad who attempted to aid through minor financial donations that would keep the participant on their feet to continue ahead. Participant H is well-known for welcoming tourists which has enabled them to make long-lasting friendships. *"I didn't get any job; I didn't get any job. It was very tough for me to survive, maybe some other people like the tourists also, I have some friends from overseas also that tried to help me and sent me some small monies, just to continue the journey (laugh) you see."* (Participant H)

These narratives illustrate the range of adaptations my participants made to ensure that they survived the economic impact of their businesses being shut down, and the disappearance of their customer base.

Remittances

COVID-19 related restrictions negatively impacted remittances as a knock-on impact of not being able to make a living. Hardships were consequently extended across borders. Most participants practised sending remittances back to their home countries religiously every month. However, such has been hindered due to the lack of a stable income. Six participants out of the eight involved in this research could not send remittances to their home countries and thus, could not help their families, as typified by these responses: *"No, I don't have money to send my home country (laughs)"* (Participant A)*;* and *"I used to send sometimes when you get you send 150 like $10, I don't send anymore."* (Participant B). This was because participants needed to use all available financial resources as described by participant D: *"...our families are there back home but now after the COVID we don't have anything to send to them what we get is just to pay then pay our rent but before that it was ok..."*.

In a rare and lucky case, one participant told us that their family could survive without the money being sent home: *"...Even my mother she's, my mom she's a farmer. She's a fighter, she's a farmer, my dad is also a farmer, so they don't expect anything from us, and we don't have, even paying rent we, you don't have, its hard..."* (Participant E). This was helpful to them in lightening the burden and confirmed Kalantaryan and McMahon's (2020) research that each household is impacted differently.

As the person who held the majority of the responsibility of supporting their family, participant G found the loss of income from trade restrictions particularly devastating: *"…to my family, I used to be the one who's helping all of them, but now I don't have nothing, no one on my side. Now when I'm thinking, I'm just thinking very deep, I said God, please put me to the first place I was, not to this place I am now. Because I am facing a very difficult...."* (Participant G). Such a case possibly mirrors the experiences of many African immigrants in South Africa.

The knock-on effect across borders of the decrease in income of participants supports Kalantaryan and McMahon's (2020) findings that COVID-19 related economic impacts often have a far wider impact than on the immediate person and may even contribute to the rise in poverty rates across the continent. This will be challenging to overcome and recover from.

There are glimmers of recovery. After not sending anything home during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, participant F is starting to send as much funds as possible to support her child: *"I do, because I have my child schooling there, my mom is back home so I normally send a little bit of help back home. For that one year, no."* (Participant F). This may be because they do not have to meet costs of living for family in South Africa and can reduce their in-country expenses.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The effects of and navigating around the ongoing pandemic

This chapter will place more of a focus on the craft businesses situated in GMS specifically on how COVID-19 has impacted businesses and workers which included an observation as well as to understand how these businesses intend on moving forward in these new times. This chapter also shares insight on views shared about the survival of GMS.

The effects on employment creation

Immigrant-owned businesses within the informal sector hold the reputation of enabling job creation in South Africa (Fatoki, 2014, Crush 2001 & Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2016). They have played a massive role in reducing the unemployment rate and, in return, assisting in alleviating poverty subjected to both South Africans and immigrants. As per my research (Madurai, 2019) a key finding suggested that African immigrant-owned businesses in the GMS craft market facilitated job creation by creating employment opportunities for both local South Africans and other African immigrants. However, this has also been subject to the negative impact of trade restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to 2020, participants A, C, D, H, and F had created employment opportunities for others, but had to dismiss their workers when they were shut down as they could no longer afford to pay salaries. Workers sunk back into the cycle of poverty from which they were once saved. The responsibilities of workers differed widely from setting up the canopy, pushing stock supplies to the square, preparing the displays, and aiding customers, which are important steps to guarantee the smooth running of businesses. Such responsibilities now fall onto the shoulders of the already burdened stall owners. As for now, it is unknown if workers will be reemployed because stall owners need to use funds earned from sales to rebuild their businesses and for their livelihoods. There is simply no money to employ staff. The vital aspect of employment creation has been hampered, placing poverty at the forefront of many lives.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, participant C had two workers on their team like participant A: **"***For now, uh, I, I, I work with a guy, only the one who put the canopy. I used to have two people working with me. The one display for me because I'm little bit older, I can't display but for now I'm displaying myself… I can't afford to pay*." (Participant C).

Preceding the COVID-19 pandemic, participant D ran the stall with their wife and another worker. Regrettably, they cannot reemploy this member as they do not generate enough income to do so. Participant D and their wife still run the stall together but will not employ more help soon*: "right now, I work with my wife but before COVID we used to work three of us. I had a staff member who I could not employ now after the COVID. Uh, there is no money to employ another one now"* (Participant D).

Lastly, participant H also could not afford to continue paying their worker and now operates their business on a solo capacity: *"I was having it, the staff members before COVID. But, not now, not anymore."* (Participant H).

The situation of participant F differs as their worker returned home to Malawi and was not let go of. However, they have not sought another worker to aid in the running of their stall: *"I used to have one guy, but he went back home, Malawi he was from Malawi"* (Participant F).

GMS is renowned as a space that has provided employment for both African immigrants and South Africans, but job creation is no longer a factor facilitated by businesses since there is simply no capital available. Money obtained is used for survival alone and cannot be stretched out to employ workers who offer a helping hand.

Running a business during the ongoing pandemic

Operating a business during the ongoing global pandemic presents many setbacks and uncertainties due to changes in the nature of the pandemic on a day-to-day basis whereby strains grow stronger, travel bans are implemented, and lockdown restrictions still exist. In addition, sourcing stock from across the continent is a challenge because of travel and trade restrictions. Others are struggling to sell stock from pre-COVID-19 times and don't have enough money to buy new stock (Participant A and E). This mirrors the findings of Githahu (2021), who also conducted research with stall owners in the craft market of GMS and WIEGO (2021) who interviewed informal traders and found that the lack of imports and shifting old stock were part of the current strategies. Based on my observations and experience, I noticed that some stalls sold stock that was often rusty; specifically, the earrings and beaded bracelets that I tried on were covered in dust residue, revealing that the stock was aged, nevertheless, had to be sold. Participants shared their outlooks about running their business during such an

uncertain period and what makes it increasingly challenging is that they do not have internal or external support to do so.

Participant A reflects these challenges in their story: *"challenges it's gonna be that maybe to put new stock but it's gonna be a big challenge, because we never sell something for 3 years in the market, we always try to put the new stock that's the big challenge because if you didn't make money, you can't put the new one. I think we just gonna trust in God. We need to replace the new one. We need to start again that's the big challenge, we have to redo do. Like they already steal some tables we want to display, we don't have that I don't have that table. I don't have my gazebo; they already steal it…"* (Participant A). In addition to old stock which cannot be replenished due to the lack of funds, they have also been subject to theft – display tables and gazebos were stolen from the storage unit, and they cannot afford to replace those either, so they are left trying to do their best with what they have.

According to participant B, running their business during the pandemic has resulted in the lack of care from management regarding the products on sale: *"You know because of Corona, because of corona no one now care now. The management they don't care who sell what. There's too much competition now. That affect my business. Imagine your neighbour was selling something else because they see you selling and start copying you..."*. According to Washinyira (2019) this competition was already a feature of GMS before COVID-19, where stall owners rushed to purchase stock that seemed like the most sale-able items, leading to a glut of stock which impacted businesses negatively. This has been exacerbated in COVID-19 times.

In addition, costs of trading in GMS have been increasing. Participant C notes: "*Last week I go every day, the week before I go 2 days. When I'm, sometimes I don't when I am tired because you need to pay for the storeroom, you need to pay for the person pushing the stuff for you. Then sometimes it better stay home."* (Participant C). Inconsistent trading times translate into a loss of potential income, but when potential costs of trading outweigh potential income, along with increased workloads as stall owners can no longer employ support staff, as with participant C, some may make a choice to rather stay home. Factor in the increasing costs of transport to and from GMS (Washinyira, 2019), and this calculation becomes even more cogent.

Participant D expressed a more positive view about trading during the ongoing pandemic. They are optimistic that the square will start seeing more customers and much-needed change in the times to come as slight signs of such are visible. *"we are hoping for the best up to now we can see some right, but still not yet, not yet there but we see like, it will come back. It will come back but not now, but maybe in the near future"* (Participant D).

Another participant who is hopeful for positive change is participant E, confident that things will get better despite challenges: "*the business is returning back to normal but now it's a little bit hard because we don't have our staff, we don't have capital to start again, we don't even know how were gonna do it but if we had like a stock, we know business is gonna be good. We have good stock; we are just hoping that we sell it*" (Participant E)

All things considered, operating a business during the ongoing pandemic is an arduous affair as every facet of the business has been strained despite some faith presented by a few participants.

New business strategies

Adopting a new business strategy is an important step to take in order to enable the growth of businesses once again. Participant A has developed some plans: *"...the way to stock my stuff, the way I must make like a packaging, that will make something new. The one, the customer can see this is another business, not like the way we always put. To my table I need to change more stuff. I don't want a full stock. I must make the stock the one I can see the money, not just display everything, that is the new strategy I must get and selling in social media, in Facebook I am trying that thing..."* (Participant A). Selling goods through social media has become a popular option since the start of the pandemic and is a fast-paced way to reach customers situated in a broader range of locations.

Continuing talks on stock, participant E's strategy is to showcase distinctive products that will not be sold in other stalls found in the square, to continue to sell products that represent their business as well as to create products out of high-value materials that can be sold at a higher price to produce a greater income: "*I've learned is you need to make, to be unique, stick on your product and make only this stuff of good quality so when you sell something one at least you have nice money…*" (Participant E).

Participant D would like to make changes but cannot: "*Every day we are thinking how we can improve our business, but the capital is not there, the money is not there we don't have any money to put into the business so even if you want to improve it, we are not able. Coz right now, whatever we sell, we just use…"* (Participant D). This impediment to potential recovery in terms of the lack of funds to purchase new stock has been felt by many informal businesses, specifically market stall owners, as pointed out by WIEGO (2021).

At this stage, stall owners cannot adopt an entirely new business strategy due to the lack of adequate capital and the many challenges they still need to overcome. The only viable option is to work with the stock they have and display it in a manner that garners enough attention from customers. As pointed out by Rogerson and Braun (2020, p. 737), even though a new business strategy is created, the implementation of such will be a "slow, brick by brick" process, and more "setbacks" must be anticipated.

Observations

During the weekday, the square best resembled a dull ghost town with stalls sporadically spread out to fill up the floor space of the square. The plots of land in between the stalls were substantial due to the absence of many stall owners; thus, stalls were positioned throughout the square to make the square look fuller. Even so, there were too few businesses present to have that effect. The joyous laughter and banter and music that were prevalent in 2019 were no longer heard, but rather the sounds of a few stall owners pleading for business were amplified throughout the market. Only a handful of tourists could be seen moving from one stall to the next, visibly not making any purchases. These patterns played out consistently throughout the day. Stall owners appear to be exhausted and as if they have lost hope as they sat and waited for a purchase to be made. Despite this, they demonstrate grit through the way they try to go into GMS every day and set up their stalls most beautifully and vibrantly. There is an increase of individuals wandering around the square, begging for money to purchase food. Some individuals could also be seen sleeping in parts of the square. These depictions highlighted a greater sense of struggle and burden that had filled GMS.

I returned to GMS during the weekend, there was a stark difference. A lot of effort and physical labour goes into setting up the stall. I witnessed a stall owner on top of a tree trying to tie up his gazebo, which looked very risky. It is much work for a single person to carry out. Some

stall owners were cleaning their goods before putting them on display with special detergents to keep their goods at a high-quality level. Stalls are set up in a very artistic style with as many goods displayed as possible in a meticulous and eye-catching way. There was more movement, colour, and vibrancy on the square with more stalls present. There was also an increase in the movement of tourists as well as local South Africans. Stall owners were visibly happier and more welcoming with friendly hellos while they invited passer-byers into their stalls to enjoy the handicraft goods being sold; they also often shared stories with tourists. The sound of the square was filled with music from a local singer and from a small radio found in a stall booming various African beats. The square transformed into a spectacular oasis of vibrance. More children were present, running around and playing together as their parents were stall owners. Regarding COVID-19 safety precautions, there was a mix of stall owners who wore masks, and those who did not, which poses a risk to both stall owners and customers, even though the market is in the open air. It appeared that income generation now takes precedence over health-related safety measures against COVID-19. There were also groups of African immigrant men that did not own stalls or work in a specific stall but spent time on the square, aiding stall owners where or when they could. They could also be seen walking around, greeting and conversing with customers, sharing fascinating stories about their lives and about GMS.

The Survival of Greenmarket Square

The GMS craft market in the past seemed to be a joyous space that has offered opportunity, employment, and economic prosperity to many (Madurai, 2019). The survival of the square is essential. It is a space that brings many different parts of the world together in unison to discover more about and experience parts of Africa through the crafts and artworks displayed. For participants, what used to be their haven, has been dismantled due to the impact of the occupation and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gathering views from participants was both a heart-breaking and heart-warming experience. For many participants, GMS has been a considerable part of their life in South Africa. The only participant that did not think that GMS would continue to survive was participant A: *"...it's not gonna continue, its gonna struggle, the way I see it. It's not gonna go again like the way we start..."* (Participant A)

On the other hand, participants C, D, E, and F have hope that the square will continue to survive. For participant C, GMS represents survival: *"I don't wish to see this on the end, I want it to*

survive because yeah, is a square that, like us, uh, foreigner here if you don't have this space so many people will die, I'm telling you. So many people will die…" (Participant C)

Participant D agrees, adding that survival comes through change: *"…I believe so as long as things change, whether it's now or in the near future, the market will survive or the market will be there, the only thing is if things change from now where we are because the market can never die or go forever because after the COVID the market will come back to normal…"* (Participant D).

Correspondingly, participant F also shares that survival comes through change, but in their view, such change is important and merely revolves around an increase in vaccinated tourists who are needed to enable the endurance of the square: "*If it continues the way it is, I don't see. Unless a change come from our tourists because we depend on tourists in Greenmarket so unless the people get vaccinated or the government do something about our international travellers, there's no other way out for us…"* (Participant F).

Proudly, participant E shared that GMS was one of the only markets that persisted during the COVID-19 pandemic, spotlighting that the square will always remain as it has been able to overcome and persevere through massive change*: "…Greenmarket, we are there to stay, we are there to stay, because actually it's the only market that have survived during this COVID…"* (Participant E).

Although there is hope, there is no concrete or conclusive answer about the survival of GMS; there is only a yearning that such would occur.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Conclusion

In answering how the two crises of the refugee occupation, and COVID-19 related restrictions impacted on informal immigrant owned businesses in GMS, it is evident that the impacts have been severe. This is partially because the resolution of the refugee occupation and the negative impacts resulting from that were followed immediately by the impact of restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Craft businesses within the square have experienced numerous setbacks over the years, such as infrequent business, operational constraints due to the changing weather patterns, and competition amongst stalls (Washinyira, 2019). However, none have compared to the destruction caused by the two events researched that consequently made a massive dent on the socio-economic standing of the participants' businesses and livelihoods. Washinyira (2019) shared that the GMS craft market was at 95% capacity prior to the turning point. This percentage has declined drastically based on my observations within 2021, demonstrating the impact. Suffering felt by participants was visible; nonetheless, their determination and attitude to not give up shone brighter.

Regarding the refugee occupation, the nature of the occupation was not limited to the confines of the church alone but was spread throughout the square. As a result, the once vibrant square became degenerated due to the transformed conditions as the refugees carried out their daily activities within the square, sounding health hazards and safety alarms. Through their strife, the refugees halted the operation of businesses by repelling customers, specifically tourists, away, which occurred for reasons such as the overcrowding and unhygienic conditions beheld in the square, through physically barricading customers from entering as well as by using aggressive language towards customers. Such acts only heightened the fear amongst potential customers. Overall, I concur that the turning point of the refugee occupation acted as a barrier that restricted customers from entering the square even though physical barriers were also erected to prevent the movement of customers, as mentioned. The refugees also constructed tents and slept in spaces where stalls needed to be set up. Some would urinate on stalls or defecate in public spaces of the square displaying a lack of respect towards these hard-earned businesses, or the overall health safety of individuals in the square. The atmosphere of the square during the occupation was hostile and filled with distress and despair. Immigrant stall owners largely distanced themselves from their fellow immigrants' strife in South Africa. As this research suggested, the lived experiences of stall owners versus the refugees differed

drastically as cumulatively; the refugees fell victim to more gross human rights violations driven by xenophobia, as suggested in their protest. In contrast, participants of this research stated that their lives were not immersed in struggle to the same extent. The tension between the two groups remained high as stall owners felt frustrated rather than supportive of the occupation, campaigning for its end. At the same time, the refugees grew angry toward stall owners for not standing alongside them in solidarity to protest for a better life. The negative factor of discrimination was then subjected to stall owners by the refugees and vice versa. The notion of 'us' versus 'them' was brought forward as both parties became divided enemies to each other. Both stall owners and refugees fell subject to collective discrimination from the outside world as many spectators could not tell one from the other, throwing phrases such as 'amakwerekwere' toward the two groups, which was incredibly unjust.

As for occupation containment measures through the intervention of SAPS, mixed remarks were collected from participants. Some praised SAPS while others found them to be more of a nuisance as they caused an increased strain on businesses or were absent for most of the occupation. SAPS were summoned to dissolve the occupation due to the negative impact it had on surrounding businesses, linking to disruption and safety concerns. The role handed to SAPS occurred in stages. Firstly, SAPS were called upon to bring peace during violent spouts of the occupation that undoubtedly impacted the operational craft businesses, further deterring customers away or in the time of evacuating the refugees out of GMS. Phase one resulted in the closure of businesses for the day, prohibiting income generation. A divide amongst craft businesses concerning the spread of information was present as some stall owners were well informed about operations to be carried out by SAPS while others were not. Information could have been kept within community groups based on nationality or was not spread to centre stalls found in the square.

As a result of the occupation, immigrant-owned craft stalls lost a vast amount of business rapidly, which could not afford to happen. Customers resorted to purchasing goods from craft retail stores nearby, further reducing much-needed support. It is worth noting that weather conditions play a notable role in determining the rate of income generation for these businesses situated in the open air of GMS. During prime businesses months of the summer season, the occupation acted as a resistor as it commenced when weather patterns were conducive for income generation. The site of GMS, long after the colonial era, has been a site that displayed

and celebrated the success of African people; however, in the course of and after the refugee occupation, the square has only shown the distress of African people as it did in the past.

Within the same month of the occupation, the COVID-19 pandemic commenced, further extending the socio-economic devastation caused as the craft businesses were not financially able to close for an extensive period. The COVID-19 pandemic was said to be a scary time, filled with immense uncertainty that deduced these businesses to the starting point. The livelihoods of stall owners were also hard hit as they could not make ends meet to survive as paying for rent, bills, and food necessities became burdensome. Thus, I would say that the lack of operating in the market results in 'no money' and, in return, 'no food'. Once restrictions had eased, and stalls began to operate again, income generation remained low as a travel ban, prohibiting the entrance of tourists, was still in place for many months. However, even when lifted, the flow of customers remained slow. At that point, stall owners were solely operating to earn enough to purchase food necessities in order to survive. The devastating restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have been the worst challenge faced by these businesses to date.

On an economic standing, the South African government did not support these businesses despite the positive contribution they have made in promoting job creation, alleviating the high unemployment rate, and playing a vital role in boosting the local economy. As this research suggests, these businesses did not obtain government aid due to their position as immigrant-owned businesses within the informal sector; therefore, they were subjected to a double burden. While the management of GMS and the City of Cape Town also steered clear from offering support. In the same tone, on a personal basis, as African immigrants, stall owners did not receive support from the South African government. However, as presented, the government failed to offer aid to South African citizens; thus, it was almost an expectation that aid would not be extended to immigrants. It was believed that they were not supported due to their status as 'foreigners.' Alternatively, support was offered to some through interventions from non-governmental organisations such as the Scalabrini centre and the church through monetary donations and food supplies. In contrast, another participant received aid from friends where possible.

As has been presented, immigrants follow a 'survivalist instinct' (Tengeh, 2013) and were able to find new ways to keep their livelihoods afloat during the lockdown while their businesses

were non-operational. Some participants displayed “resilience and creativity,” (Mbeve et al., 2021, p. 53) “entrepreneurial resilience,” and “self-efficiency” (Purnomo et al., 2020, p. 515) as they did not give up and sit idle but instead attempted to engage in any form of income generation, despite the job description. This demonstrates their determination even when obstacles were in the way. Survivalist jobs consisted of making and selling masks, selling fruits and vegetables as well as washing clothes, activities that allowed meagre income generation. A participant even started up their own laundry business. Participants used their business skillset and conversational abilities to promote income generation during this period. They have learned how to be self-sustaining in South Africa, a trait carried throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as is evident. In contrast, three participants did not seek alternative means of employment and used funds saved from the business to spend on their basic needs. This was a risky move as there were no available funds to put towards the business once operational, and their economic autonomy was removed in the process. Linking to livelihoods, participants halted the flow of sending out remittances, even when their businesses were operational, as they could only afford to use financial means to meet their own basic needs. Consequently, hardships were increasingly extended across borders. By way of discovery, some remittance-receiving families could get by while others would be subjected to conditions bridging on poverty.

The knock-on impact of income loss was not confined to the stall owners alone. They had often employed others. These craft based businesses have been renowned for their contribution made to employment creation. However, this has dramatically changed due to limited income. Workers who played an essential role in the operation of these businesses before the COVID-19 lockdown period have been let go as there are simply no funds available to pay them. It is clear that the pandemic has majorly changed the operational nature of these businesses; hence, it was essential to understand how participants approached running their businesses during the ongoing pandemic.

Challenges can be seen in purchasing new stock as there is no capital to do so; therefore, the older stock must be sold, there has been a surge in competition amongst stalls which is overlooked by management, and operational costs such as storeroom and transportation costs have become challenging to compensate. Although there is hope that valuable change will start to take place in time, implementing a new business strategy at this point would have to be brainstormed around working with stock already held. New strategies presented centre around

displaying and creating unique stock in different ways, changing packaging, and using social media platforms to reach an audience beyond the craft market of GMS. Stall owners are still trying their best by using what they have to attract the eye of customers. I would say that a business strategy implemented is determination, as they have not given up on their businesses despite the troublesome setbacks felt. It is worth noting that the financial lines between their businesses and livelihoods became blurred as all financial capital held was used to survive alone, leaving very little to put towards their businesses. All in all, it will take an extensive amount of time and patience for these businesses to return to their initial state of success.

Outcomes which were the result of the refugee occupation and COVID-19 restrictions share many commonalities. Both events restricted the movement of valuable clients, tourists, limited the act of breathing freely due to the unhygienic conditions of the square during the occupation, and constricted flow of free-breathing due to the introduction of COVID-19 compliant face masks. These events occurred during prime weather seasons that ordinarily attracted more customers, and the largest impact of both events was the drastic change caused to the businesses and livelihoods of stall owners. Rogerson (2021) researched the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the tourism industry within the formal sector. Similarities were presented that linked to my research despite the focus on informal sector businesses. Such findings suggested that the tourism industry was hard hit due to the lack of tourists; they did not receive financial aid from the government, businesses increased their social media presence, and reduced the number of workers, linking to the increase in unemployment. These results mirror some of the discoveries made in my research, however, in the context of the informal craft market in GMS.

Participants and all who hold a stall in GMS have been forced to face unexpected life changes. Before the two events, they were always able to meet their most basic needs as they held financial security, facilitated by operating a successful business in the square. Such a lifestyle has transformed for the worst, and it remains uncertain if such success can be achieved again, to the same extent as in the past. Despite the hardships that occurred so rapidly due to the double impact of the refugee occupation and COVID-19 pandemic, participants have remained resilient and hopeful, especially about keeping their businesses up and running in GMS. They have not given up and continue to persevere. The survival of Greenmarket Square will result in the survival of stall-owners.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Methodological Reflections

The first interview conducted was via telephone with a participant from my research conducted in 2019. My participant has not started trading again in Greenmarket Square since the first national lockdown in 2020 but intends on trading again from the 21st of October 2021. My participant referred two more participants to aid in my research, with only one agreeing to assist. I shared her social media accounts to aid her business and donated R250 towards her business or personal spending.

The second interview was conducted via telephone. I had communicated with a male, but his wife answered and spoke to me instead when calling to start the interview. I had arranged to call my original participant, but he stated that he was no longer trading in Greenmarket Square.

The third interview was conducted via telephone with a research participant found in GMS who was trading. We met during the day, and I supported her business by purchasing a tiny purse. We arranged to have a call later that day to carry out the interview. She has been trading in GMS for three weeks already.

Going into Greenmarket Square was an immensely heart-breaking experience, a once vibrant and colourful space filled with the hustle and bustle of tourists was almost empty, with vast spaces in between each stall. This joyful site was filled with a visible struggle to earn a basic income where the income obtained is only enough to purchase food necessities. There were lots of people begging on the square as well. Seeking participants presented to be another challenge as many were not willing or did not have a phone; some did not want to partake in this research as they did not see how it would help their business grow; I had purchased goods from some potential participants to aid in their business while a potential participant was willing to take part in my research and made me purchase a bracelet. When selling the bracelet to me, she communicated in clear English. When I was leaving, she called me back and said that she does not understand English and therefore cannot be a participant in my research. On this day, I collected ten numbers of potential participants and sent out a message to find a suitable interview time, but only two respondents replied.

The fourth interview was conducted via telephone with an immensely willing participant that I met in GMS who shared their contact details with me. The participant also shared the contact details of their spouse, who also owns a stall in the square. Later that evening, the participant sent me another message asking for any job opportunities or any tips to grow their business, stating that “COVID -19 are still within us”. I purchased two animal figures and donated beads for product creation to aid their business. On this day, I tried calling the other potential research participants; a participant rejected my call, another said it was too windy to talk, and the other participant stated that they wanted to have the interview in my office. After explaining that I am a student and I do not have an office, the participant still insisted that the interview must take place in person at an office.

During the weekend, I returned to the square to seek more participants and conduct interviews in a face-to-face manner, as telephonic interviews were proving to be a struggle. I arrived at the market at 10 am, but while walking to the square, the imagery was more beautiful and brighter compared to the first time. I started my participant search by going to the wife of a former participant, who gladly assisted me. She also spoke to her friend in a nearby stall who constituted another participant. I walked around the square searching for more participants but was rejected multiple times. I also went back to participants that gave me their contact number during my last visit but was rejected again. At the same time, some had different people running their stalls. I finally found another willing participant who was happy to help. I went to the neighbouring stalls where the owner was sitting, seemingly free with time to talk but was rejected. Another participant I met previously but who did not have a phone wanted to be interviewed, but I was trying to avoid this participant as they did not wear a mask. I avoided all stalls where stall owners were mask-less, which accounted for a significant proportion. I noticed that men were less likely to abide by COVID-19 protocols. The participant insisted on the interview, and I kept at a distance, wore a mask, and am fully vaccinated, but the participant, who had had one dose, kept on coming close to me while I kept on moving back. I sanitised thoroughly once this interview was conducted and decided to isolate for a week. Since it was a sweltering day, I purchased water for my participants and a snack.

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

"Identifying the socio-economic impacts of the 2019-2020 refugee occupation and COVID-19 related restrictions on immigrant-owned businesses in the urban informal sector of Greenmarket Square, Cape Town"

By Michaela Madurai. A Sociology student from the University of Cape Town.

Dear participant, you have been selected to partake in research that aims to understand the social and economic effects that the 2019- 2020 refugee occupation and COVID-19 Pandemic had on Immigrant-owned businesses in the Greenmarket Square craft market. The information collected from your participation will be used for the purpose of my Master's thesis.
Your participation will take shape through an interview, following strict COVID-19 safety protocols. If you approve to join my research as a participant, your confidentiality as well as identity will be protected and anonymised. I will request your permission to voice record this interview. The recording acquired will be kept safely, I am the only person who has access to the recording. You have the right to stop the interview at any point and you have the right to reject any questions or withdraw from the interview if you feel the need to do so. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Duration: This interview will be around 40 minutes long.
Nature of interview: Telephonic _____ Face to face _____

- I……. agree to be a participant in this research.
- I am aware that my COVID-19 safety will be well protected.
- I am aware that I can reject answering questions.
- I am aware that I can withdraw from the interview at any point.
- I am aware that the information that I share will be used in a Master's Thesis that will be publicly available.
- I am aware that my confidentiality and identity will be anonymised and protected.

I am aware of and understand the terms mentioned above _____ Yes _____ No
I have raised any questions that I may have _____ Yes _____ No
I give permission to voice record this interview _____ Yes _____ No

_____ _____

Participants Signature Date

APPENDIX C

Interview Schedule

Research Question

"Identifying the socio-economic impacts of the 2019-2020 refugee occupation and COVID-19 related restrictions on immigrant-owned businesses in the urban informal sector of Greenmarket Square, Cape Town"

General Questions

1. How did you start your business?
2. Have you found success in your business?
3. What is the current state of your business?

The Refugee Occupation

1. What are your thoughts about the refugee occupation?
2. How did you react towards the refugee occupation?
3. Were you sympathetic towards the refugees?
4. Have you found success in South Africa? Explain.
5. What was the state of the market at the time? Was the rate of customers that fill the market affected?
6. What economic effects did your business experience as a result of the refugee occupation?
7. Did you face any discrimination?
8. Were you personally victimised by police?
9. How did your business change after the refugee occupation?

The COVID-19 Pandemic

1. How did you feel at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa?
2. What was the state of your business before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How did the nationwide lockdown and regulations affect your business?
4. Did you face any stigmatisation as a result of the pandemic?
5. Did the South African government offer any aid through the relief fund targeted towards businesses?

6. Do you send remittances (money) back to your home country? How was this affected?
7. Since your business was not able to operate during the first nationwide lockdown, what modes of survival did you adopt to ensure economic generation?
8. How did you economically manage during the lockdown and after?
9. Has your business returned to normal after the restrictions eased?
10. How do you feel about running your business during the ongoing pandemic?
11. Has your stock supply been affected?
12. Have you been able to pay your workers?
13. What are the new challenges that you face?

Linking Questions

1. Have you experienced any hostility or discriminatory treatment as a result of the two events?
2. Have you adopted a new business strategy to deal with the rapid change and to ensure the future survival of your business?
3. How did you secure your livelihood and the economic status of your business?
4. Has your business received any financial aid from the government or any other organisations?
5. Has there been a support network created amongst the craft businesses in Greenmarket Square?
6. Will you continue to operate your business in Greenmarket Square?
7. Would you say that the Greenmarket Square craft market will continue to survive?